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Chapter 3

Mother Knows Best: A Brief Examination of the 1982– 2019 US Mass Shootings Data From *Mother Jones's* Investigation

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ABSTRACT

In the aftermath of the movie theater mass shooting in July of 2012 in Aurora, Colorado, Mother Jones magazine created one of the first open-source databases documenting mass shootings in the United States. They focused on documenting rampage shootings in public places which resulted in four or more victims killed by the attacker(s). Their initial database consisted of incidents between 1982 and 2012, then an additional 54 cases were added to this data base of incidents which occurred between 2013 and August 2019. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the incidents gathered in this complete database from 1982 to 2019. Special attention is given to overall trends and characteristics of types of offenders, events, and weapons used in such violent events.

INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the movie theater mass shooting in July of 2012 in Aurora, Colorado, *Mother Jones* magazine created one of the first open-source databases documenting mass shootings in the United States (Follman, Aronsen, and Pan, 2019). They focused on documenting rampage shootings in public places which resulted in four or more victims killed by the attacker(s). Their initial database consisted of incidents between 1982 and 2012, then an additional 54 cases were added to this data base of incidents

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which occurred between 2013 and August of 2019. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the incidents gathered in this complete database from 1982 to 2019. Special attention is given to overall trends and characteristics of types of offenders, events, and weapons used in such violent events.

As of late 2019, there is still no universally accepted definition of what constitutes a *mass shooting*. But, generally, it is considered an incident involving multiple victims of firearm-related violence. Most definitions *exclude* mass killings as a result of terrorist, authorized law enforcement or authorized military actions. The *United States' Congressional Research Service* (Walker, 2015) (the public policy research arm of the United States Congress) acknowledges that there is no broadly accepted definition but defines a “public mass shooting” as an event where someone selects four or more people indiscriminately and kills them. This definition is very similar to the Federal Bureau of Investigations’ definition (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2019) of the term “mass murder”. According to the FBI, the term “mass murder” has been defined generally as a multiple homicide incident in which four or more victims are murdered, within one event, and in one or more locations in close geographical proximity.

The *Mother Jones’* database is an attempt to help in the understanding of the complexities of mass shootings in the United States.

OVERVIEW OF CASES AND EVENTS

The first part of the *Mother Jones’* database focuses on the characteristics of each mass shooting event they documented between 1982 and 2019. This includes an examination of the year, month, and day of an event. An examination of the type of location, state of occurrence, and whether an event was a “mass” or “spree” shooting is included. The following is an overview of those findings.

Number of Incidents each Year

In examining the number of incidents which have occurred each year, there is an obvious trend towards increasing numbers. While there have *only* (for lack of a better word) been seven (7) incidents listed in 2019, there is still approximately four months left in the year. Moreover, educational institutions at all levels are about to open their doors for another year of school. Sadly, these are locations where many mass shootings occur.

A significant increase in the number of mass shootings can be seen beginning generally in 2012 to 2019. 2012 was the first year in this timeline to experience seven (7) events. That number, or more, is becoming common place it appears in American society.

A list of the mass shootings occurring in 2019 is shown in Table 1.

Month of Occurrence

While February (12) and June (12) are slightly ahead in the number of mass shootings, it appears that these types of events are almost evenly distributed throughout the months of any given year. No month of the year during this time frame had less than seven (7) documented events.

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Table 1.

SunTrust Bank Shooting	Sebring, FL	1/23/2019	Zephen A. Xaver, 21, fatally shot five women inside a bank and then called the police to confess. He was armed with a handgun and wore a bulletproof vest. He reportedly ordered the women to lie down on the floor and shot them execution-style. After a standoff with police, he surrendered and was taken into custody.
Pennsylvania Hotel Bar Shooting	State College, PA	1/24/2019	Jordan Witmer, 21, shot three people at a Ramada Hotel bar near Penn State University, including a former girlfriend he was there with. He then fled the bar, crashed his car about a mile away, and stormed into a random house, fatally shooting an elderly resident and then himself. Witmer, who had a legal carry permit for his handgun, had just finished a three-year stint in the US Army; ten days prior to the attack he had been convicted on drunk driving-related charges in Kentucky, where he'd been stationed.
Harry Pratt Co. Warehouse Shooting	Aurora, IL	2/15/2019	Gary Martin, 45, went on a rampage inside the warehouse in response to being fired from his job and died soon thereafter in a shootout with police. Among his victims were five dead coworkers and five injured police officers. Martin had a felony record and lengthy history of domestic violence; he was able to obtain a gun despite having had his Illinois firearms ownership identification card revoked. According to a report from prosecutors, Martin told a co-worker the morning of the shooting that if he was fired, he was going to kill employees and police.
Virginia Beach Municipal Building Shooting	Virginia Beach, VA	5/31/2019	DeWayne Craddock, 40, a municipal city worker wielding handgun, a suppressor and high-capacity magazines, killed en masse inside a Virginia Beach municipal building late in the day on a Friday, before dying in a prolonged gun battle with police. Craddock reportedly had submitted his resignation from his job that morning. He was a veteran of the Virginia Army National Guard, and "had a shaved head, bodybuilder" physique and cameras in the windows of his house on a peaceful cul-de-sac" according to the Washington Post.
Gilroy Garlic Festival Shooting	Gilroy, CA	7/28/2019	Santino William LeGan, 19, fired indiscriminately into the crowd near a concert stage at the festival. He used an AK-47-style rifle, purchased legally in Nevada three weeks earlier. After apparently pausing to reload, he fired additional multiple rounds before police shot him and then he killed himself. A witness described overhearing someone shout at LeGan, "Why are you doing this?" LeGan, who wore camouflage and tactical gear, replied: "Because I'm really angry." The murdered victims included a 13-year-old girl, a man in his 20s, and six-year-old Stephen Romero.
El Paso Walmart Mass Shooting	El Paso, TX	8/3/2019	Patrick Crusius, 21, who was apprehended by police, posted a so-called manifesto online shortly before the attack espousing ideas of violent white nationalism and hatred of immigrants. "This attack is a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas," he allegedly wrote in the document.
Dayton Entertainment District Shooting	Dayton, OH	8/4/2019	Connor Betts, 24, died during the attack, following a swift police response. He wore tactical gear including body armor and hearing protection and had an ammunition device capable of holding 100 rounds. Betts had a history of threatening behavior dating back to high school, including reportedly having hit lists targeting classmates for rape and murder.

Figure 1.

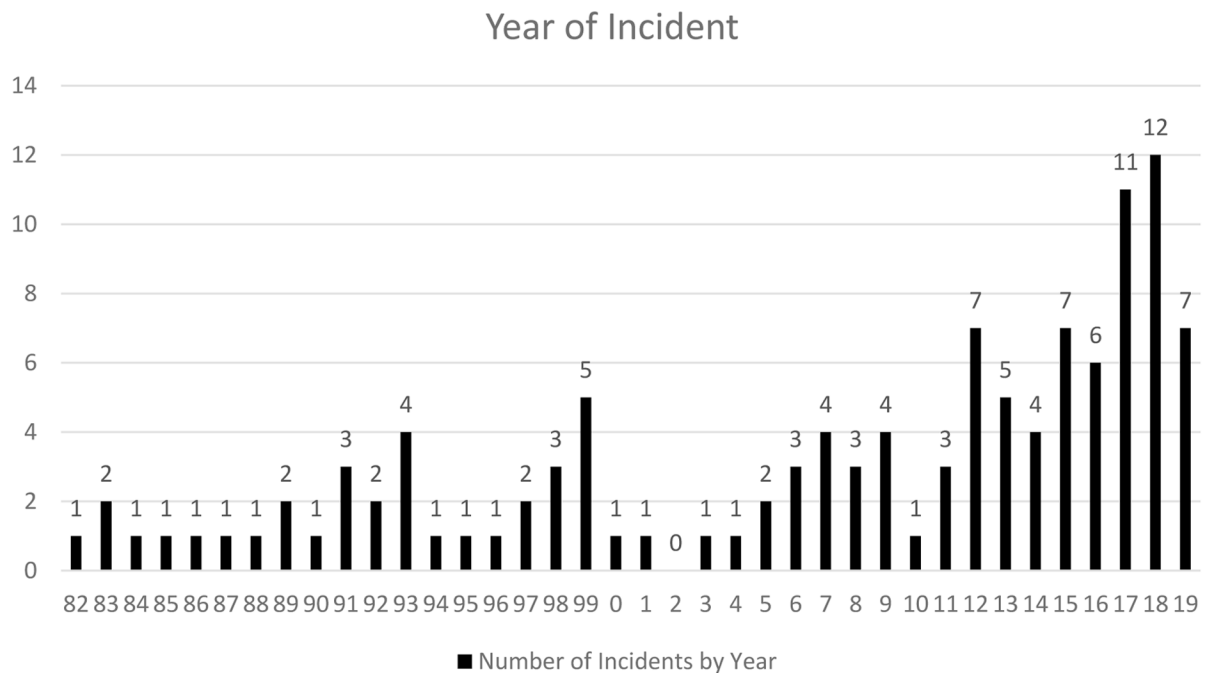


Figure 2.

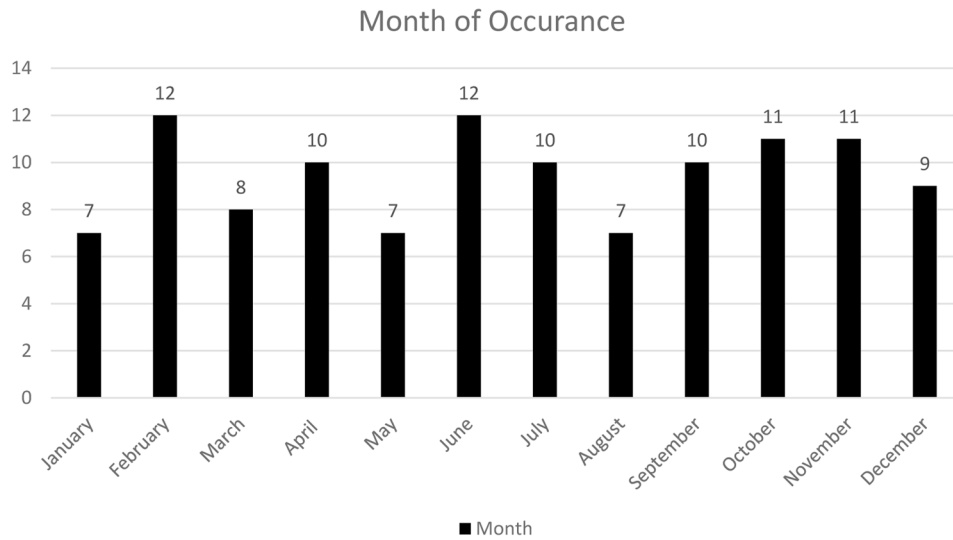
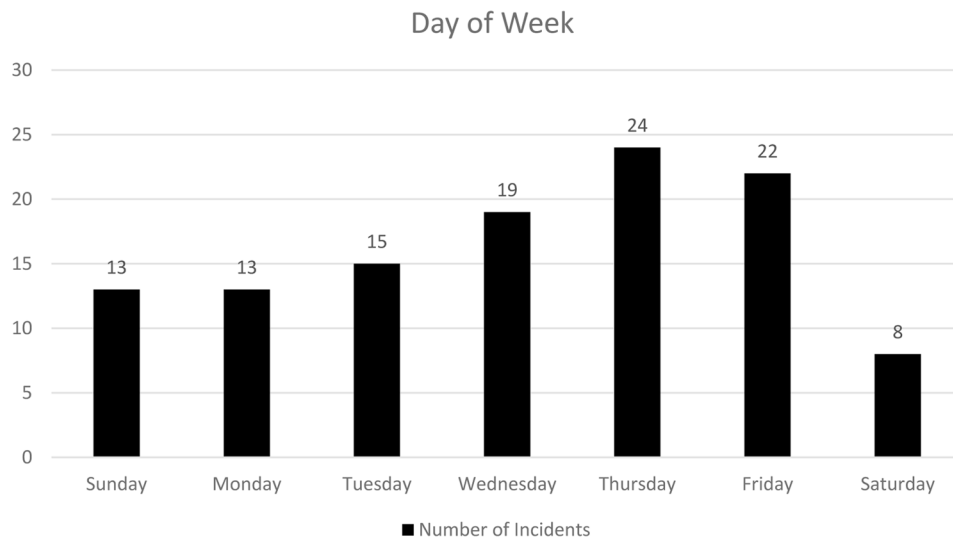


Figure 3.



The shootings documented in this database are almost evenly distributed by month throughout the year. Two months (February and June) had the highest number of incidents at 12, there were two more months (October and November) had eleven (11). All other months varied between seven (7) and nine (9) events.

A list of mass shooting incidents occurring in February is shown in Table 2.

A list of mass shooting incidents occurring in June is shown in Table 3.

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Table 2.

ESL Shooting	Sunnyvale, California	2/16/1988	Former ESL Incorporated employee Richard Farley, 39, gunned down seven people at his former workplace, after stalking and harassing a coworker he was romantically interested in. He was later arrested and now sits on death row at San Quentin.
Fort Lauderdale Revenge Shooting	Fort Lauderdale, Florida	2/9/1996	Fired city park employee Clifton McCree, 41, opened fire on former coworkers he called “racist devils” inside their municipal trailer in an act of revenge after failing a drug test. He then committed suicide.
Navistar Shooting	Melrose Park, Illinois	2/5/2001	Fired employee William D. Baker, 66, opened fire at his former Navistar workplace before committing suicide.
Trolley Square Shooting	Salt Lake City, Utah	2/12/2007	Sulejman Talovi, 18, rampaged through the shopping center until he was shot dead by police.
Kirkwood City Council Shooting	Kirkwood, Missouri	2/7/2008	Charles “Cookie” Lee Thornton, 52, went on a rampage at the city hall before being shot and killed by police.
Northern Illinois University Shooting	DeKalb, Illinois	2/14/2008	Steven Kazmierczak, 27, opened fire in a lecture hall, then shot and killed himself before police arrived.
Su Jung Health Sauna Shooting	Norcross, Georgia	2/21/2012	Jeong Soo Paek, 59, returned to a Korean spa from which he’d been kicked out after an altercation. He gunned down two of his sisters and their husbands before committing suicide.
Alturas Tribal Shooting	Alturas, California	2/20/2014	Cherie Lash Rhoades, 44, opened fire at the Cedarville Rancheria Tribal Office and Community Center, killing four and wounding two. After running out of ammunition, Rhoades grabbed a butcher knife and stabbed another person.
Kalamazoo Shooting Spree	Kalamazoo County, Michigan	2/20/2016	Jason B. Dalton, a driver for Uber, apparently selected his victims randomly as he went on a rampage over several hours in three different locations, including five people he shot in the parking lot of a Cracker Barrel restaurant. He was “arrested without incident” at a downtown Kalamazoo bar about six hours after the rampage began.
Excel Industries Mass Shooting	Hesston, Kansas	2/25/2016	Cedric L. Ford, who worked as a painter at a manufacturing company, shot victims from his car and at his workplace before being killed by police at the scene. Shortly before the rampage he had been served with a restraining order.
Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Shooting	Parkland, FL	2/14/2018	Nikolas J. Cruz, 19, heavily armed with an AR-15, tactical gear, and countless magazines of ammo, according to the Broward County Sheriff, attacked the high school as classes were ending for the day, killing at least 17 people and injuring many others. He was apprehended by authorities shortly after fleeing the campus.
Harry Pratt Co. Warehouse Shooting	Aurora, IL	2/15/2019	Gary Martin, 45, went on a rampage inside the warehouse in response to being fired from his job and died soon thereafter in a shootout with police. Among his victims were five dead coworkers and five injured police officers. Martin had a felony record and lengthy history of domestic violence; he was able to obtain a gun despite having had his Illinois firearms ownership identification card revoked. According to a report from prosecutors, Martin told a co-worker the morning of the shooting that if he was fired, he was going to kill employees and police.

Day of Week

The day of the week in which these events occur has had the same trend as the month of occurrence. While Thursday (24) has the largest number of documented events, no day during the week had less than eight (8).

As with the month of event, the days were very close in the number of shootings occurring.

Type of Location

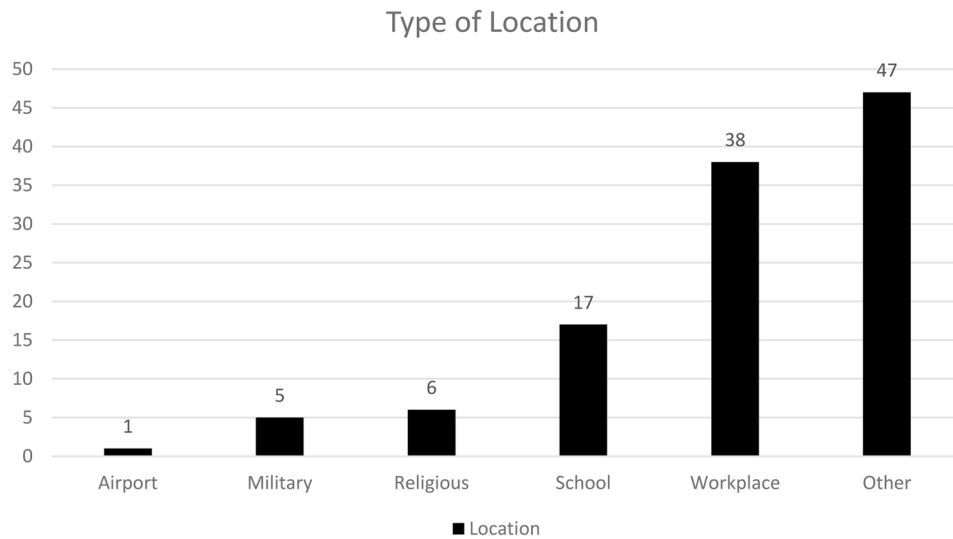
Given that there are so many “types of locations”, it is difficult to categorize many of the events which occur each year. In that 47 of the locations for these events are listed as “other”, there is evidence that this is true. Many such shootings happen on streets, private homes, and other types of businesses. Of those that could be properly categorized, 38 of them occurred in the workplace. It is also frightening that 17 of these incidents occurred in schools.

A list of the “religious” type locations where six (6) incidents occurred is shown in Table 4.

Table 3.

Pennsylvania Supermarket Shooting	Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania	6/7/2017	Randy Stair, a 24-year-old worker at Weis grocery fatally shot three of his fellow employees. He reportedly fired 59 rounds with a pair of shotguns before turning the gun on himself as another co-worker fled the scene for help and law enforcement responded.
Florida Awning Manufacturer Shooting	Orlando, Florida	6/5/2017	John Robert Neumann, Jr., 45, a former employee of manufacturer Fiamma Inc. fatally shot five workers at the company, and then killed himself on the scene. He'd been fired from the company in April. The attack took place a week before the one-year anniversary of the Orlando nightclub massacre.
Charleston Church Shooting	Charleston, South Carolina	6/17/2015	Dylann Storm Roof, 21, shot and killed 9 people after opening fire at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina. According to a roommate, he had allegedly been planning something like that for six months."
Trestle Trail Bridge Shooting	Menasha, Wisconsin	6/11/2015	Sergio Valencia del Toro, 27, in what officials say was a random act, shot and killed three people including an 11-year-old girl before turning the gun on himself.
Atlantis Plastics Shooting	Henderson, Kentucky	6/25/2008	Disgruntled employee Wesley Neal Higdon, 25, shot up an Atlantis Plastics factory after he was escorted out of his workplace for an argument with a supervisor. Higdon shot the supervisor outside the factory before opening fire on coworkers inside. He then committed suicide.
Dallas Nightclub Shooting	Dallas, Texas	6/29/1984	Abdelkrim Belachheb, 39, opened fire at an upscale nightclub after a woman rejected his advances. He was later arrested.
Capital Gazette Shooting	Annapolis, MD	6/28/2018	Jarrod W. Ramos, 38, shot through the glass doors of the paper's newsroom around 3pm to carry out his attack; police quickly responding to the scene found him hiding under a desk and apprehended him. Ramos had harbored a longstanding grudge against the paper over a 2011 column that had detailed his guilty plea for the harassment of a former female classmate. Ramos had sued the paper for defamation and lost.
San Francisco UPS Shooting	San Francisco, CA	6/14/2017	Jimmy Lam, 38, fatally shot three coworkers and wounded two others inside a UPS facility in San Francisco. Lam killed himself as law enforcement officers responded to the scene.
Santa Monica Rampage	Santa Monica, California	6/7/2013	John Zawahri, 23, armed with a homemade assault rifle and high-capacity magazines, killed his brother and father at home and then headed to Santa Monica College, where he was eventually killed by police.
GMAC Massacre	Jacksonville, Florida	6/18/1990	James Edward Pough, 42, opened fire at a General Motors Acceptance Corporation office before committing suicide. (The day prior, Pough killed a pimp and prostitute and injured two others. Those victims are not included in the mass murder count.)
Air Force Base Shooting	Fairchild Air Force Base, Washington	6/20/1994	Former airman Dean Allen Mellberg, 20, opened fire inside a hospital at the Fairchild Air Force Base before he was shot dead by a military police officer outside.
Orlando Nightclub Massacre	Orlando, Florida	6/12/2016	Omar Mateen, 29, attacked the Pulse nightclub in Orlando in the early morning hours of June 12. He was killed by law enforcement who raided the club after a prolonged standoff.

Figure 4.

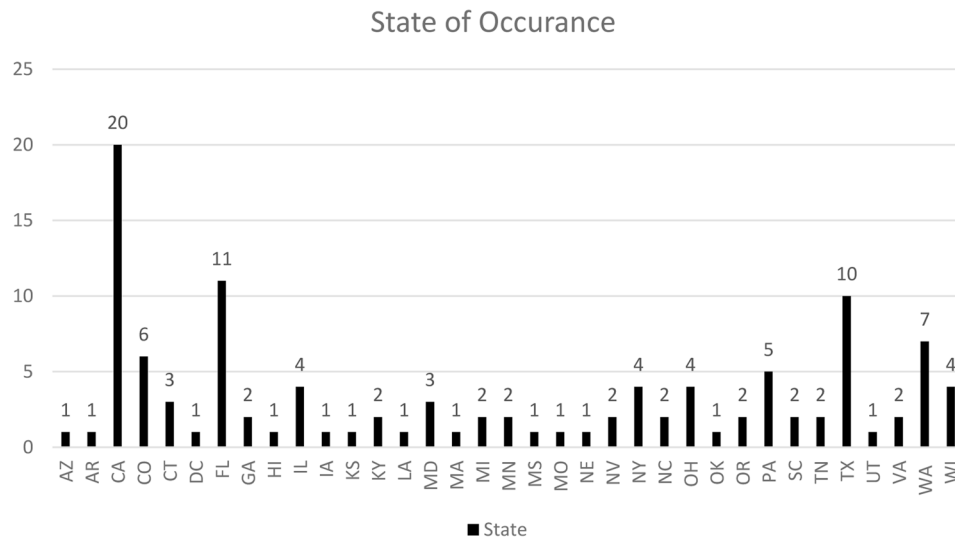


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Table 4.

Wedgwood Baptist Church Shooting	Fort Worth, Texas	9/15/1999	Larry Gene Ashbrook, 47, opened fire inside the Wedgwood Baptist Church during a prayer rally before committing suicide.
Living Church of God Shooting	Brookfield, Wisconsin	3/12/2005	Living Church of God member Terry Michael Ratzmann, 44, opened fire at a church meeting at a Sheraton hotel before committing suicide.
Sikh Temple Shooting	Oak Creek, Wisconsin	8/5/2012	U.S. Army veteran Wade Michael Page, 40, opened fire in a Sikh Gurdwara before he died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound during a shootout with police.
Charleston Church Shooting	Charleston, South Carolina	6/17/2015	Dylann Storm Roof, 21, shot and killed 9 people after opening fire at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina. According to a roommate, he had allegedly been planning something like that for six months.
Texas First Baptist Church Massacre	Sutherland Springs, TX	11/5/2017	Devin Patrick Kelley, a 26-year-old ex-US Air Force airman, opened fire at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs during Sunday morning services, killing at least 26 people and wounding and injuring 20 others. He left the church and fled in his vehicle after engaging in a gunfight with a local citizen; he soon crashed his vehicle and died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.
Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting	Pittsburgh, PA	10/27/2018	Robert D. Bowers, 46, shouted anti-Semitic slurs as he opened fire inside the Tree of Life synagogue during Saturday morning worship. He was armed with an assault rifle and multiple handguns and was apprehended after a standoff with police. His social media accounts contained virulent anti-Semitic content, and references to migrant caravan "invaders" hyped by President Trump and the Republican party ahead of the 2018 midterms elections.

Figure 5.



State of Occurrence

Thirty-five (35) states, including the District of Columbia, have experienced mass shootings during this time period.

Out of 50 states and District of Columbia, 35 have had at least one documented mass shooting. While it is true the larger states generally had more events, many smaller states had shootings as well.

Type: Mass vs Spree Shooting

As of mid-2019, there is still no standard definition of what constitutes a “mass shooting”. Generally, a mass shooting is an incident involving multiple victims (3-4+) of firearm-related violence. This defini-

Figure 6.

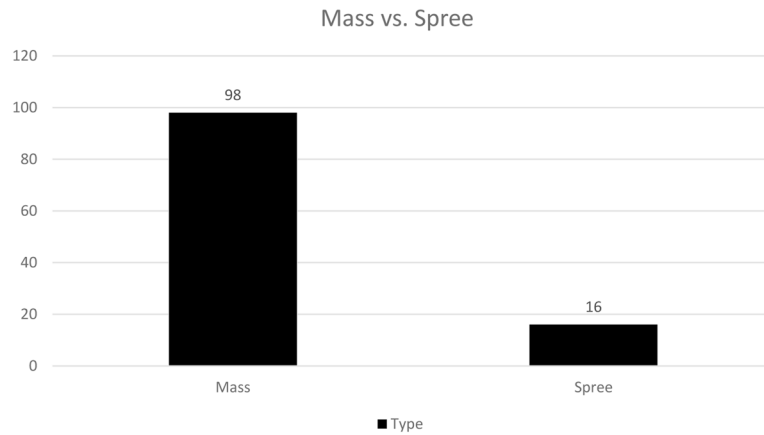
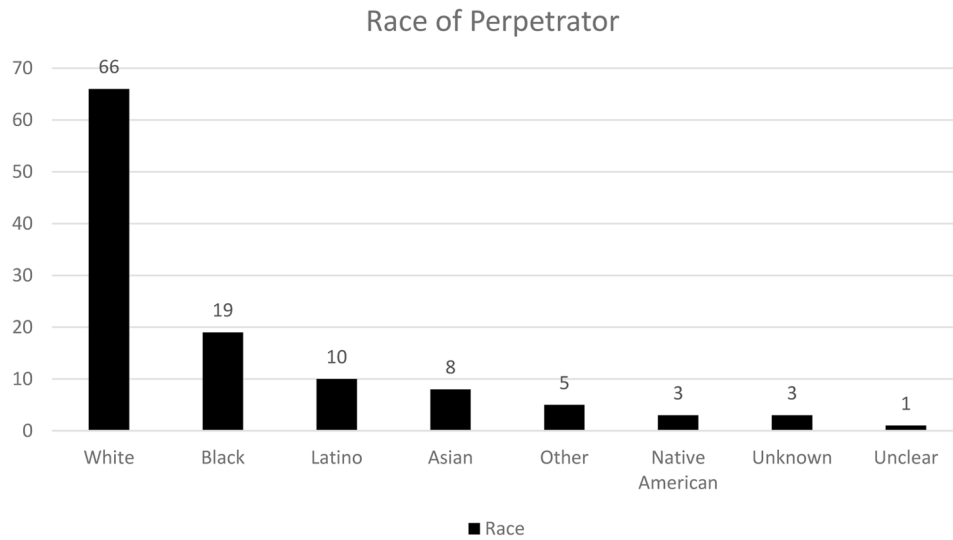


Figure 7.



tion also excludes mass killings as a result of terrorist, authorized law enforcement or military actions. A commonly used definition is one by the *United States’ Congressional Research Service* which defines a “public mass shooting” as an event where someone selects four or more people and kills them in an indiscriminate manner. This is very similar to the *U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations* which defines mass murder as murdering four or more people during an event with no “cooling-off period” between the murders. Thus, a mass murder typically occurs in a single location where one or more people kill several others.

On the other hand, a “spree killer” is someone who kills two or more victims in a short time, in multiple locations. The *U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics* (Fox and Levin, 2015) defines a spree killing as “killings at two or more locations with almost no time break between murders”.

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Given the lack of a standard definition and the similarities between existing definitions, this report found that the vast majority of these shootings were mass shootings (98).

Perpetrator

The second section of the *Mother Jones*' report examines some very basic characteristics of the perpetrators. This section involves the race, gender, and age of the perpetrators.

Race

Sparking a great deal of debate is the fact that the vast majority of shooters are White. Furthermore, the types of acts committed by this vast majority are being considered "domestic terrorism". In that there is no official "charge" for "domestic terrorism", many feel as if the United States' government is not taking this threat seriously.

Gender

As with many other types of violence, mass shootings are dominated by male perpetrators. Out of 114 documented events, only 4 involved a female offender.

A list of the mass shootings involving only female perpetrators is shown in Table 5.

Age of Shooter

Another area of mass shooter demographic documented was that of age. In this database, the youngest shooter was 11 and the oldest was 66 years of age.

The age group with the highest number of shooters was the 21 to 29 (34) years of age. But the age groups of 30 to 39 (23) and 40 to 49 (30) were very close.

A list of the six (6) shootings where the perpetrator was 17 and below is shown in Table 6.

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Another section of the database examines basic question about the mental health status of the perpetrators. The question posed was whether there had been prior signs of mental health issues for each perpetrator.

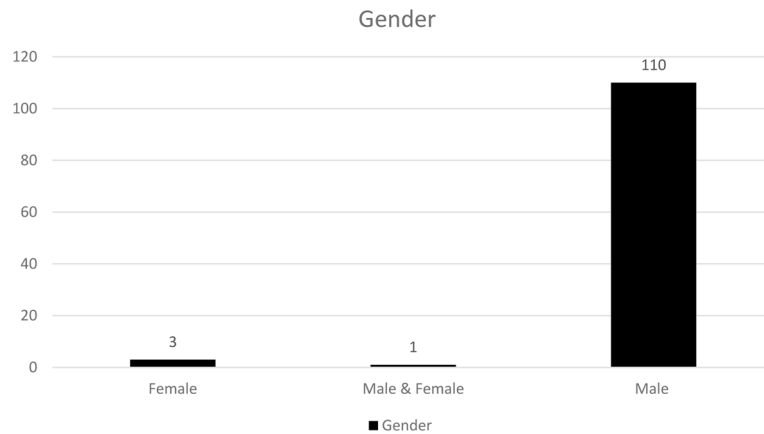
Table 5.

Goleta Postal Shootings	Goleta, California	1/30/2006	Former postal worker Jennifer Sanmarco, 44, shot dead a former neighbor then drove to the mail processing plant where she used to work. Inside, she opened fire, killing six employees before committing suicide.
Alturas Tribal Shooting	Alturas, California	2/20/2014	Cherie Lash Rhoades, 44, opened fire at the Cedarville Rancheria Tribal Office and Community Center, killing four and wounding two. After running out of ammunition, Rhoades grabbed a butcher knife and stabbed another person.
Rite Aid Warehouse Shooting	Perryman, MD	9/20/2018	Snochia Moseley, 26, reportedly a disgruntled employee, shot her victims outside the building and on the warehouse floor; she later died from a self-inflicted gunshot at a nearby hospital. (No law enforcement officers responding to her attack fired shots.)

Table 6.

Santa Fe High School Shooting	Santa Fe, TX	5/18/2018	Dimitrios Pagourtzis, a 17-year-old student, opened fire at Santa Fe High School with a shotgun and .38 revolver owned by his father; Pagourtzis killed 10 and injured at least 13 others before surrendering to authorities after a standoff and additional gunfire inside the school. (Pagourtzis reportedly had intended to commit suicide.) Investigators also found undetonated explosive devices in the vicinity. (FURTHER DETAILS PENDING.)
Marysville-Pilchuck High School Shooting	Marysville, Washington	10/24/2014	Jaylen Fryberg, 15, using a .40-caliber Berretta, shot five students at Marysville High School, including two of his cousins and three friends, killing all but one.
Red Lake Massacre	Red Lake, Minnesota	3/21/2005	Jeffrey Weise, 16, murdered his grandfather, who was a police officer, and grandfather's girlfriend. Weise then drove his grandfather's squad car to Red Lake Senior High School and opened fire on the reservation campus, killing another seven people before committing suicide.
Columbine High School Massacre	Littleton, Colorado	4/20/1999	Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, opened fire throughout Columbine High School before committing suicide.
Thurston High School Shooting	Springfield, Oregon	5/21/1998	After he was expelled for having a gun in his locker, Kipland P. Kinkel, 15, a freshman at Thurston High, went on a shooting spree, killing his parents at home and two students at school. Five classmates wrestled Kipland to the ground before he was arrested.
Westside Middle School Killings	Jonesboro, Arkansas	3/24/1998	Mitchell Scott Johnson, 13, and Andrew Douglas Golden, 11, two juveniles, ambushed students and teachers as they left the school; they were apprehended by police at the scene.

Figure 8.



Prior Signs Mental Health Issues

This is a section which is very hard to accurately determine. As with many issues in the topic of mass shootings, there is no set standard to define “prior signs of mental health issues.” This could be mean anything from irrational behavior observed by one’s family and friends to actual lengthy commitment to a mental health facility. In reality, this probably falls somewhere in between.

These numbers are probably the result of the difficulty in determining the past mental health status of an individual. Fifty-nine (59) had clear indications of prior mental health issues, but it was unclear or unknown for thirty-five (35).

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Figure 9.

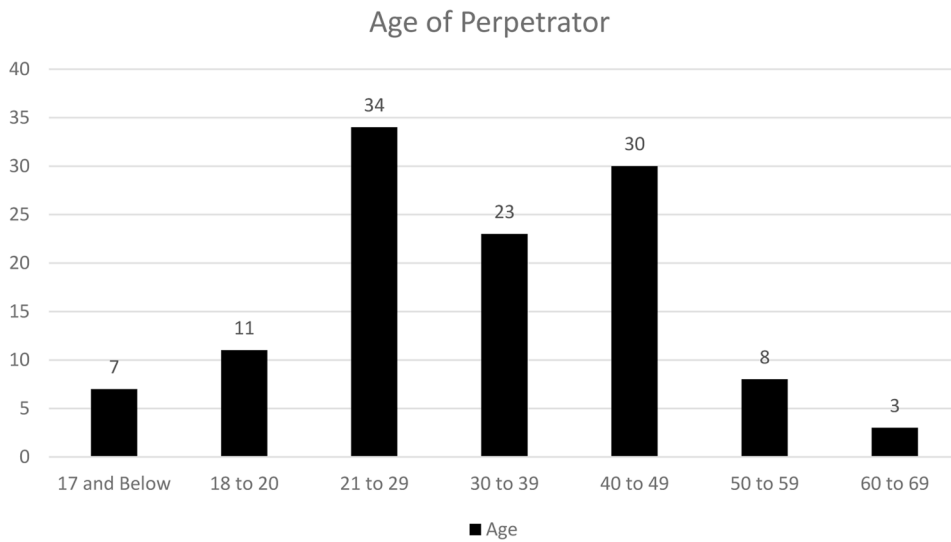
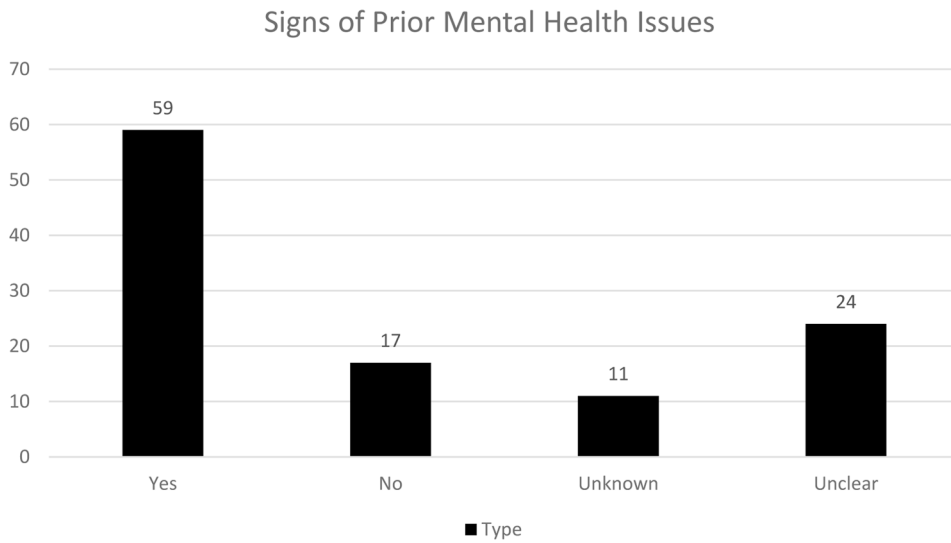


Figure 10.



WEAPONS USED

The next to last section of the database deals with the weapons used. There is information on the weapon type and whether they were obtained legally.

Figure 11.

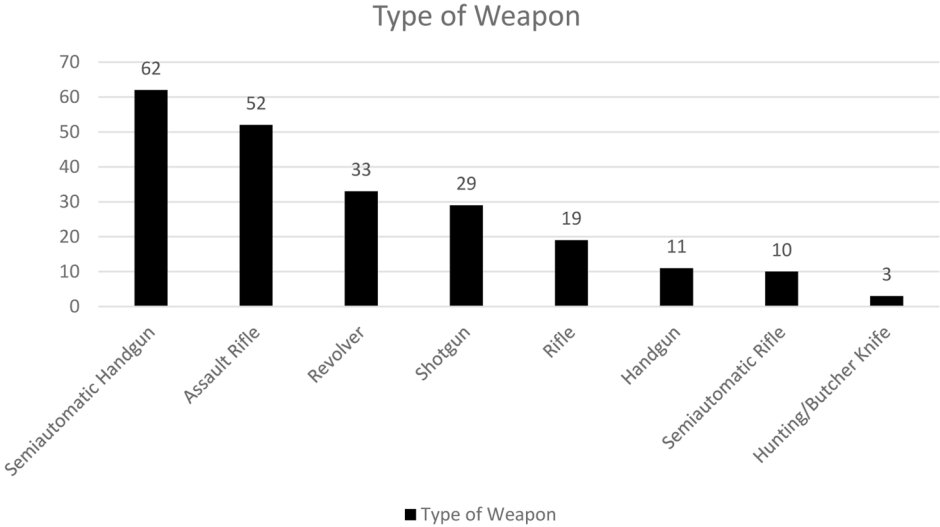
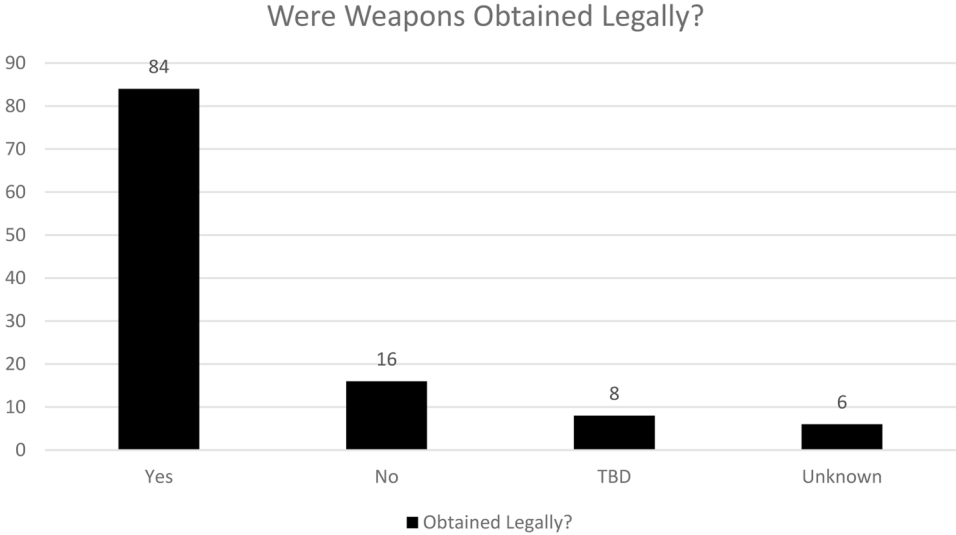


Figure 12.



Weapon Type

Many mass shooting perpetrators possess multiple types of weapons during their violence. The majority of the documented events documented in this database involved the use of a semi-automatic handgun (62). A very close secondary use of weapons involved assault rifles.

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Figure 13.

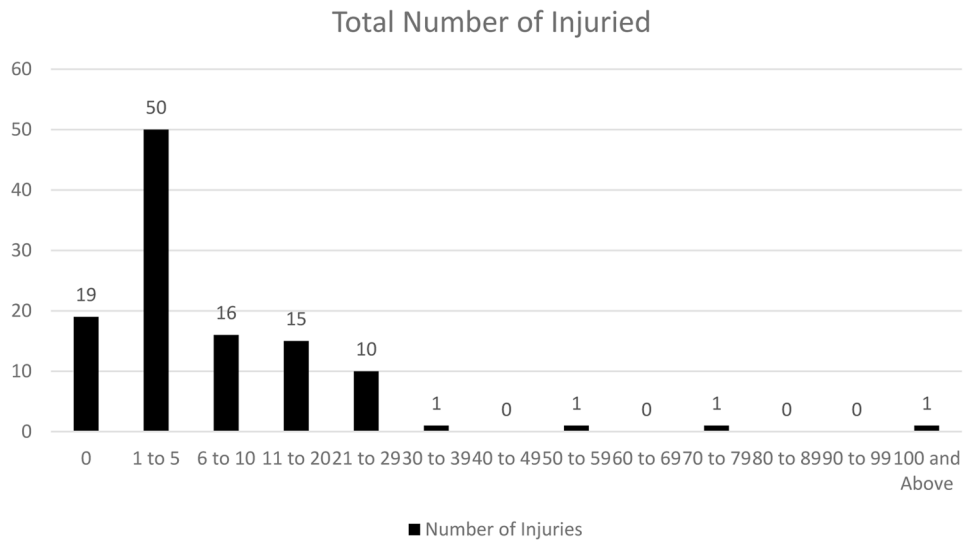
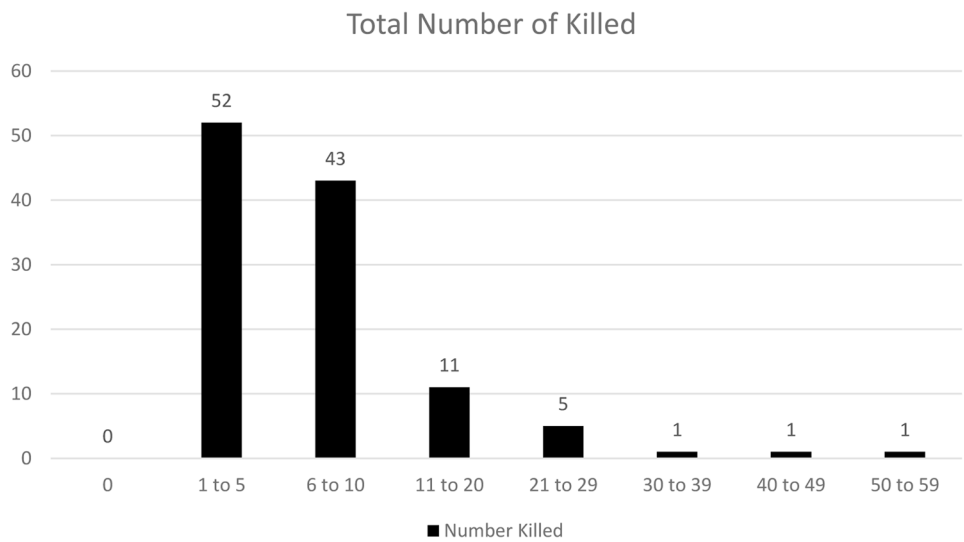


Figure 14.



Weapons Obtained Legally

As one would expect in the United States, most weapons used in mass shootings have been obtained legally. In this sample, 84 incidents out of 114 involved weapons which the perpetrator(s) were in legal possession of and had obtained legally.

INJURIES AND FATALITIES

The final section of the database examines the injuries and fatalities involved in these documented shootings.

Injured

The number of injuries incurred during these documented shootings ranged from zero (0) to over 100, actually 546. Almost half (50) of the documented mass shooting resulted in between 1 and 5 injured.

The top 3 shootings with the highest number of injuries is shown in Table 7.

Fatalities

It appears that as the number of mass shootings increase, the number of fatalities increase. Between 1982 and 2019, a total of 114 people has died due to mass shootings.

The majority of the events (52) had between 1 and 5 killed, but a very close second was 43 events where 6 to 10 were killed.

The top 3 shootings with the highest number of fatalities is shown in Table 8.

Table 7.

Las Vegas Strip Massacre	Las Vegas, NV	10/1/2017	Stephen Craig Paddock, 64, fired a barrage of rapid gunfire using semiautomatic rifles modified with “bump stocks” down on thousands of concertgoers on the Las Vegas Strip late on a Sunday night; Paddock had positioned himself in a corner suite on the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, where he took aim from broken out windows. Shortly after the attack began, police responding found Paddock inside the hotel suite, deceased from a self-inflicted gunshot.	546
Aurora Theater Shooting	Aurora, Colorado	7/20/2012	James Holmes, 24, opened fire in a movie theater during the opening night of “The Dark Night Rises” and was later arrested outside.	70
Orlando Nightclub Massacre	Orlando, Florida	6/12/2016	Omar Mateen, 29, attacked the Pulse nightclub in Orlando in the early morning hours of June 12. He was killed by law enforcement who raided the club after a prolonged standoff.	53

Table 8.

Las Vegas Strip Massacre	Las Vegas, NV	10/1/2017	Stephen Craig Paddock, 64, fired a barrage of rapid gunfire “using semiautomatic rifles modified with “bump stocks” down on thousands of concertgoers on the Las Vegas Strip late on a Sunday night; Paddock had positioned himself in a corner suite on the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, where he took aim from broken out windows. Shortly after the attack began, police responding found Paddock inside the hotel suite, deceased from a self-inflicted gunshot.	58
Orlando Nightclub Massacre	Orlando, Florida	6/12/2016	Omar Mateen, 29, attacked the Pulse nightclub in Orlando in the early morning hours of June 12. He was killed by law enforcement who raided the club after a prolonged standoff.	49
Virginia Tech Massacre	Blacksburg, Virginia	4/16/2007	Virginia Tech student Seung-Hui Cho, 23, opened fire on his school’s campus before committing suicide.	32

CONCLUSION

In closing, while the actual number of mass shootings and what constitutes one is up for debate, it is obvious they are drastically increasing. The number of incidents is increasing, the number of injured is increasing, and the number of those killed is increasing – each year.

With each incident, the debate about gun-control, background checks, and access to mental health services, increases, yet then seems to quickly fade. Many would agree that with the rolling 24/7-hour news coverage in the United States that acts of massive violence receive immediate coverage for a few days after their occurrence, but the media then moves to the next story.

After each shooting there seems to be the same sequence of events. First there is extensive media coverage where outlets attempt to one-up each other on being the first to release some “new information”. Then there is the line up of public officials who express their “condolences” followed quickly by calls for legislative action. Meanwhile, those who keep track of mass shootings will be updating their list of shootings and will begin comparing the most recent shooting to the one which occurred just prior.

Ultimately the result will be nothing new happens except the new trend of copy-cat shooters will emerge. A current example of this is the El Paso, Texas mass shooting with happened at a Walmart on August 3, 2019 where 22 people died. Within a 10-day period following this shooting there were 2 additional potential mass shootings at an American Walmart which were stopped by fellow shoppers.

Sadly, all of these mass shootings have become the brunt of a sarcastic joke about those who do not really care but want to *appear as if they do*, as sending their “thoughts and prayers” to those affected.

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