



10-13-2015

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Charles, Beau K., "Backed by a Bullet" (2015). *SURGE*. 205.
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Abstract

Northern Arizona University and Texas Southern University's school shootings popped up on my newsfeed.

[*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, school shootings, black victimization, mass shooter psychology, gun access

Disciplines

African American Studies | Defense and Security Studies | Mental and Social Health | Psychology | Race and Ethnicity | Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies | Social Control, Law, Crime, and Deviance | Sociology of Culture

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](#) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that –isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

BACKED BY A BULLET

October 13, 2015

Northern Arizona University and Texas Southern University's school shootings popped up on my newsfeed.



"We had two more school shootings today," I text to my friend in Canada.

"What the literal fuck," she responds.

We say no more. I don't bother to read the articles. That's 4 school shootings within a week. [Nothing new can be said](#). There's no new narrative, no suddenly revealed reason for these tragedies. There's only excuses and misdirection. There's the tendency [to blame mental illness](#) and there's the humanization of [white murderers](#), a problem in its own, but even more so when coupled with the dehumanization and criminalization of [Black victims](#). (I mean, let's be real, the Charleston shooter [got a whopper](#) on the way to jail. [The guy killed Rev. Clementa Pinckney](#), a South Carolina state senator. But how many of us were told he shot and killed an elected government official? That got swept under the rug.)

There's a buzz and then there's nothing.

Following the Oregon shooting, the Gettysburg College community received an email informing us that the FBI is on high alert for the area and that our campus will have heightened security in light of a generalized threat made to schools in the Philadelphia area. Are we conscious of the insanity of the situation? Schools used to be the safest place, and now my non-American friends send me worried texts advising me to skip class. To stay low.

When Sandy Hook happened my senior year of high school, my U.S. Government teacher walked in a shaken man, declaring that "this country has gone to hell." Fuck if that wasn't just the first circle. It's more than the *school* shootings that followed – [149 since December 14th, 2013](#), averaging at one a week — that push this country deeper into tragedy; it's the inaction that follows, not just from our lawmakers, but from our collective citizenship.

How many lives will be ended, how many bonds of love will be broken, how many communities will be traumatized before the dramatic change this country needs to happen actually happens? We need more than projections and musings, we need completion. No other 'developed' nation has this predicament. Literally, [none](#). They have all employed basic tactics to prevent widespread gun violence, such as strict gun laws and [buy-back programs](#). [Logic would suggest](#) that decreasing access to guns would make it a *bit* harder to unload cartridges into your classmates.

If we want change in the form of stricter gun laws, we need to have as much energy as the [extremist NRA](#), which has members show up [locked and loaded to greet the president at memorials of shooting victims](#) and has millions of dollars of [lobbying power](#) to maintain the Guns!Guns!Guns! status quo. [This fight isn't new](#). The only thing new is my increasing fear and paranoia as a student on a campus and as an American citizen. [It's too easy to buy the weapons that kill us](#).

Obama [recently passed a law](#) that states that the media can't name shooters. It's a small step in the right direction: denying shooters immortalization and notoriety reduces the [celebrity culture](#) of murderers. If you consider the shooters as a demographic, the repetition of young white males [becomes alarmingly apparent](#): what in our culture cultivates this [behavior](#)?

But that too has been explored. Material exists in zounds regarding [mass shooter psychology](#) and motivation, in [gun access](#) and gun violence correlation, in media portrayals and copycat crime. I have done the reading. I am ready to act. We call ourselves Bullets. Who better than the students of Gettysburg College to answer a call to arms to mobilize against gun violence and unregulated gun control?

I have a strategy to unite this campus in a movement for a safer country. I will be hosting a talk on October 23rd at 6pm, with the support of various departments, on the issue of gun control, access, and violence, and how it relates to us as college students and American citizens. Please RSVP to the discussion by October 18th to charam02@gettysburg.edu (location to be determined). For more information, for updates on future events, or for support and consideration, don't hesitate to email me. I'll be creating a network and an alias. This is for ALL readers, not just members of the Gettysburg College community.

This is only the beginning. I don't believe in failure or no-win scenarios. Fight and win or fight and go down swinging.

Beau Charles '17
Staff Editor