

# Two

---

## Mass Murder and Spree Murder

### *Two Types of Multicides*

A convicted killer recently paroled from prison in Tennessee has been charged with the murder of six people, including his brother, Cecil Dotson, three other adults, and two children. The police have arrested Jessie Dotson, age 33. The killings, which occurred in Memphis, Tennessee, occurred in February 2008. There is no reason known at this time for the murders. (*Courier-Journal*, March 9, 2008, p. A-3)

A young teenager's boyfriend killed her mother and two brothers, ages 8 and 13. Arraigned on murder charges in Texas were the girl, a juvenile, her 19-year-old boyfriend, Charlie James Wilkinson, and two others on three charges of capital murder. The girl's father was shot five times but survived. The reason for the murders? The parents did not want their daughter dating Wilkinson. (Wolfson, 2008)

### **Introduction**

There is a great deal of misunderstanding about the three types of multi-cide: serial murder, mass murder, and spree murder. This chapter will list the traits and characteristics of these three types of killers, as well as the traits and characteristics of the killings themselves.

Recently, a school shooting occurred in Colorado. Various news outlets erroneously reported the shooting as a spree killing. Last year in Nevada, a man entered a courtroom and killed three people. This, too, was erroneously reported as a spree killing. Both should have been labeled instead as mass murder. The assigned labels by the media have little to do with motivations and anticipated gains in the original effort to label it some type of multicide. Using another example, several decades ago, Charles Starkweather went on a “killing spree” with his girlfriend, Carol Fugate. He started by killing Fugate’s parents and ended his killings 30 days later. His total number of victims was more than three and the time frame was less than 30 days. What were his motivations? What was his anticipated gain? When John Wayne Gacy killed 33 young men in and around Chicago over a period of several years, what were his motivations and what was his anticipated gain? In 1995, when Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, an act that has been termed the deadliest act of terrorism on U.S. soil before 9/11, 168 lives were lost and more than 800 injured. Should we term their act spree murder, mass murder, or serial murder?

In December 2007, a church in Arvada, Colorado, was the target of a mass murderer. Five people were killed. Many more could have been victims had not the volunteer security guard at the church shot and killed the gunman. Also in Colorado, two young men, students at Columbine High School, went on a killing spree at the school, killing 12 students and one teacher before killing themselves. In Kentucky, one man recently died in prison, a suspect in a serial murder case where his victims numbered in the teens. The victims are all dead, leaving one crucial question to be asked: why? Another question is how the victims were selected. There are many other questions to be asked and answered. That is the reason for this chapter: to clarify the differences and similarities among mass, spree, and serial murderers; to examine why these multicides happen; to look at how victims are selected; and to ask and answer other questions.

## **Definitions, Traits, and Characteristics**

With some regularity, the mass media report cases of multicide with no regard to the specifics of exactly what type of multicide has been committed. With that said, let us offer definitions for mass murder and spree murder.

## Mass Murder

Mass murder is the killing of three or more people at one time and in one place. There are many examples of mass murder: Three decades ago, a man named James Oliver Huberty walked into a McDonald's restaurant and killed 21 people before forcing the police to kill him. Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols killed 168 people at one time and in one place in an act of domestic terrorism. Julio Gonzalez, angry at his ex-girlfriend whom he thought was in a New York City nightclub, set fire to the club, resulting in the deaths of 87 people. In Louisville, Kentucky, Joseph Wesbecker walked into his former place of employment, shot 19 coworkers, killing seven and wounding 12, then shot and killed himself. Mitchell Johnson and Andrew Golden killed four fellow students and a teacher in Arkansas.

In February 2008, 23-year-old Latina Williams killed two women in a technical college in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The police stated that Williams entered the room, spoke with the medical technology instructor, and then left. She returned and killed two fellow students and then herself. There was no apparent reason for her actions, according to the shooter's mother (Gerth, 2008).

In April 2007, Seung-Hui Cho was a student at Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) in Blacksburg, Virginia. Cho, a South Korean who had moved to the United States when he was eight years old, was a senior, majoring in English. He had received special services for behavioral problems while in college, and had been accused of stalking two female students. On Monday morning, April 16, 2007, Cho went to two separate sites, West Ambler Johnston Hall and Norris Hall (see Figure 2.1). Gaining entrance to the buildings, he shot two victims in the first building, went back to his dorm room, changed his clothing, and went to the second site about two hours later. He went into several classrooms and continued his killing rampage. After the police arrived, they heard a shot and found that Cho had killed himself with a shot to the temple. In the aftermath, it was found that 33 people—five faculty members, 27 students, and Cho—had died, and that 23 more were wounded (Chua-Eoan, 2007, p. 10).

### ***Virginia Tech Shooting***

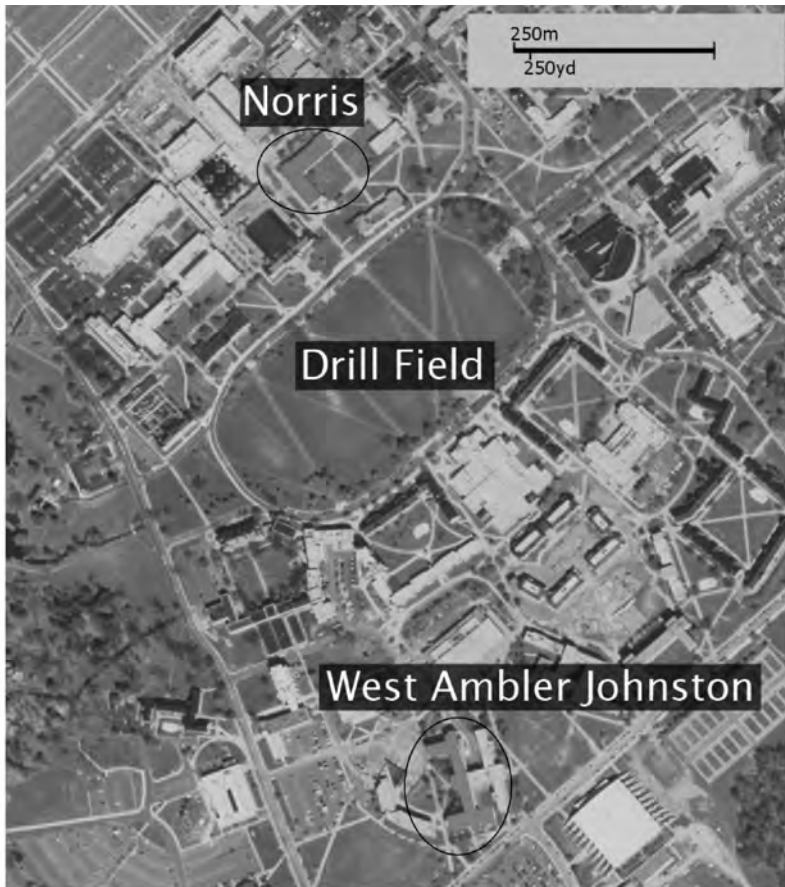
**Name:** Seung-Hui Cho

**Location:** Blacksburg, Virginia

**Weapons:** Glock 19, Walther P22

**Deaths:** 33, including shooter

**Injured:** 23



**Figure 2.1** Aerial view of the two killing sites used by Cho in his killing of 33 people at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, April 2007.

Source: Wikimedia Commons, [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Norris\\_West\\_AJ\\_Map.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Norris_West_AJ_Map.jpg).

#### Victims of The Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Shooting

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Status at Virginia Tech</i>
Ross Alameddine	20	Sophomore, English and Business
Christopher Bishop	35	Professor, German
Brian Bluhm	25	Graduate student, Civil Engineering

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Status at Virginia Tech</i>
Seung-Hui Cho	23	Senior, English
Ryan Clark	22	Senior, Psychology
Austin Cloyd	18	Freshman, International Studies and French
Jocelyne Couture	49	Professor, English
Daniel Cueva	21	Junior, International Studies
Kevin Granata	50	Professor, Engineering Science
Matthew Gwaltney	24	Graduate student, Environmental Engineering
Caitlin Hammaren	19	Sophomore, International Studies
Jeremy Herbstritt	27	Graduate student, Civil Engineering
Rachael Hill	18	Freshman, Biological Sciences
Emily Hilscher	19	Freshman, Animal Science
Jarrett Lane	22	Senior, Civil Engineering
Matthew LaPorte	20	Sophomore, Political Science
Henry Lee	20	Freshman, Computer Engineering
Liviu Librescu	76	Professor, Engineering
G. V. Loganathan	53	Professor, Engineering
P. Lumbantoruan	34	Graduate student, Civil Engineering
Lauren McCain	20	Freshman, International Studies
Daniel O'Neil	22	Graduate student, Environmental Engineering
Juan Ortiz	26	Graduate student, Civil Engineering
Minal Panchal	26	Graduate student, Architecture
Erin Peterson	18	Freshman, International Studies
Michael Pohle	23	Senior, Biological Sciences
Julia Pryde	23	Graduate student, Biological Engineering
Mary Read	19	Freshman, Interdisciplinary Studies

(Continued)

(Continued)

---

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Status at Virginia Tech</i>
Reema Samaha	18	Freshman, Urban Planning
Waleed Shaalan	23	Graduate student, Civil Engineering
Leslie Sherman	20	Junior, History
Maxine Turner	20	Senior, Chemical Engineering
Nicole White	20	Junior, International Studies

In February 2008, 27-year-old Steven Kazmierczak, a former graduate student majoring in sociology at Northern Illinois University, entered a lecture hall at that university and shot 21 students, killing four female and one male student. He then killed himself. The killer carried his weapons in a guitar case. The killer had been well liked by other students and the professors at the university. Kazmierczak killed

Daniel Parmenter, 20;  
Julianna Gehant, age unknown;  
Ryenne Mace, 19;  
Gayle Dubowski, 20; and  
Catalina Garcia, age unknown.

There are no known reasons for his action, although he had a history of mental problems. He had been admitted to a psychiatric setting after high school, but stayed only for a short time. He enlisted in the Army in 2001, but was discharged six months later for unspecified reasons. There was no motive immediately apparent to the investigators. One possible motive could be that he broke up with his girlfriend a couple days before the mass murder. Another is that he was reported to have stopped medication for depression shortly before the episode. Students put up six white crosses on campus in front of the Holmes Student Center—five with the names of Kazmierczak's victims, and one with no name, for Kazmierczak.

The sites of mass murder seem often to change. Several years ago, the U.S. Post Office was a “popular” place for one to commit mass murder. Only a couple of years later, schools, from grammar school through college, became a common site. Table 2.1 holds information regarding selected school shooters. Shopping mall mass killings have also captured the attention of the populace recently. For example, Dominick Maldonado entered the Tacoma Mall in Washington state and shot six people. They all survived his attack. He took four people hostage, only to surrender to the police four hours later.

### **Tacoma Mall Shooting**

**Name:** Dominick Maldonado

**Location:** Tacoma, Washington

**Target:** Tacoma Mall

**Date:** November 2005

**Weapon:** Assault weapon

**Deaths:** 0

**Injured:** 6

In a small suburb of St. Louis, Missouri, on February 7, 2008, a man walked into a town meeting and killed two police officers and three other people before police killed him. The man, identified as Charles Thornton, had a history of making outrageous comments at town meetings.

(Text continued on page 31)

**Table 2.1** Selected School Shooters

	<i>Michael Carneal</i>	<i>Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold</i>	<i>Mitch Johnson and Andy Golden</i>	<i>Peter Odighizurwa</i>	<i>Robert Flores</i>
<b>Age</b>	14	18, 17	13, 11	43	41
<b>Race</b>	White	White	White	White	White
<b>Weapon</b>	5 rifles, 1 handgun	30+ bombs, rifle, pistol, 2 handguns	13 handguns	Handgun	Handgun
<b>No. of Assaulted Victims</b>	8	48	15	5	5
<b>Type of School</b>	High school	High school	Middle school	College	College
<b>Murdered Victims</b>	3	13	5	5	5
<b>State</b>	Kentucky	Colorado	Arkansas	Virginia	Arizona
<b>Gender</b>	Male	Males	Males	Male	Male

---

 Mass Murderers and Alleged Mass Murderers, 1990 to the Present
 

---

<i>Name</i>	<i>Death Toll</i>	<i>State</i>
Janette Abler	5 children	West Virginia
Joseph Akin	18 people	Alabama
Bruman Alvarez	5 people: his 3 children and 2 men	Maryland
David Anderson	4 people: a man, his wife, and their 2 children	Washington
Larry Ashbrook	7 people	Texas
Jorjik Avanesian	7 of his family members	California
Dennis Bagwell	4 of his family members	Texas
Jason Baldwin	3 boys	Arkansas
George Banks	9 of his family members	Pennsylvania
Richard Baumhammers	5 people	Pennsylvania
Alex Barany, Jr.	4 people: a man, his wife, and their 2 children	Washington
Matthew Beck	4 of his coworkers	Connecticut
Timothy Black III	3 people	Washington
Richard Brand	5 of his family (cult) members	Ohio
Andrew Brooks	4 people: his father and 3 other men	New York
Barbara Brown	5 children	West Virginia
Carl Brown	8 people	Florida
David Brown	4 of his family members	Minnesota
Ricky Brown	5 people: his children	West Virginia



<i>Name</i>	<i>Death Toll</i>	<i>State</i>
Michael Brunner	3 people: his girlfriend and their 2 children	Kentucky
Jason Bryant	3 members of a family	Tennessee
Richard Buchanan	4 people: his mother, father, and 2 brothers	Virginia
Larry Buttz	4 people: his wife, their 2 children, and himself	Iowa
David Camm	3 people: his wife and 2 children	Indiana
Michael Carneal	3 fellow students	Kentucky
Henry Carr	3 people: 2 adults and a child	Florida
Jesse Carter	3 people: a mother and her 2 children	Missouri
Kim Chandler	3 children	Ohio
Seung-Hui Cho	27 fellow students, 5 faculty, and himself	Virginia
Mark Christeson	3 people: a mother and her 2 children	Missouri
Mark Clark	5 people: his wife and their 4 children	Maryland
Anthony Clemente	4 of his family members	Massachusetts
Gerald Clemons	3 of his former coworkers	Ohio
Damian Clemente	4 of his family members	Massachusetts
Everett Cobb	3 people: his ex-wife, her husband, and a friend	Tennessee
James Colbert	4 people: his wife and their 3 daughters	New Hampshire
Asa Coon	6 people: 5 people and himself	Ohio

(Continued)

(Continued)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Death Toll</i>	<i>State</i>
Peter Contos	3 people: his girlfriend and their 2 children	Massachusetts
Joseph Corcoran	6 people, including his brother	Indiana
Natasha Cornett	3 members of a family	Kentucky
John Cotter	3 adults	Nebraska
Robert Coulson	5 people: his parents and 3 others	Texas
Paul Crawford	4 of his neighbors	Minnesota
Girlye Crum	3 adults and 2 children	Oregon
Robert Daigneau	4 people: his wife and 3 other adults	Kentucky
Frederick Davidson	3 professors	California
James Davis	3 coworkers	North Carolina
Ray DeFord	8 people	Ohio
Errol Dehaney	3 people: his wife and their 2 children	Connecticut
Lawrence Delisle	4 people: his children	Pennsylvania
Charles Dotson	6 people	Tennessee
Carl Drega	4 people	New Hampshire
Damien Echols	3 boys	Arkansas
Miguelina Estevez	4 people: her 3 children and herself	Pennsylvania
Hernandez Estrada	3 people: his wife, their son, and 1 other adult	California
Susan Eubanks	5 people: her 4 children and herself	California
Gary Evans	5 people	New York

<i>Name</i>	<i>Death Toll</i>	<i>State</i>
Colin Ferguson	6 people	New York
Geoff Ferguson	5 people	Connecticut
Gian Ferri	6 people	California
Michael Fisher	3 people: his mother, step-father, and step-brother	Louisiana
Antionnete Franks	5 people: 4 people and an adult	Louisiana
Kenneth French, Jr.	7 people	North Carolina
Bryan Freeman	3 people: his parents and brother	Pennsylvania
David Freeman	3 people: his parents and brother	Pennsylvania
Orlando Ganal	4 people, including his in-laws	Hawaii
Martin Garcia	3 people: his 2 step-daughters and his niece	Nevada
Craig Godineaux	5 people	New York
Andrew Golden	5 people: 4 fellow students and a teacher	Arkansas
Julio Gonzalez	87 people	New York
Christopher Green	4 people	California
Allen Griffin, Jr.	3 people	Michigan
Eric Harris	13 fellow students	Colorado
Joseph Harris	4 people	New Jersey
Shane Harrison	5 people	Arizona
Robert Hawkins	9 people	Nebraska
Scott Heidler	4 people: his foster parents and 2 children	Georgia

*(Continued)*

(Continued)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Death Toll</i>	<i>State</i>
George Hennard	22 people	Texas
Khousa Her	6 people: her children	Minnesota
Richard Herr	3 coworkers	Connecticut
Karen Hill	3 people	Ohio
Daryl Holton	4 people: his ex-wife and their 3 children	Tennessee
Danny Hooks	5 women	Oklahoma
David Housler	4 people	Tennessee
Edic Houston	4 people, former fellow students	California
Karen Howell	3 members of a family	Kentucky
Kyle Huff	6 people	Washington
Joshua Jenkins	5 of his family members	California
James Johnson	4 people	Missouri
Mitchell Johnson	4 fellow students	Arkansas
Ken Jones	5 people: his wife and 4 of his coworkers	Mississippi
Steven Kazmierczak	5 students and himself	Illinois
Kipland Kinkel	11 people: parents and students	Oregon
Edgar Killen	3 people	Mississippi
Dylan Klebold	13 fellow students	Colorado
Fred Kornahrens	4 people: his wife, their 2 children, and his father-in-law	South Carolina
Sam Lau	3 people: his wife and their 2 children	Washington
Barry Loukaitas	3 people: his teacher and 2 fellow students	Oregon

<i>Name</i>	<i>Death Toll</i>	<i>State</i>
Gang Lu	5 college officials and fellow students	Iowa
Juan Luna	5 people	Illinois
Joseph Lundgren	5 family (cult) members	Ohio
Lam Luong	3 children	Louisiana
James Mankins	5 people	Texas
Virgil Martinez	4 people: his wife, their 2 children, and a friend	Texas
Courtney Matthews	4 people	Tennessee
Eric Matthews	4 people: his wife, 2 of his ex-girlfriends, and his son	Illinois
Curtis McCree	5 fellow workers	Florida
Michael McDermott	7 coworkers	Massachusetts
Thomas McIvane	3 children	Michigan
Timothy McVeigh	168 people	Oklahoma
Jesse Misskelley	3 boys	Arkansas
James Montgomery	3 people	Tennessee
Leonardo Morita	5 people: his wife, 3 children, and their domestic worker	California
Dean Mullins	3 members of a family	Kentucky
Matthew Murray	4 people	Colorado
William Neal	3 people	Colorado
Brian Nichols	5 people: 4 one day, 1 the next day	Georgia
Terry Nichols	168 people	Oklahoma

*(Continued)*

(Continued)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Death Toll</i>	<i>State</i>
Sandi Nieves	4 children	California
Marvin Nissen	3 people	Nebraska
John Orr	4 people	California
Alonzo Osorio	5 people	North Carolina
Jose Osorio	5 people	North Carolina
Martin Pang	4 people	Washington
Michael Perry	5 people, including his parents	California
Tyler Peterson	7 people: 6 people and himself	Wisconsin
Albert Petrosky	3 people: his wife and 2 other people	Colorado
James Pough	13 people	Florida
James Price	3 people	Alaska
Terry Ratzmann	7 people	Wisconsin
Steven Renfro	3 people: his girlfriend, his aunt, and a neighbor	Texas
Robert Renninger	4 people: his wife and their 3 children	Pennsylvania
Joe Risner	3 members of a family	Kentucky
John Ritzert	3 children	Indiana
Charles Roberts IV	5 students	Pennsylvania
Eric Rudolph	3 people	Various states
Ilene Russell	4 adults and 1 child	Michigan
John Satterwhite	4 people: his son and 3 of his step-children	South Carolina
James Schnick	7 family members	Minnesota

<i>Name</i>	<i>Death Toll</i>	<i>State</i>
Miranda Shaw	4 people: her 3 children and herself	Florida
Clay Shrout	4 people: his father, mother, and 2 sisters	Kentucky
James Simpson	5 people: his wife, employer, and 3 coworkers	Texas
Jeffrey Sloan	4 people: his mother, father, and 2 brothers	Missouri
Charles Smith	4 people: his girlfriend and her 3 relatives	Illinois
Robert Smith	5 people	Arizona
Roland Smith	7 people	New York
Ronnie Sparks	3 people	Kentucky
John Stephenson	3 people	Indiana
John Stephenson	4 people: a man, his wife, and another man	Kentucky
Michael Stevens	3 people	Vermont
Richard Stevens	3 people	New York
Crystal Sturgill	3 members of a family	Kentucky
Arturo Suarez	4 people	California
Reginald Sublett	4 people: his ex-girlfriend, their son, and 2 other people	Montana
Sulejman Talovic	6 people	Utah
John Taylor	5 people	New York
Ronald Taylor	5 of his friends and relatives	California
Charles Thornton	6 people	Missouri

*(Continued)*

(Continued)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Death Toll</i>	<i>State</i>
Richard Timmons	3 people: his wife and their 2 children	New York
Kenneth Tornes	5 people: his wife and 4 coworkers	Mississippi
Bryan Uyesugi	7 coworkers	Hawaii
Michael Vernon	5 people	New York
David Vitaver	3 people: his wife and their 2 children	Florida
Lavern Ward	3 people: his girlfriend and their 2 children	Illinois
Jeff Weise	9 fellow students	Minnesota
Coy Wesbrook	4 people: his wife and 3 others	Texas
David Whitson	4 people: his wife and their 3 children	Oregon
Charles Wilkerson	3 people: his girlfriend's mother and 2 of his siblings	Texas
Jason Williams	4 family members	Alabama
Curtis Windom	3 people: his girlfriend and 2 other people	Florida
Alan Winterbourne	5 people	California
Luke Woodham	3 people: his mother and 2 fellow students	Mississippi
Willie Woods	5 coworkers	California
Norman Yazzie	4 people: his children	Arizona



*(Continued from page 21)*

In some cases, the person named may not have been charged with all the victims shown because of the expense of further trials or lack of direct evidence to ensure conviction. In some cases, a person may be charged with only one murder even though the police and the courts believe he or she is responsible for more. Also, a few of the people listed in the table have not yet gone to trial years later.

Twenty-year-old David Logsdon went to the Ward Parkway Center Shopping Mall in 2007. Firing his rifle in a random fashion, he killed three people and wounded two others before the police killed him. He may also have killed an elderly woman before he went to the mall. He was driving her car when the police went to her home because the neighbors reported that they had not seen her in several days. Logsdon was viewed as a private person, not well known even by his close neighbors. What drove this person to commit his acts of murder will probably never be fully known. He entered the mall and shot people he did not know, another common characteristic of the mass killer.

Logsdon had an extensive juvenile record. He was under an order from the local court to not carry any weapons. What triggered this attack? He stated that he recently broke up with his girlfriend, and he was angry with the world, which is hardly an adequate explanation. Whatever the explanation, he was sentenced to 163 years in prison.

In February 2007, Sulejman Talovic, 18 and a Bosnian immigrant, walked into the Trolley Square Mall in Salt Lake City. He carried a shotgun and a handgun, and had a backpack full of ammunition. The result of his shooting rampage was four people injured and six people killed, including himself. Not all the victims died in the mall itself. For example, one victim was shot inside the mall but died in his car in the mall's parking lot. The victims ranged in ages from 15 to 53. No one knows the motivation for this man's actions. Like many other

### **Ward Parkway Center Shooting**

**Name:** David Logsdon  
**Location:** Kansas City  
**Target:** Ward Parkway Center  
**Date:** April 2007  
**Weapon:** Rifle  
**Deaths:** 4  
**Injured:** 6

### **Trolley Square Shooting**

**Name:** Sulejman Talovic  
**Location:** Salt Lake City  
**Target:** Trolley Square Mall  
**Date:** February 2007  
**Weapons:** Shotgun and handgun  
**Deaths:** 6, including shooter  
**Injured:** 4

cases of mass murder, the basic motivation as well as the anticipated gain will remain a mystery.

Another mall shooting occurred in December 2007, in Omaha, Nebraska. Robert Hawkins, age 20, went into the Westroads Mall.

### ***Westroads Mall Shooting***

**Name:** Robert Hawkins

**Location:** Omaha, Nebraska

**Target:** Westroads Mall

**Date:** December 2007

**Weapon:** Rifle

**Deaths:** 10 (including self)

**Injured:** 5

Walking into the lobby of the Van Maur store, he opened fire, injuring five people and killing nine. He then killed himself. The nonrelatives with whom he had lived reported that he had been an introverted and troubled young man. He was especially troubled because he had lost his job only the week before and had broken up with his girlfriend. Did this have anything to do with the shootings? We cannot imagine that it did not fuel the fire that was already present. But what caused all of the impelling features to arise?

There have been other acts of mass murder. For example, there have been a flurry of shootings with deaths in courthouses. More than a decade ago, Kenneth Baumruk shot and killed his wife and critically wounded four other victims. In a St. Louis courtroom, chaos broke out when Baumruk, age 60 at the time of the shootings, protested the rulings of the judge concerning his pending divorce from his wife.

In Tyler, Texas, Hernandez Estrada, Sr. opened fire outside the courtroom, killing his wife and an innocent bystander, and injuring three law enforcement officials and his son. The police then fatally shot him.

In 2005, Brian Nichols was indicted by a Fulton County grand jury on 54 counts, including murder, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated assault on a police officer, battery, theft, carjacking, and escape from authorities. Nichols, 33, killed four people at the courthouse one day, and another person the next day. He was arrested and is now in jail. His arrest and conviction have cost the taxpayers more than \$1 million as of this writing, despite the fact that the killings were caught on tape and he has pled guilty to five counts of murder.

What we have seen so far in the case of mass murder is that the victims are generally unknown to the perpetrator. James Oliver Huberty told his wife he was “going to hunt humans” as he walked out the door to go to a McDonald’s restaurant near his house. He knew no one there, but killed 22, including himself, and injured 19. The “mall killers” certainly did not

know the shoppers. In the courthouse killings, even if the killer knew a family member in the courtroom, the others killed or injured were strangers.

There are also mass killers who kill only people they know. For instance, Ronald Gene Simmons killed 14 family members and two coworkers: he shot eight victims, strangled seven, and drowned one. He was executed by lethal injection in 1990, his death warrant signed by then-governor Bill Clinton.

### Two Men Kill Four in Indianapolis

On January 19, 2008, two men broke into a home and killed two adult women and two children. The victims, a woman aged 24 and her four-month-old daughter, and another woman aged 24 and her 23-month-old son, were all shot repeatedly.

The police stated that while there was no immediate motive known, the home contained scales, a safe, and a pound of marijuana.

The two men are presently in jail.

Source: Wolfson, A. (2008a, January 20). Condemned killer may get new sentencing. *Courier-Journal*, p. B-3.

Despite his protests of innocence, Dr. Jeffrey MacDonald was found guilty in the murder of his family—his wife and two young daughters. The jury returned a verdict of one count of murder in the first degree and two counts of murder in the second degree. MacDonald received three life sentences. His case was recounted in the book *Fatal Vision*, by Joe McGinnis (1985). MacDonald still protests his innocence from his cell in prison.

John List killed his family in late 1971: his wife, three children, and his own mother. All five victims were found in his home. He later moved out of state to Denver. For the next 17 years, he led a secret life. He met his second wife in Maryland and moved to that state after their marriage. The FBI continued to investigate the case and arrested List at his place of employment in 1989. He was found guilty in the murders of his family and was given five consecutive life sentences. He died in prison in 2008.

### Man Throws His Four Children Into the River

In Bayou La Batre, Alabama, Lam Luong, age 37, has been accused by local authorities of throwing his four children off an 80-foot-high bridge into coastal waters. Luong allegedly had a drug problem and had been arguing with his wife. He took the children after the argument to the bridge. He originally told the police he had given the children to his girlfriend but that she did not return them. He later confessed to the police.

*Source:* Frakes, J. (2008, January 10). Abuse case leads to murder case. *Courier-Journal*, p. A-4.

---

R. Holmes and S. Holmes (2001) list eight types of mass killers: (1) disciple killer, (2) family annihilator killer, (3) disgruntled employee killer, (4) ideological killer, (5) set-and-run killer, (6) disgruntled citizen killer, (7) psychotic killer, and (8) school shooter. In this book, we discuss the various types, and, using the same theoretical framework for each, contrast and compare the killers. We also offer differences between the two. For example, the mass killer usually does not kill any others after the initial mass attack. He does not continue to kill because there is no reason to do so. Motivations for the mass killer are different from motivations for the serial killer. The serial killer does not wish to stop his killings. He wishes to continue his killings because he enjoys it. There are many other differences, including the fact that in most cases the victims of the mass killer are unknown to him. The exception to this is the family annihilator, the most common of all mass killers (R. Holmes & S. Holmes, 2001). The mass killer often has a grudge against society that he carries out in his attack against society and his unknown victims.

We can be thankful that some acts of intended mass murder are unsuccessful. There have been cases where a potential mass murder scene results in fewer than three deaths. This may be due to the lack of expertise of the shooter, or of the person who designs a bomb, or the success of the medical treatment team and professional health care that save victims' lives. Kelleher (1997) terms the unsuccessful mass murderer a "mass murderer by intention." He is not a mass killer, but only because he was not successful in realizing a baseline number of deaths (three) that would qualify him as a mass killer. This could be said also of the "serial killer by intention." The case of Cleo Green is an example of such a killer. He went into the homes of four elderly women intending to kill them. He left their

homes thinking, in each case, that the women were dead. One had been decapitated and was obviously dead. Another woman had been stabbed 21 times, and a third woman had been stabbed 11 times; they survived the attacks only because of speedy and professional care by the emergency ambulance service. The fourth woman defended herself successfully by grabbing and squeezing Green's scrotum. Had it not been for the care of the medical care professionals, Cleo Green would be a serial killer, not a "serial killer by intention."

## Spree Murder

The spree killer is different from both the mass killer and serial killer. *Spree murder* is defined as the killing of three or more people within a 30-day period, and is usually accompanied by the commission of another felony, as can be seen in various cases. In Louisville, Kentucky, two young men, ages 19 and 21, went on a killing spree in 2006–2007. They robbed street people to gain only a few dollars but they killed the victims so they would not be able to identify them. Their reason for the murders? To be able to buy drugs. In another case, three gang members killed drug pushers in a spree killing in order to obtain their drugs and cash.

Spree killers tend to do their damage within a short time span. There is generally no cooling-off period. They are like killing machines up to the point they are caught or turn themselves in. Take the case of Charles Starkweather and his girlfriend, Carol Fugate. They started their killing spree in 1957. The young couple started by killing Fugate's family, after which they went on a killing spree for 30 days. The final victim was a traveling salesman who had pulled his car off the side of the road to take a rest. Starkweather murdered him, took his car, and a short time later was captured by the police. Starkweather was executed for his crimes. Carol Fugate was given a prison sentence. She served her time and was paroled in 1976.

In late 2002, two snipers terrorized suburban Maryland and Virginia outside Washington, D.C. They killed from a distance with no apparent motive or discrimination of victims. The attacks occurred during a three-week period in October. Ten people were killed and three others were critically wounded by two shooters, John Allen Muhammad (né John Allen Williams), 41 at the time of his arrest, and Lee Boyd Malvo, 17 at the time of his arrest. They had allegedly already killed three people in three southern states during robberies, as well as 16 people in California, Arizona, and Texas, and two in Maryland.

**The “Beltway Snipers”****Lee Boyd Malvo and  
John Allen Muhammad****Malvo: Born** 1985**Muhammad: Born** 1960

Called the “Beltway Snipers,” Muhammad and Malvo went on a killing spree that commenced on October 2, 2002, in Maryland. Within the next three days, six people had been killed by them within a few miles’ radius. The shootings continued until October 24, when both men were arrested by the local police while they were sleeping in their car. Malvo pled guilty to six counts of

murder and was sentenced to six consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole. A Maryland jury found Muhammad guilty of six counts of murder and sentenced him to six consecutive life terms without the possibility of parole (Moose & Fleming, 2004).

The mass killer may commit suicide or put himself in a position where police will have to kill him, also known as suicide by proxy. Spree killers usually select victims randomly, but go for those who will meet their personal needs at the time. In other words, they will kill for money, drugs, or other items of conspicuous consumption.

Sometimes you hear about a spree serial killer, a hybrid, or a multicide predator, where there is a shorter time span involved, perhaps days, and where the victims may not have a common thread. These killers are fairly common: they go on a “crime spree” and silence their victims so they will not be able to identify the spree killers themselves.

**Conclusion**

Mass murder and spree murder are social issues and social problems. Both strike without warning, both affect a significant number of people, both are undesirable, and both can be reduced through collective social action. Mass murder and spree murder are different in many respects from serial murder. Many times in mass murder, especially in the examples of the disgruntled employee and the family annihilator, the victims are known to the killer. This is not usually true with the spree killer and certainly is not true with the serial killer. The mass killer is usually caught at the scene or dies at the killer’s own hands or at the hands of local law enforcement agents. The spree killer also usually is apprehended. The serial murderer, however, often escapes detection and apprehension for years; many times this killer is never apprehended.

What can be done about the mass killer and spree killer? This is not an easy question to answer. It is a question that brings a great deal of debate

not only about the answers, but also about the basic questions of etiology. What causes a person to become a mass killer? What causes a person to become a spree killer? Easy questions, but what of the answers? Most difficult, if not impossible, to answer.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What are the main elements of the mentality of the murderer?
2. How does the basic motivation and the anticipated gain of the spree killer differ from that of the mass killer?
3. As a class discussion, pick a school killer. How do the various examples compare and contrast? What are the common elements? Were there predictors of their murderous activities?
4. Do all mass killers kill in only one site? Can you identify a case where the killings were separate? What were the unique circumstances of that case?
5. What is your protection from the mass or spree killer? Do you believe it is easier to protect oneself from a mass or spree killer than from a serial killer?

