

Gunman shoots 4, killing 2, in Seattle

by Daniel Vasquez and Brandon Bailey
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SEATTLE — A man in camouflage gear walks into a shipyard office and shoots four people, killing two, the day after a disgruntled employee blows away seven co-workers at a Xerox repair facility in Honolulu.

Seattle police were still hunting for the shipyard gunman Wednesday night. His motive was unknown. And despite a spate of similar incidents around the country this year, experts say they are still the rare exception to an overall decline in violent crime nationwide.

But even as the homicide rate is dropping, some analysts believe there has been an uptick in the category of seemingly random mass shootings. Experts also say there are common threads to these terrifying episodes — and perhaps even lessons that can prevent them from occurring again. "It's not that these guys are spontaneous. They don't suddenly explode," said criminologist Jack Levin, director of the Brudnick Center on Violence at Boston's Northeastern University. "The truth is these are usually cold-blooded executions. The killer typically sees himself as a victim of injustice who wants to get even."

By late Wednesday, authorities still hadn't identified the Seattle gunman, believed to be in his 20s or 30s, who walked into a weathered three-story building on the north shore of Lake Union around 10:30 a.m.

Witnesses said the man wore a baseball cap, sunglasses and an overcoat over camouflage clothing. He didn't say anything as he shot four men with a 9mm handgun — and then walked away. Police were using dogs, helicopters, boats and armored vehicles to search the gritty industrial and residential neighborhoods near the Northlake Shipyard building — just a few miles from downtown Seattle. Public schools in the area were locked down, as city officials advised residents to stay inside and be careful.

Larry Parrett, 44, left work to check his house, five blocks from the shipyard. "I came home to check for broken windows or anything suspicious," he said. "My girlfriend wanted me to stop by because she was afraid to come home" while the shooter was still at large. Peter Giles, the shipyard's 26-year-old manager and nephew of the owners, was pronounced dead at the scene. Russell James Brisendine, a 43-year-old marine engineer, died in surgery after being shot three times in the chest and abdomen. A third victim was in critical condition with a gunshot wound

to the chest, while a fourth was treated for a gunshot wound to the arm.

"This happened to some pretty nice guys," said Mark Jackson, who rents space in the shipyard building for his industrial painting company. He said the shootings came "totally out of the blue. I can't imagine two people in an office can create enough anger in anybody to get shot."

The shootings here came one day after a disgruntled Xerox technician

been accumulating frustrations and feelings of alienation for years.

"We have this false belief that these guys suddenly snap or go berserk," said James Alan Fox, former dean of Northeastern University's College of Criminal Justice. "It takes more than a single episode to get to the point that you're that angry, that depressed, that you're willing to take the lives of other people — and sometimes your own life."

people to react to it. For people who are right at the edge, a variety of things are enough to push them over."

Another factor that makes today's mass shootings seem worse than ever is the high casualty rate inflicted by the greater firepower some gunmen have brought to bear, Blumstein said. The typical shooter has had access to semi-automatic or automatic weapons that fire rapidly and come with magazines large enough to carry numerous rounds.

But even while acknowledging a statistical increase in random mass shootings — as opposed to those involving robbery or attacks on family members — Blumstein argues that these are more isolated episodes than part of a larger societal problem. Fox, the former Northeastern dean, agreed. If there's been a numerical increase, he said, it's not a strong statistical trend.

"You can't presume that just because we've had several in a cluster, that we're going to hell in a handbasket," Fox added. "We have more today than we did 30 years ago, but we're not in an epidemic."

Still, other experts say there are enough similarities for society to confront the issues that may fuel such violence.

Employers need to be more compassionate in their handling of workers, particularly those who are troubled or facing termination, said Robert Baron, a professor of management and psychology at Rensselaer Polytechnic University who has studied workplace violence extensively.

Studies have found many workers feel threatened by the increasing pace of change in their jobs, along with the decline in longterm job security, Baron said. On a broader level, Levin said those who tend toward violence often feel alienated from their communities and distrustful of institutions that are supposed to resolve problems peacefully — such as the courts and social service agencies.

"We have to find ways of repairing the credibility of our mainstream institutions," Levin said. As an example, he suggested that both business and government agencies bring back human telephone operators — instead of bewildering voicemail systems — so customers can feel that someone actually cares about their complaints. When people who are already on the margin begin to feel that no one cares about their problems, Levin added, some will turn to more extreme measures to find relief.



PHOTO BY STEVE RINGMAN KRT

Paramedics unload a victim of the Gasworks Park Office building shooting at Harborview Medical center in Seattle, Wash. Two men were killed and two injured Wednesday when a gunman in camouflage gear walked into a Seattle shipyard office and opened fire in the second U.S. workplace shooting in two days.

calmly killed seven people at his workplace in Honolulu — the worst mass murder in Hawaii's modern history. Byran Uyesugi, 40, later surrendered to police. Xerox officials say Uyesugi wasn't having any problems at work. But family members said Uyesugi, a 15-year employee of the company, had been ordered to attend anger management sessions after he threatened a supervisor in 1993. Relatives also reportedly said Uyesugi was concerned he might be getting laid off.

Workplace violence of all kinds has risen in recent years, according to federal statistics, and Levin said that's especially so for violence against supervisors or managers. "The number of bosses or supervisors killed by disgruntled workers or ex-workers has doubled over the past decade," Levin said. In the Seattle case, witnesses said they didn't recognize the shooter as an employee. He could turn out to be a jealous lover, an angry customer or even a sloppy hold-up man. But when robbery or some other crime isn't involved, experts say the typical mass-killer is often a middle-aged man who's

Like Mark Barton, the Atlanta day-trader who killed nine people and himself last July, or Buford Furrow, the former Aryan Nations security guard who killed a postal worker and shot up a Jewish community center in Los Angeles last August. Experts say that such men often blame others for their problems. And sometimes they're inspired by news reports or even fictional accounts of similar events elsewhere. In one of the worst mass shootings of the decade, George Hennard killed 23 people at a Luby's cafeteria in Killeen, Texas, in 1991. Afterward, according to Levin, police went to his home and found he'd been watching a videotaped account of an earlier mass shooting at a McDonald's in San Ysidro, south of San Diego. "There can be a copy cat effect," agreed Alfred Blumstein, director of the National Consortium on Violence Research at Carnegie Mellon University.

"The great majority of people who are exposed to violence in the media just don't react to it in any serious matter," he added. "But it only takes a few

Flight recorders and humans work hand in hand in crash probe

by Don Phillips
The Washington Post

NEWPORT, R.I. — Most people call them "black boxes," but aircraft flight data recorders and cockpit voice recorders should be called magic boxes.

The two boxes from EgyptAir Flight 990, pinpointed Friday on the bottom of the Atlantic by the USS Grapple, may allow investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board to quickly learn the cause of a crash that so far remains a mystery. And the faster they know why 217 people died, the faster they can prevent a similar crash.

If Flight 990's voice and data recorders contain usable information, investigators will know far more than just what the pilots said and did. They will know the pilots' emotional state, whether the plane responded as the pilots intended, and even whether or not the plane was hit by an explosion, and exactly what explosive was involved.

Safety board investigators are often called "tin kickers," and it is true that an experienced investigator can often walk through a field of shredded metal and broken bodies and read it like a book.

But as new-generation airliners begin to dominate aviation, crash investigation has gone digital, creating new opportunities to delve into a plane's secrets. Many computer chips in the cockpit and the engines have "nonvolatile memory" that can be deciphered after a crash.

But the plane's cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder are the mother lode.

For most of the history of commercial aviation, recorders were relatively unsophisticated. Voice recorders were hardly more than tape recorders, and data recorders ranged from rolls of tin foil to analog instruments capable of recording only a small number of parameters such as airspeed and altitude.

Following the crash of USAir Flight 427 at Pittsburgh on Sept. 8, 1994, safety board Chairman Jim Hall began a crusade to force airlines — as the Federal Aviation Administration has since ordered — to upgrade flight data recorders because the Boeing 737's recorder had only 11 parameters and was of limited value.

The EgyptAir flight data recorder, by contrast, contains 74 measurements of airplane movements, control surface movements, control positions, altitude, aircraft speed, outside wind speed, engine operation and warning system activation. The cockpit voice recorder contains the last 30 minutes of cockpit sounds.

They are the most protected piece of any jetliner. Modern recorders are no larger than a thick disk that easily fits in the palm of the hand. They are encased in plastic and surrounded by electronic equipment that also serves as a buffer for the internal disk and are packed into an orange-colored container that can withstand crash forces and fires. The orange box "is basically a dust cover," said one investigator.

Crash investigation is replete with examples of crashes solved by flight and voice recorders, sometimes by only one sound, one phrase or one electronic clue.

On May 26, 1991, a Lauda Air Boeing 767 suddenly dived into the jungles of Thailand, crashing with such force that even the well-protected flight data recorder was destroyed. But the cockpit voice recorder survived.

On the voice recorder, just at the end, one pilot of the Austrian airliner said "thrust reverser" in German. That gave the tin kickers the clue about where to concentrate their attention in the shredded wreckage of the first Boeing 767 to crash. The thrust reverser, a form of engine brake, had deployed in flight, setting up air currents that destroyed the lift on one wing and sent the plane flipping into a dive.

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On Feb. 6, 1996, a Birgen Air Boeing 757, carrying German tourists, took off from the Dominican Republic. Within minutes, the pilots seemed to lose touch with reality and, in confusion, dived into 7,600 feet of sea water.

Recovery of the plane and bodies was not possible at that depth, but a remotely operated submarine retrieved the recorders. The plane fell for a simple reason: a blockage in the plane's pitot tube, a small probe that helps determine the plane's airspeed.

The plugged pitot tube fed confusing readings to the plane's instruments, leaving the crew disoriented over the dark ocean.

The value of the information from a flight data recorder is obvious. But the value of the cockpit voice recorder goes far beyond a mere recording of pilot voices.

A voice recorder gathers information from four microphones, one next to each pilot, one in the instrument console and an "area mike" that gathers sound overall.

The console mike is sensitive to vibration in the plane's airframe, and since vibration travels through the airframe faster than sound will arrive at the other mikes, it is possible to pinpoint some loud sound — such as an explosion — by measuring the minuscule time difference between sound and vibration.

Explosives leave distinctive sound patterns, allowing the safety board laboratory staff to determine whether dynamite, plastic explosive or something else was used.

The final sound on the cockpit voice recorder of Trans World Airlines Flight 800 in 1996 initially stumped investigators because it fit no known explosive. Further work determined it was more characteristic of the explosion of a fuel-air mixture. The cause of the Boeing 747's breakup was a fuel tank explosion.

Another mystery was the sound of two "thumps" on the voice recorder of USAir Flight 427 just as it rolled and dived into a hillside near Pittsburgh. Investigators knew that the plane ran into turbulent air in the wake of a plane flying four miles ahead, but that didn't necessarily explain two thumps.

But when the safety board's recorder expert, James Cash, rode a test flight to determine the effect of such wakes on a Boeing 737, he heard the distinctive two thumps as the plane hit the wake at a certain angle.

Another field of cockpit voice recorder research is to determine the emotional state of the crew and its performance. Pilots often speak in a deliberate monotone, but they are still subject to stress and fear.

In the USAir 427 crash, investigators used speech characteristics to gauge the crew's stress level, a technique pioneered by Russian aviation authorities, to estimate the force being applied by the crew to controls.

Sometimes voice and data recorders together can solve a mystery. In the May 1996 ValuJet onboard fire and crash into the Everglades, a loud bang from the cargo hold was caught on the voice recorder but was not readily identifiable.

At exactly the same moment on the flight data recorder, the plane appeared to rapidly gain several dozen feet in altitude and just as rapidly descend while sharply speeding up and then sharply slowing down, something physically impossible.

The answer? A tire in the cargo hold had overheated in the fire and exploded. It created a brief pressure surge inside the airplane, affecting the altimeter and airspeed indicators.

Voice and data recorders are only one part of a crash investigation. The safety board's laboratory also performs metallurgical and other tests, and nothing has replaced the tin kicker for interviewing witnesses, collecting samples, studying damage patterns, reviewing maintenance records or making the final judgment of why people died.

The Microsoft decision

The Washington Post

It's hard to imagine how the findings of fact handed down Friday evening by U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson could have been worse news for Microsoft or better news for the government's antitrust enforcers. Judge Jackson declared that Microsoft possessed monopoly power in the market for Intel-based personal computer operating systems, and that the company had leveraged this power in ways that harmed competitors and, more important, consumers.

While Friday's ruling did not attempt to apply any legal standards to the facts, the conduct Judge Jackson contends now has been proven by the government to, by any reasonable standard, constitute violations of the

antitrust laws.

Judge Jackson's ruling seems to us, in the main, a reasonable reading of the evidence — if one that is sometimes too strident and ungenerous to Microsoft. Indeed, when the record of the case is aptly summarized, it is hard to escape the conclusion that Microsoft's dominant position is threatening to the health of competition in the software industry.

Judge Jackson's opinion outlines, first, the evidence that the company controls an operating system monopoly — chiefly that it can set prices without reference to competitors and that other operating systems control insignificant market share. This monopoly, the judge held, is protected by the number of applications that have been developed for the Windows platform and the inability of any pu-

tative competitor to succeed in the market without a similar, pre-existing base of applications.

Judge Jackson then proceeded to detail the manner in which that monopoly was employed by Microsoft to stifle perceived threats to the company's dominance. This conduct included efforts to persuade Netscape not to compete for the browser market on Windows. And, the judge concluded that when that effort failed, Microsoft sought to force other companies to support Microsoft's Internet Explorer browsing software — rather than Netscape's — as a condition of cooperation from Microsoft that its operating system monopoly make essential for so many companies. Significantly, Judge Jackson found that Microsoft's browser and operating system were distinct products, inte-

grated for the purposes of squelching competitive threats despite the fact that the integration harmed consumers.

He also concluded that Microsoft attacked other companies' innovations when it regarded them as potential competitors to Windows as platforms for software development.

Judge Jackson's opinion should send a strong message to the company that it would do well to settle this litigation. The district judge who sits through a long trial is entitled to substantial deference on factual findings. In light of the strength of Judge Jackson's factual findings, that fact alone should jolt the company's resistance to discussing the sort of accommodations that would end the case.

Killer of gay student avoids death penalty

TMS Campus
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The 22-year-old man convicted of killing gay college student Matthew Shepard has avoided the death penalty, prosecutors announced Thursday.

The judge sentenced Aaron McKinney, a roofer and high school

dropout, to two life sentences to be served consecutively. Under Wyoming law, however, he could've gotten the death penalty.

McKinney was convicted of murder Wednesday in the beating of gay college student Matthew Shepard by jurors.

The jury of seven men and five women rejected the more serious

charge of first degree murder, which involves premeditation. Felony murder, or murder committed during a felony crime, carries a possible death penalty. Kidnapping and robbery are felonies.

Shepard was lured last year from a bar, lashed to a fence, bludgeoned in the head with a pistol and left to die on the cold prairie in a case

whose brutality led to demands for hate-crime laws across the country.

The other man arrested, Russell Henderson, 22, pleaded guilty in April to kidnapping and murder and is serving two life sentences.