

The Bulletin

Saturday, December 15, 2012 norwichbulletin.com Volume 152, Number 350 75 cents

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NEWTOWN

26 killed in shooting at elementary school

■ 20 kids among victims ■ Gunman also killed mother, self

By John Christoffersen
The Associated Press



Connecticut State Police lead a line of children away from Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown after a shooting Friday. Twenty-eight people, including 20 children, the shooter and his mother, were slain.
SHANNON HICKS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A man killed his mother at home and then opened fire Friday inside the elementary school where she taught, massacring 26 people, including 20 children, as youngsters cowered in fear to the sound of gunshots reverberating through the building and screams echoing over the intercom.

The 20-year-old killer, carrying two handguns, committed suicide at the school, bringing the death toll to 28, authorities said.

The rampage, coming less than two weeks before Christmas, was the nation's second-deadliest school shooting, exceeded only by the Virginia Tech massacre that left 33 people dead in 2007.

"Our hearts are broken today," a tearful President Barack Obama, struggling to maintain his composure, said at the White House. He called for "meaningful action" to prevent such shootings. "As a country, we have been through this too many times," he said.

Police shed no light on the motive for the attack on two classrooms. The gunman, identified as Adam Lanza, was believed to suffer from a personality disorder and lived with his mother, said a law enforcement official who was briefed on the investigation but was not authorized to discuss it.

Panicked parents looking for their children raced

SEE MASSACRE, A7

MORE INSIDE

LOCAL

Fifty or sixty people, many of them young children, gathered Friday evening to remember a 26-year-old Norwich mother of two killed a year earlier. **A3**

ARTS



A big-name ballerina from New York City is set to bowl over audiences this weekend in "The Nutcracker" at the Garde Arts Center in New London. **D1**

ONLY IN PRINT

- Enjoy the crossword. **B8**
- Read WFSB meteorologist Mike Cameron's weather forecast. **A8**
- High school sports box scores. **B2**

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Local police weigh in on school security

By John Penney
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Plainfield Police Chief Michael Surprenant and several of his officers were on the firing range Friday when the news of a mass shooting at a Newtown elementary school broke.

"And it was qualifying

range for our active-shooter training," he said. "Some of us were talking about school shootings when we heard what happened in Newtown."

A man identified as 20-year-old Adam Lanza opened fire Friday inside the elementary school

SEE POLICE, A7

SCHOOLS

Tragedy gives officials pause

By Alison Shea
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It was a surreal day for school leaders across Eastern Connecticut as they watched their worst nightmares unfold in a sleepy town some 90 miles away.

"This could be any school in America — any in Connecticut," Griswold Superintendent Paul Smith said. "And I'm sure people will revisit (emergency) plans and make sure they're very safe."

SEE SCHOOLS, A7

DANIELSON

Mother sentenced to 30 years in toddler's death



Melissa O'Connor reacts as she hears the defense talk about her son Bryce during her sentencing Friday morning at Danielson Supreme Court. O'Connor was sentenced for 30 years for her son's murder.
AARON FLAUM/NORWICHBULLETIN.COM

By John Penney
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During an emotional day in Danielson Superior Court on Friday, Melissa O'Connor of Dayville was sentenced to 30 years in prison for beating and strangling her toddler son more than two years ago.

O'Connor, 25, pleaded guilty to murder in October under the Alford Doctrine, in the death of her 20-month-old son, Bryce, on April 15, 2010. Under the Alford Doctrine, a

defendant does not agree with all the state's allegations, but agrees that a conviction — and a stiffer sentence — is likely if a case goes to trial.

According to Assistant State's Attorney Matthew Crockett, O'Connor left her Hartford Pike apartment on the morning of the murder to drive her husband to work, leaving Bryce alone in a playpen for roughly 30 minutes. When she returned, O'Connor told police she became frustrated and "snapped" when she tried

to dress her son, accusing him of "pouting, giving her the evil eye" and fighting her.

O'Connor struck Bryce multiple times in the head, chest and arms with a closed fist to "shut him up," and choked him until his "eyes rolled back, his body stiffened and he became unresponsive," Crockett said.

She left the child still breathing in an upstairs room of the apartment she shared with another son,

SEE SENTENCING, A2

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