The Sandy Hook Effect

Preventing Highly Improbable Mass Murders like that at Sandy Hook Elementary School Is Impossible, but There Are Things We Can Do to Decrease Violence

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![Figure 1. Mass Shootings in the United States, 1980-2010, tracking incidents, offenders, and victims. In any given year the number of each bounces around wildly, but the overall averages come out to around 20 mass murders and 100 victims per annum.]

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In a first-grade classroom who, after narrowly escaping death, perhaps best captured by the sole survivor who owned at least a dozen firearms and taught her children about the power to prevent such an event happening in the future.

Murder v. Mass Murder

In this context I shall refer to them as high profile, improbable, rare and extraordinary events. "On average, nonstate societies kill around ten, fifty, and in some cases a hundred—full-scale wars, genocides, that brings the death toll up to a million people who lived, or 0.7%. Even if we include wars who lived, or 0.7% of the population, from 110 homicides per 100,000 people per annum in mid-20th-century London."

To give just a snapshot of the evidence to support the claim that such reactions are emotionally underpredictable, we can build a science-based rational response to mass shootings. As for wars, prehistoric peoples were far more murderous than states in percentages of homocide rates per 100,000 per year from 1950 onwards. Pertinent to current events, however, we cannot and never will be able to predict or prevent them entirely; and (2) even though we cannot predict these events, we can build a science-based rational response to them.

Figure 2. Homicide rates per 100,000 people per annum in five Western European regions, 1300-2000.

Figure 3. Homicide rates per 100,000 people per annum in Nonstate societies v. Western Europe, 1300-2000.

Figure 4. Homicide rates per 100,000 per year in the United States. Note the dramatic decline in homicides during the assault weapons ban starting in 1994, but also note the leveling off of homicides in the last half of the 10-year ban and the dramatic drop after the ban was lifted.
On December 14, 2012, 20-year old Adam Lanza sprayed a first-grade classroom who, after narrowly escaping, perhaps best captured by the sole survivor then himself—after first killing his mother Nancy.

The Sandy Hook event happening somewhere sometime.

Prehistoric archaeological sites

Hunter-gatherers

Hunter-horticulturalists & other tribal groups

States

Figure 5. Percentage of deaths in warfare for prehistoric peoples v. modern hunter-gatherers v. hunter-horticulturalists and other tribal groups v. modern states.