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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2012

TRAGEDY IN CONNECTICUT

This time, children

- ▶ Gunman kills 20 students, 6 adults at elementary after killing mother at home
- ▶ 20-year-old shooter killed self in school, reportedly had personality disorder
- ▶ Guns involved might have been among those legally bought by mother

By John Christoffersen
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEWTOWN, Conn. — A man killed his mother at their home and then opened fire yesterday in an elementary school, massacring 26 people, including 20 children. Youngsters covered in fear as gunshots reverberated through the building and screams echoed over the intercom.

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

The rampage was the nation's second-deadliest school shooting, exceeded only by the Virginia Tech massacre that claimed 33 lives 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, saying, "As a country, we have been through this too many times."

Police shed no light on the motive for the attack. The gunman, 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 to Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, a prosperous New

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ADREES LATIF | REUTERS

Families grieve near Sandy Hook Elementary School, where a gunman opened fire on schoolchildren and staff in Newtown, Conn.



BIOGRAPHY OF SHOOTER

Killer, 20, left few footprints in veiled life

By David M. Halbfinger
THE NEW YORK TIMES

He carried a black briefcase to his 10th-grade honors English class and sat near the door so he could readily slip in and out. When called upon, he was intelligent, but nervous and fidgety, spitting his words out, as if having to speak up was painful.

Pale, tall and scrawny, Adam Lanza walked through high school in Newtown, Conn., with his hands glued to his sides, the pens in the pocket of his short-sleeve, button-down shirts among the few things that his classmates recalled about him.

He did all he could to avoid attention, it seemed.

Until yesterday. The authorities said Lanza, 20, wearing combat gear, carried out one of the deadliest shootings

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SHANNON HICKS | NEWTON (CONN.) BEE

Connecticut State Police lead a line of frightened children from Sandy Hook Elementary School. The pupils were told to close their eyes, so they wouldn't see blood and broken glass.



JESSICA HILL | ASSOCIATED PRESS

Officers from several law-enforcement agencies responded to the shooting.

MORE INSIDE

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Trauma will linger a long time

By Bill Bush and Allison Manning
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

There were 20 children killed. There were children who saw others get killed. There were more who heard the shots and escaped uninjured — at least physically. In short, the mass murder that happened in a Connecticut school yesterday will be set apart from other horrific crimes by the fact that it targeted very young children.

Preventive measures can only do so much when a shooter is determined.

"These children got caught in some kind of revenge and rage fantasy that this young man had, and he had a lot of access to weapons, and he specifically went in to kill children," said Jim Clark, the director of the University of Cincinnati's School of Social Work.

"This is so mind-boggling to most of us." School shootings are relatively rare events that are horrible and draw heavy media coverage. But the shooter usually is a peer who is angry about something that happened inside the school, Clark said. The school symbolizes an outrage to them, and "they live out a revenge fantasy," he said.

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