

Elizabethtown College

JayScholar

Sociology-Anthropology: Student Scholarship &
Creative Works

Sociology-Anthropology

Spring 2021

That's News to Me: A Content Analysis of the Portrayal of Perpetrators of Mass Murder in Mass Media Communications

Meghan Kenney

Follow this and additional works at: <https://jayscholar.etown.edu/soc-anthstu>



Part of the [Communication Commons](#), and the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

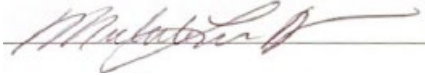
That's News to Me: A Content Analysis of the Portrayal of Perpetrators of Mass Murder in Mass
Media Communications

By

Meghan Kenney

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in the Discipline in
The Communications and Criminal Justice Departments and the Elizabethtown College Honors
Program

May 2021

Thesis Advisor _____  _____

Michele Lee Kozimor, PhD

Thesis Advisor _____  _____

Kirsten Johnson, PhD

Third Reader _____ *Conrad L. Kanagy* _____

Conrad Kanagy, PhD

ABSTRACT

The United States holds only five percent of the world's population, but surprisingly 31 percent of global mass shootings. Previous literature defines a mass shooting as an incident where at least four individuals are shot and a mass murder as an incident where at least four individuals are killed. Mass shootings have been found to occur in bunches due to the exposure of mass shootings inspiring copycat shootings. Such inspiration has been potentially linked to media coverage of these events thus giving them "accidental advertising". Limited research has empirically examined the news coverage of mass shootings through a content analysis. This exploratory research used quantitative and thematic content analysis to examine two qualitatively different mass shootings, the Las Vegas Concert shooting and the Dayton Nightclub shooting, and the news coverage of each event. The data for this research were obtained from a content analysis of articles from a local Las Vegas news website, The Las Vegas Sun, a local Dayton, OH news website, The Dayton Daily News, and AP News. Results will be presented and compared to the proposed guidelines for the coverage of mass shootings by media organizations.

Keywords: mass shooting, mass murder, news coverage, content analysis

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank Dr. Kozimor and Dr. Johnson for being my faculty advisors on this project. Their guidance was important to my completing this research. They both offered unconditional support as I went through this project and I would not have been able to complete this research without them.

I would like to thank Dr. Kanagy for his guidance, feedback, and suggestions to ensure that this be the best research it could be.

I would also like to thank my fellow Teaching Assistants, Jessica Cox and Rachel Bickelman for their endless support. I will always appreciate the time spent in the lab and the TA Office talking about our HID projects and helping each other so we could all succeed throughout this school year.

Lastly, I would like to thank my friends, and family for their support. My friends for keeping me sane and laughing throughout the process of this project. My parents for their continued support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION.....	5
CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
CHAPTER 3 – HYPOTHESES.....	17
CHAPTER 4 – DATA AND METHODS.....	18
CHAPTER 5 – QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS.....	22
CHAPTER 6 – QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS.....	28
CHAPTER 7 – SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS.....	32
REFERENCES.....	35
APPENDIX A: Summary of Shootings.....	39
APPENDIX B: Tables.....	40
APPENDIX C: Coding Sheet.....	48

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Although the United States holds only five percent of the world's population, about 31 percent of the world's mass shootings, an incident where at least four individuals are shot (excluding the shooter), occur in the country (Meindl and Ivy 2017; Silverstein 2020). As of 2015, a mass shooting occurred roughly every 12.5 days (Meindl and Ivy 2017). Many of these mass shootings, between 1998-2018 it was about six in 10 mass shootings, were domestic instances that occurred inside the home (Times Editorial Board 2020). In 2019, there were more mass shootings in the United States than days in the year, 417 mass shootings (Silverstein 2020). This was the highest number of mass shootings reported by the Gun Violence Archive and the Gun Violence Research Group (Silverstein 2020). In addition, 31 of these mass shootings were mass murders, an incident where at least four people are killed (Silverstein 2020).

2020 was a year plagued by the global COVID-19 pandemic, yet mass shootings were up even further than 2019 with 610 shootings and 21 mass murders (Gun Violence Archive 2021). With the increased unemployment, the stress and anxiety that individuals feel about the virus, the stress of living in areas of high infection rates, and the increase in gun sales, some individuals, including the director of Guns Down America, are not surprised by the uptick of shootings (Przybyla 2020). Experts believe that the COVID-19 global pandemic made already existing social problems that have historically fed violence in certain areas much worse including lack of opportunities (both employment wise and education wise), reduced access to mental health care, and the social isolation that has come with the social distancing and stay at home advisories (Times Editorial Board 2020).

Because of the social isolation that many individuals have experienced throughout the COVID-19 global pandemic, gun safety advocacy groups are concerned that many mass

shootings are domestic related issues, since many of them begin as domestic altercations among acquaintances (Times Editorial Board 2020). Many of these domestic altercations leading to mass shootings or murders are not seen in the public eye, as the numbers involved are not as attention grabbing as shootings in churches, workplaces, or schools (Times Editorial Board 2020). However, neighborhood and domestic crime risk, when referred to in the news, is a factor that creates fear of becoming victimized in and near the home, not just in public places (Callahan and Rosenberger 2015). Domestic mass shootings have many similarities, such as the fact that the shooter tends to be a man, but a different statistic that has been growing worsens the potential for mass shootings: increased gun sales (Times Editorial Board 2020). The number of individuals applying for background checks to receive guns increased by 50 percent from the entire two year period from 2017-2019 and the number of gun sales in April 2020 had a 72 percent increase from April 2019 (Przybyla 2020; Times Editorial Board 2020).

As of May 6, 2021, there were 181 mass shootings and 12 mass murders, putting 2021 on track to be another potentially record breaking year for mass shootings (Gun Violence Archive 2021). Throughout the first few months of 2021, there were multiple highly publicized mass shootings and mass murders such as one where eight individuals were killed at an Indianapolis, IN FedEx facility, where eight individuals were killed at three Atlanta, GA spas, where a former NFL player killed six individuals in Rock Hill, SC, and when ten individuals were killed at a supermarket in Boulder, CO (Holcombe 2021). President Joe Biden ordered the most ambitious executive actions on gun control of any president in United States history in early April specifically citing the events in Boulder, CO in his reasoning (Jaffe, Madhani, and Balsamo 2021). These steps would crack down on homemade firearms without serial numbers and tighten

regulations on pistol stabilizers, and they would be the first step to Biden's "common-sense steps" that he had pledged early in his presidency (Jaffe, Madhani, and Balsamo 2021).

Generally, mass shootings have been found to occur in bunches, meaning that exposure to mass shootings has been found to inspire more shootings (Towers et al. 2015). The inspired shooters are often referred to as "copycats" and the bunches of shootings that come out of mass shootings are often referred to as "contagion", both terms are defined as ways that some individuals become more likely to duplicate a behavior after being exposed to this behavior (Lankford and Madfis 2018). Towers et al. (2015) hypothesized that media, whether television, radio, news, or other forms of media, might be the vehicle used in inspiring these individuals.

The coverage of these events can be seen as "accidental advertising" and public glorification, therefore inspiring some mass shooters or murderers (Thompson 2017). Media coverage of the shooters is a reward for many of them because it makes them famous, therefore incentivizing future mass shooters (Lankford and Madfis 2018). Many of these individuals have explicitly stated that they were looking for fame, or as one of the shooters in the 1999 Columbine High School Shooting wrote in a journal published following the shooting, some look to be seen as gods since they get to decide who lives or dies in those moments (Lankford and Madfis 2018; Thompson 2017). Those who admittedly seek fame are those who tend to have the deadliest mass shootings, on average killing twice as many victims as other shooters (Lankford and Madfis 2018). These individuals also tend to get the most publicity, due to the media focusing more on the events with larger victim counts than on mass shooting events that happen domestically (Lankford and Madfis 2018; Times Editorial Board 2020).

Due to the blame on media for encouraging imitated shooting events, some media critics have endorsed a campaign called "Don't Name Them" (Lankford and Madfis 2018; Thompson

2017; Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training n.d.) which allows for coverage of mass shootings. The Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) (n.d.) Active Shooter Database is an endorser of this campaign saying that reports regarding active shooter events sensationalize the names of the shooters. Some organizations believe that since the names of these shooters are public record and it is routine for the media to name them, once these individuals are captured the media needs to stop using their names as they become a call to action for potential copycats (Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training n.d.). Some studies disagree with naming the shooters in public at all such as Lankford and Madfis (2018) who proposed guidelines to media organizations that stated not to ever name the shooter, not to ever use photographs or likenesses of the shooter, stop using the names, photographs, and likenesses of past shooters, and to report everything else with as much detail as they would like as long as they are adhering to the aforementioned guidelines.

Additionally, the media spends significant amounts of time and therefore money covering mass shootings. In a study done by Croitoru et al. (2020), it has been determined that the media spends upwards of 31 days following a mass shooting showing stories about the aftermath on television and writing articles. That same study also concluded that the general public only holds their interest on this topic for an average of 10 days following the incident (Croitoru et al. 2020). All of the time and money spent on these shootings and shooters is another way of potentially glorifying the shooter by giving them fame for at least one month following the event, if not longer (Croitoru et al. 2020; Lankford and Madfis 2018).

This research examines the effects of news media outlet type on the coverage of two recent mass shootings and the subsequent one-year anniversary of each shooting. This exploratory research uses both quantitative and thematic content analysis to examine two

qualitatively different mass shootings and the news coverage of them to determine if the coverage changes in focus during the month following the shooting and the month of the one-year anniversary. The first mass shooting that was analyzed was the Las Vegas Concert shooting. This mass shooting occurred in 2017 and has been defined as a mass shooting with a large victim count and national scope. The second mass shooting occurred at a nightclub in Dayton, OH in 2019 and was included due to the low victim count and local nature of the tragedy. This research examines a combination of a comparable selection of both local and national news coverage as presented on the websites of media outlets for each shooting to determine whether there are significant differences in scale and scope of the coverage of each incident. In addition, each news article during the month immediately following the shooting and during the anniversary was examined to determine the number of times the shooter name is used and the proportion of the story that is perpetrator, fact, or victim based. The findings of this study were compared to the proposed guidelines for the coverage of media organizations by Lankford and Madfis (2018).

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on Mass Shootings

The general public is drawn to the news of mass shootings because they are violent acts that target large masses of individuals somewhat randomly (Lankford and Madfis 2018; Silva 2019). The literature defines a mass shooting as an event that used gun violence against others that was carried out by at least one shooter and must include multiple random or symbolic victims (Silva 2019). These shooters must use at least one firearm, the shooting must take place in a public or populated location or locations, and the shooter must have narcissistic, specific to the victim, or ideological motivations for the event (Silva 2019). Since 1999, when the shooting at Columbine High School occurred, mass shootings have been on the rise in the United States (Dahmen 2018; Lankford and Madfis 2018; Silverstein 2020).

Media Coverage of Mass Shootings

The basis of journalistic and news story values is finding and reporting the truth while minimizing harm through the course of reporting and publishing (Dahmen 2018). Mass murder media coverage is based in the idea of news values, which is one of the chief decision-makers in how a news outlet chooses a news story (Harcup and O'Neill 2017). Mass shootings have become a major point of media coverage as it captures the public's attention leading to them becoming a common media topic across all mediums (Croitoru et al. 2020). The reason why one event may be covered more than another is based in the apparent newsworthiness of the event but it also is contingent on cultural, organizational, and economic factors of a story that can influence news story selection (Harcup and O'Neill 2017).

These mass shootings and mass murders have been leading stories for national news networks for many years (Croitoru et al. 2020). A story is a collection of facts about an event

collected into a news segment, whether it be an article or broadcast that has some level of newsworthiness (Harcup and O'Neill 2017). Although the most common shooter in these events is a middle aged, nonideological, white male, the media often highlight younger shooters of other races and religious beliefs, with the exception being location of the shooting and number of victims to be reported (Croitoru et al. 2020).

Consequences of Media Coverage of Mass Shootings

Media coverage of mass shootings has been proven to have some dangerous consequences. Due to the nature of reporters wanting to minimize harm throughout the reporting process, the destruction that can come out of media coverage for mass shootings is not discounted (Dahmen 2018). Some examples of the dangerous consequences of reporting are Cultivation Theory, which has proven that the media has the ability to control an individual's ideas on heavily covered topics, and the fact that the news is a free advertising platform for shooters which can encourage imitation shooters (Lankford and Madfis 2018). Levin et al. (2018) found in their research that those with higher levels of fear and those in their early 40s with children indicated higher levels of interest in mass murder news stories. They had done a study based on knowledge that viewer's morbid curiosity draws them to stories of mass murder, which is one of the reasons why television reports often tend to focus on details regarding the perpetrator (Levin et al. 2018). There has been a growing idea that the American news media needs to change how they report mass murder incidents as to not incite others to want the fame and celebrity that comes along with these incidents (Levin et al. 2018).

Wright and Washington (2018) offered a new approach to the idea of blame in homicide cases - shared blame. They did a content analysis of Florida news and police reports and were able to find apparent differences in the way that content was framed and victims were depicted

based on the race of the victims and the race of the perpetrator (Wright and Washington 2018). Wright and Washington (2018) wanted to show that the reporting can encourage copycat crimes and therefore can be part of the problem. Copycat crimes can stem from individuals wanting the fame or glory that they believe comes with committing a mass murder and getting onto the news, which many articles believe could be a reason for so many imitations, the individuals want to be glorified (Lankford and Madfis 2018).

Croitoru et al. (2020) found that within the time of a shooting, online search trends often mirror other shootings with the largest volume of searches being within the first week or two and then the searches dying out by the end of the month. However, they also found that when the next mass murder occurs, trends spike again for previous murders, resulting in a conclusion to the study being that the public's desire for information does not stay with an event that is currently occurring but it is with the broad context of mass murder events (Croitoru et al. 2020). Croitoru et al. (2020) also found in their study that the media coverage of mass murder events tends to last longer than the public interest in these events, with media coverage typically being 31 days following a shooting and public attention being 10 days after a mass shooting.

Theoretical Framework

Cultivation theory. Potter (2014) defines Cultivation Theory as a theory that describes an individual who is regularly exposed to media over a long period of time who then perceives the world through the lens of the media that they have been exposed to. Discovered by George Gerbner in the 1970s, Cultivation Theory has stimulated many media researchers to consider a more macro level thinking with more natural approaches as to add to the literature of media effects (Potter 2014). Cultivation analysis is a method for studying the impacts of messaging via mass mediums and it focuses on long-term issues that come with long periods of exposure to a

medium (Shanahan, Signorielli, and Morgan 2014). Cultivation theory began with a pattern of practices used by researchers who operate within a general socialization perspective and evolved into Gerbner's idea of seeing whether a form of mass media could be directly correlated to an individual's responses through their knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors (Potter 2014). Cultivation patterns vary systematically across different groups of media observers, meaning that some individuals have been found to get different messages or draw different conclusions based on the same mediums (Shanahan, Signorielli, and Morgan 2014).

Agenda-Setting Theory. Agenda-Setting theory occurs when the media provides information that is relevant issues of society that reflects the minds of the consumer of the media (Carazo-Barrantes 2021). Agenda-Setting theory is associated with the concept of gatekeeping meaning that the media has control over what events get distributed through their platform and how they choose to discuss these events (Carazo-Barrantes 2021). Social media has changed the course of Agenda-Setting, because it has changed how gatekeeping works (Carazo-Barrantes 2021). Individuals can now decide for themselves what information will become public and what information, so the media has had to evolve to encompass what is posted by individuals as well as what is reported on through the media (Carazo-Barrantes 2021).

Mean World Syndrome. Mean World Syndrome is defined as the tendency for those who watch television often to believe that the world is a more crime ridden, scary, and hostile place than it actually is, to be more afraid than others of becoming a victim of violent crime, and to have less trust in others (Chandler and Bushman 2007). This tendency was given its name by the creator of Cultivation Theory, George Gerbner and was partly based on the narcissism that individuals believed existed in their world due to what they see in the media (Jamieson and Romer 2014). Mean World Syndrome was widely seen as a consequence of Cultivation Theory,

meaning that the issues that individuals were believing due to Cultivation Theory created a deep fear of violence in the world around them (Jamieson and Romer 2014). Although Mean World Syndrome is a tendency that typically stems from fictional television, it proves that television that focuses on violence and that dramatizes violence is what causes the fear of the world around those affected and it can affect their perceptions of real-world crime (Jamieson and Romer 2014).

Framing Theory. The idea behind framing theory is that any issue can have many different perspectives that it is viewed through (Chong and Druckman 2007). Each perspective can be constructed by having multiple implications or considerations and individuals have to create a certain orientation of their view of a situation based on their prior stereotypes, stories, and cultural influences (Chong and Druckman 2007). Framing Theory couples well with Cultivation Theory when considering how media affects individuals because Framing Theory explains why individuals are so easily influenced by media because of the stories and stereotypes that are then applied in Cultivation Theory (Chong and Druckman 2007; Silva 2019).

Social Construction of Reality. Berger and Luckmann's (1966) Social Construction of reality is based in the idea that the interaction between individuals and groups over time creates habits based on other's actions around them. Interactions with the world around each individual is what builds their reality because an individual cannot exist without interacting with the world around them and learning from their interactions (Berger and Luckmann 1966). This relates to mass media through Framing Theory, by explaining why individuals perceptions are based on stories and stereotypes, it is because humans are learning from the world around them at all times throughout their existence and applying this knowledge to the world around them (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Silva 2019).

Policies for Responsible Media Coverage

As previously stated, there is a journalistic ethical code which states that when reporting a story, journalists must report in a way that minimizes the potential for harm (Dahmen 2018; Lankford and Madfis 2018). Some examples of this may include refraining from offensive language and graphic or explicit content as well as not naming or publishing photographs of living victims of certain crimes, such as those sexual in nature, without the permission of those affected (Lankford and Madfis 2018). The Society of Professional Journalists (2014) Code of Ethics calls for reporters to consider not just the short term effects of an article but also to consider the long term effects considering the reach and how permanent media publication is (Dahmen 2018).

Media coverage of sensitive events has been growing and evolving to ensure safety and privacy for the victims involved, but in some capacities the media has also grown to try to halt copycat incidences (Lankford and Madfis 2018). The best example of this is the evolution of media discussion of suicide. The World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have recommended precautions for reporters to take when reporting on suicide related events as to discourage imitations and contagion (Lankford and Madfis 2018).

Additions to the Literature

This research uses self-collected data from national and local news sources to add to the current literature on the portrayal of perpetrators of mass murders in media by exploring and analyzing the content of articles written about mass murders to determine common words and themes. Existing literature lacks on actual quantitative data on this topic, and much of the current literature discusses why this would be an important study without actually performing the study and getting the data. Other existing literature compares very similar events and how often certain

terms or phrases are searched online. There is limited research that analyzes the difference in themes and verbiage in national and local news sources with two very different mass murder events. Though it has been shown that the media needs to update the way that shooters are discussed in articles, this research quantitatively shows the glorification or lack of glorification of perpetrators of mass shootings.

CHAPTER 3 - HYPOTHESES

H₁: National news coverage of each mass shooting will have a higher proportion of content focused on the shooter than the local news coverage.

H₂: National news coverage will use the perpetrator name and background more frequently than local news coverage.

H₃: Use of the perpetrator name, background, and references will decrease over the month following the shooting with little to no mention of the perpetrator in media coverage of the shooting during the one-year anniversary month.

H₄: The Las Vegas Concert shooting will contain more references to the shooter due to the high body count and national significance than the Dayton Nightclub shooting.

CHAPTER 4 – DATA AND METHODS

Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing qualitative data through a systematic approach that involves finding themes or patterns as a way to classify data (Lapadat 2010). This method of qualitative research can be widely used for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes within a set of data (Nowell et al. 2017). The themes are interpreted by then pursuing commonalities, relationships, patterns, or explanatory principles (Lapadat 2010). Thematic analysis is an approach and strategy used in case study research to manage large volumes of data without losing themes and context and to assist with the interpretation of the data (Lapadat 2010). Thematic analysis uses coding as a basic strategy to sort data into various thematic categories, therefore making it useful when summarizing data and it leads to a well-structured approach when working with data (Nowell et al. 2017; Lapadat, 2010).

Studies that research mass shootings typically conduct quantitative content analyses to do so that show the amount of attention that the media pays to a particular aspect of a shooting (Silva 2019). These studies typically compare two datasets: information about the perpetrator and event characteristics and quantifying the news coverage of each event according to the general articles as well as the verbiage (Silvia 2019). This study uses open source data to conduct quantitative content analyses.

This research was conducted by performing a content analysis on the Dayton, OH nightclub shooting and the Las Vegas, NV concert shooting (Appendix A) using three different news outlets: AP News, The Dayton Daily News, and the Las Vegas Sun. These particular sources were chosen so that there would be representation of one national news source and one local news source for each of the two events. The national news source is the same for both

events as to compare the way that national news sources cover larger scope mass murder events and smaller scope mass murder events.

This content analysis consisted of reading through articles written by each source within a month of the shooting event that they correspond to as well as the month of the one year anniversary of each shooting. The timeframe of one month comes from the findings of Croitoru et al. (2020) who determined that the highest spike in searches for a mass murder is the month following the event. A coding sheet was created (Appendix C) that focuses on certain themes, such as a focus on the background of the shooter, and certain words or phrases, such as “victim”, “shooter”, and the name of each shooter.

The coding sheet was devised before any articles are sorted through as to have a uniform method of pulling out themes and quotes from articles. Relevant words and phrases were added to this coding sheet that follow the themes of the victims and the perpetrator in an attempt to discern the proportion of each article that falls under each general theme. Past literature has used categories for relevant words and phrases such as deceased victim, perpetrator, injured victims, survivors and heroes on the scene, community shock and grief, and law officials (Dahmen 2018).

The articles were found by going to the websites for each of the sources and searching the event. Dayton Daily News and The Las Vegas Sun both had paywalls associated with the website (the author received access to the Dayton Daily News for \$0.99 and The Las Vegas Sun for \$9.99) but AP News did not, so all articles were accessible without paying. When searching the events on each website, the author was able to find articles about the Las Vegas shooting by typing in “Las Vegas Concert Shooting” to both AP News and The Las Vegas Sun, however for the Dayton Nightclub shooting, the author had to be more specific by typing in “Ned Peppers Nightclub Shooting Dayton OH 2019” to AP News and “Ned Peppers Shooting” to Dayton Daily

News. All articles about the topic that fit into the timeframe were then organized into folders and saved as PDF documents labelled APV#, VS#, APD#, and DD#, with the # being a number associated to each unique article. If the article was an anniversary month article, it was labelled APVAn#, VSAn#, APDAn#, and DDAn#. Each number continued to correspond to the same article as the article was coded and added to SPSS.

When coding, every article was read in numerical order by source (for example APV1 was first, followed by APV2) and if the article was not coded, the article and a reason for it not being coded was written down. Some examples of reasons that an article was not coded are: article is adjacently related to event but is off topic, article was syndicated and was not written by this news source, the article was about a person related to this shooting but was not about this event, and the article was about a different event altogether. The author coded all 88 articles as to ensure coding would be the same throughout the project. While skimming each article, the sections that corresponded with a number, such as the number of times that the perpetrator's name was mentioned, were counted with tally marks and any interesting comments or notes would be written down. The rest of the coding sheet would be filled out immediately following the completion of skimming each article.

For any section corresponding with a number (with the exception of "Law Enforcement Based?") each section would be automatically marked with a yes if there were any tally marks. For the section talking about focus, following the completion of the article, the reader would decide whether the article was perpetrator or victim based, using the number of times that the perpetrator or victims were mentioned, the title of the article, and overall impressions of the article to decide, and if they had a difficult time determining this, it was determined to be even or unsure and then a note was written as to why. As for whether or not the article was law

enforcement based, this was based on the content of the article and whether the article was written more about law enforcement or from the perspective of law enforcement, not just based on how many times law enforcement was mentioned in the article. How much of the article was based on heroic action was determined by the title of the article as well as the general theme of the article and physically how much of the space was taken talking about heroes of the event. Community response was another section that had the potential to be filled out during the skimming of the article as community response was mentioned, the responses were circled. For both of these events, there was no clear motive so the section about motive for the crime had a section to describe and the reader would be filled out based on how often a motive or the search for a motive was mentioned. Finally, the overall feel of the article was circled based on the reader's perception of the article following reading the article. Every article's date was written on the coding sheet and the length of the article was recorded as either very short, usually just a paragraph, short, a few paragraphs, medium, around a page to a page and a half, medium long, about two to two and a half pages, long, around three to three and a half pages, and very long which was anything more than that. The last step of coding was to write comments about what the article was about and any interesting themes in the comment section.

Following coding, each coding sheet was inputted into SPSS with each question listed as a different variable in SPSS. This research included 36 variables and there were 88 articles that were coded and digitized.

CHAPTER 5 – QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate the descriptive statistics for the entire sample. The total sample size was 88 articles and the articles were split between tables 1.1 and 1.2 by shooting, with table 1.1 describing statistics about the Las Vegas Concert shooting and table 1.2 describing statistics about the Dayton Nightclub shooting.

[Insert Table 1.1 here]

Table 1.1 shows the descriptive statistics of respondent characteristics for Las Vegas Concert shooting from AP News and The Las Vegas Sun. The majority of the sample (64.6 percent) were victim focused articles. Out of the victim focused articles, The Las Vegas Sun had 72 percent of articles that were victim focused while AP News had 56.5 percent of articles that were victim focused. The perpetrator's name is mentioned in 45.8 percent of the Las Vegas related articles. The articles from AP News mentioned the name of the perpetrator in 65.2 percent of articles from the source while The Las Vegas Sun had 72 percent of the articles that did not mention the perpetrator's name. This statistic is very interesting because of the stark contrast, which is consistent with both H_1 and H_2 . Similarly, the victim names were mentioned exactly half of the time between the two sources, with 60.9 percent of AP News articles not mentioning the name of the victims and 60.0 percent of The Las Vegas Sun articles mentioning the victim names.

[Insert Table 1.2 here]

Table 1.2 shows the descriptive statistics of the articles for the Dayton Nightclub shooting from AP News and Dayton Daily News. The majority of the articles mentioned the perpetrator's name (70 percent) and victim names (60 percent). Both sources mentioned the perpetrator's name in the majority of the articles, and interestingly, a higher percentage of AP

News articles (76.2 percent) mentioned victim names than Dayton Daily News articles (42.1 percent). Also interestingly, the word “killed” or a synonym for it used in reference to the victims was used 100 percent of the time by both news sources.

[Insert Table 2.1 here]

Table 2.1 shows the bivariate relationship between perpetrator name and the Las Vegas Concert shooting sources. There was a 37.2 percentage difference between AP News and The Vegas Sun in regards to the perpetrator name being mentioned which means AP News mentioned the name of the perpetrator than The Vegas Sun ($p=0.010$). This finding is substantively interesting and it has statistical significance ($p=0.010$) so the hypothesis is supported.

[Insert Table 2.2 here]

Table 2.2 shows the bivariate relationship between the perpetrator’s background and the Las Vegas Concert shooting sources. There was a 19.1 percentage difference between the background being mentioned between each source ($p=0.145$). Both sources did not mention the perpetrator’s name often throughout the sample articles. This finding did not have statistical significance and but it partially supports the hypothesis that the perpetrator’s background will be mentioned more in national news sources than local news sources.

[Insert Table 3.1 here]

Table 3.1 shows the bivariate relationship between perpetrator name and Dayton Nightclub shooting source. There was a 13 percentage difference between the name being mentioned between AP News and the Dayton Daily News. This difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.369$). This partially supports the hypothesis that the national news source would use the perpetrator’s name more frequently than the local news sources.

[Insert Table 3.2 here]

Table 3.2 shows the bivariate relationship between whether or not the perpetrator's background was mentioned in an article and the Dayton Nightclub shooting sources. There was a 55.6 percentage difference between the articles that mentioned the background of the perpetrator. This difference was statistically significant ($p=0.000$). This supports the hypothesis that the national news sources are more likely to mention the background of the perpetrator when reporting on mass murder incidents than local news sources.

[Insert Table 4.1 here]

Table 4.1 shows the bivariate relationship between whether the perpetrator's name was mentioned and Las Vegas and Dayton news sources. The two groups of Las Vegas related articles (AP News Las Vegas and The Las Vegas Sun) were combined for the Las Vegas news variable and two groups of Dayton related articles (AP News Dayton and Dayton Daily News) were combined to create the Dayton news variable. There was a 24.2 percentage difference between Las Vegas and Dayton news sources that mentioned the perpetrator's name when reporting on the mass murder event. This difference was statistically significant ($p=0.023$). This does not support the hypothesis that the news sources about the Las Vegas mass murder would contain more references to the perpetrator than the news sources about the Dayton mass murder because of its large scale and national significance.

[Insert Table 4.2 here]

Table 4.2 shows the bivariate relationship between whether the perpetrator's background was mentioned in each article and Las Vegas and Dayton news sources. There was a 15.8 percentage difference between Las Vegas and Dayton news sources when considering articles that did mention the perpetrator's background. This difference was not statistically significant

($p=0.124$). This does not support the hypothesis that the news sources about the Las Vegas mass murder would contain more references to the perpetrator than the news sources about the Dayton mass murder because of its large scale and national significance.

[Insert Table 5.1 here]

Table 5.1 shows the bivariate relationship between whether the perpetrator's name was mentioned and national and local news sources. The two groups of AP News articles were combined for the national news variable and The Las Vegas Sun and Dayton Daily News were combined to create the local news sources. There was a 27.3 percentage difference between national and local news sources that mentioned the perpetrator's name when reporting on the mass murder event. This difference was statistically significant ($p=0.010$). This supports the hypothesis that national news sources would use the name of the perpetrator more than local news sources.

[Insert Table 5.2 here]

Table 5.2 shows the bivariate relationship between whether the perpetrator's background was mentioned in each article and national and local news sources. There was a 36.3 percentage difference between national and local news sources when considering articles that did mention the perpetrator's background. This difference was statistically significant ($p=0.000$). This supports the hypothesis that national news sources would mention the perpetrator's background more frequently than local news sources.

[Insert Table 5.3 here]

Table 5.3 shows the bivariate relationship between the focus of each article and national and local news source. The options for focus of each article included: victim focused, perpetrator focused, even, and unsure. There was a 34.1 percentage difference between national and local

news sources when considering the article as perpetrator focused. This difference was statistically significant ($p=0.001$). This supports the hypothesis that national news sources have a higher proportion of content focused on the perpetrator than local news coverage.

[Insert Table 5.4 here]

Table 5.4 shows the bivariate relationship between the week of the shooting month that each article was posted in and how frequently the perpetrator's name was mentioned. The first three weeks following the shootings was shown to have higher percentages of the perpetrator's name being mentioned than the last two weeks of the months and the anniversary month. This difference was statistically significant ($p=0.039$). This supports the hypothesis that use of the perpetrator name will decrease over the month following the shooting and there will be far less use of the name during the anniversary month of the shootings.

[Insert Table 6.1 here]

Table 6.1 compares the means of the number of times that the perpetrator's name was mentioned in national and local news sources as well as the number of times the perpetrator's background was mentioned in national and local news sources through a T-Test. The mean number of times that the perpetrator's name was mentioned in the national news articles was 6.6136 while the mean for local sources was 2.227 times which means that the mean difference is 4.386 for the number of times that the perpetrator's name was mentioned. This number was statistically significant ($t=2.517$, $p=0.014$) and supports the hypothesis that national news sources would mention the perpetrator's name more than local news sources.

The mean number of times that a perpetrator's background was mentioned in the national news articles was 3.140 while the mean for local news sources was 0.628, which is a mean difference of 2.512. This number was statistically significant ($t=3.193$, $p=.002$) and supports the

hypothesis that national news sources would mention the perpetrator's background more than local news sources.

CHAPTER 6 – QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

While filling out each coding sheet, themes, comments, and general thoughts were recorded based on the skimming of each article, allowing for the qualitative analysis of each source. Even though there were only three sources, the qualitative analysis will treat AP News Las Vegas and AP News Dayton as two separate entities for the sake of comparison. An important fact to remember throughout the following analyses is that with events like this, victim names are often released after perpetrator names, since all victim's next of kin must be notified before the names can be publically released. This could have a thematic event for these events, as the articles written very shortly after each event may reference the perpetrator more than the victims because that is what is known and allowed to be written about.

The first source that was coded for this research was AP News Las Vegas. One of the first themes that was noticed with this source was that shortly after the event, there were many articles that were incorrect and required AP News to issue corrections to fix this issue. Many assumptions were made by this source that were published quickly and later rescinded, with the number one assumption being the motive behind the attack. At first they were claiming that it was a group of individuals working for ISIS but this was quickly fixed when the information about the one perpetrator was revealed by police. The assumptions made about this mass murder event could be potentially harmful, as it is misleading information. Another theme from this source was that AP News did not name many of the victims in articles. The focus seemed to be more on the perpetrator and trying to figure out his reasoning for committing this heinous event. This had some exceptions, but AP News was largely perpetrator based, especially throughout the timelines of the mass murder event that they posted. In fact, even in articles about the victims, the perpetrator's name was often still mentioned, though sometimes they would replace his name

with “a shooter” or “a gunman” and some would mention the name at the beginning and then just refer to him as “the shooter”. Another theme from AP News articles about the Las Vegas concert shooting is that many of the articles were about police or were law enforcement based. Many articles interviewed law enforcement, responding police officers, and responding security guards. AP News did have many anniversary articles, but something that was still interesting is that most of these articles still named the shooter, even if they only had his name a few times. This goes against a hypothesis for this research that the anniversary articles would not mention the perpetrator’s name often.

The Vegas Sun, a local Las Vegas news source, had more articles that did not mention the perpetrator’s name and that focused on the victims of this mass murder and the impact that they had on the world. There were many stories that were more personal than the stories from AP News, such as a story about a man who lost his wedding ring while helping others get to safety. Additionally, there were many stories about The articles were generally more action oriented, especially the anniversary articles, mainly commenting on memorials and what can be done to remember those who were lost in this event. Another interesting theme of the anniversary articles in particular is that they mentioned the gunman much less frequently than AP News anniversary articles did. He was frequently referred to as “a gunman” in these articles, and they would often name victims instead of the perpetrator. The difference between The Vegas Sun and AP News is that this mass murder, one of the most heinous mass murders in United States history, happened right in their backyard to individuals who live in their community, so it definitely makes sense for The Vegas Sun to include more personal and victim based stories, because the situation is personal for them.

The Dayton Nightclub shooting was very different from the Las Vegas Concert shooting. Mainly because of the circumstances, a young man from the Dayton area arriving to the bar with his sister and friend and then running to the car only to return with a gun and the desire to murder as many individuals as possible. Because of the local and intimate nature of this shooting and the aggressive nature and past of the perpetrator, AP News referred to the victims much more frequently than they did for the Las Vegas mass murder, yet there was also a lot more conversation about the perpetrator's background. As is shown in table 4.1 and table 4.2, both Dayton sources mentioned the name and background of the perpetrator more frequently than the Las Vegas sources. Almost every article for both AP News and the Dayton Daily News mentioned at least one victim- the perpetrator's sister. Some articles were wondering if the perpetrator knew that she was one of the individuals that he shot and some were just remarking on how terrible that situation is.

AP News had many articles that were about the timeline of this mass murder, but many of these timelines started with the perpetrator's time in high school, when he used to have fantasies of killing individuals. Another interesting theme in the AP News articles about the Dayton shooting is that many of the articles mentioned the words "thoughts and prayers" or synonyms, such as "Dayton Strong," and this was often in reference to the then President's remarks about the shooting.

Dayton Daily News was an interesting shift from what was hypothesized in that almost every single article named the shooter. This could be because, again, of the local and intimate nature of the mass murder event, since he was a local individual and many other locals had many stories about him and the warning signs that he had exhibited throughout high school about his desire to do something like this. But some other themes from Dayton Daily News went more

with the earlier thoughts, such as most articles mentioning victims by name and many articles talking about heroic actions and community response to this mass murder event. The community response was interesting because many community members were angry, especially at the systems that allowed this horrific event to take place, such as gun laws in Ohio. Dayton Daily News also had some interesting insight into the eyes of those who were present that night, such as talking about some individual's post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following the event and the lasting effect of this mass murder on those who were present, as well as stories into the lives (and deaths) of some of the victims. For example, one article was written talking to the son of one of the deceased and how he held his father as he passed away. A final theme from the Dayton Daily News articles was talking about the heroic actions of the bouncer for Ned Peppers Bar (the building that the shooting happened in front of), since he was able to take the gun away from the perpetrator after the perpetrator had been shot by police, and he was willing to risk his life to ensure that the shooter did not get inside of the bar where over 250 individuals were cowering for their lives.

CHAPTER 7 - SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This research examined the effects of news media outlet type on the coverage of two mass shootings as well as the one-year anniversary of each shooting. This research used both quantitative and thematic content analysis to examine two mass shootings and their news coverage to quantify the changes in reporting over time. The mass shootings that were analyzed were the 2017 Las Vegas Concert Shooting and the 2019 Dayton, OH Nightclub Shooting. This research examined both local and national news coverage from the websites of three different media outlets in order to see if there are significant differences in the coverage of each incident. In addition, each news article from the month following each shooting as well as the month of the one year anniversary of each shooting was analyzed to determine the number of times the shooter's name is used and the proportion of the story that is perpetrator, fact, or victim based.

Three of the hypotheses for this research were supported and one was not supported. The first hypothesis for this research was that national news coverage of each mass murder event would have a higher proportion of content that is focused on the perpetrator than the local news coverage. This hypothesis was supported by this research. The second hypothesis for this research was that the national news would use the name and background of the perpetrator more than local news coverage. This was also supported by this research. The third hypothesis for this research was that the perpetrator's name and background would decrease throughout the month following the mass murder event and there would be little to no mention of the perpetrator in the one year anniversary month. This hypothesis was supported by this research. Finally, the fourth hypothesis for this research was that the Las Vegas mass murder event would contain more references to the perpetrator than the Dayton mass murder event due to the high victim count. This hypothesis was not supported by this research, in fact the opposite of this hypothesis was

found to be partially supported. This research found that the Dayton Nightclub shooting had more references to the perpetrator than the Las Vegas shooting, which is likely due to the local and more intimate nature of this mass murder event.

When considering how theories are consistent with the findings, Mean World syndrome is one that connects well, since each of the news sources perpetuated so much perpetrator-based content. This relates to Mad World syndrome because when articles such as these focus so much on the perpetrators of mass shootings and mass murders, it can make the readers believe that there is more anger in the world than there is. Cultivation theory similarly means that the amount of perpetrator-based content can lead to copycats and more similar mass shootings or mass murders. Overall the theories support the notion that when the backgrounds, motives, and methods of mass shootings are shared frequently, it can lead to mass negativity about humanity and copycat events.

Previous research generally did not utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods when conducting similar projects. The findings of this research were consistent with findings by Dahmen (2018) and Lankford and Madfis (2018). Dahmen (2018) found that media coverage of mass shootings and mass murders can cause more destruction than it is worth. Lankford and Madfis (2018) found that copycat crimes can come from individuals who want fame or glory, which is something that news coverage can create. This is consistent with the hypotheses for this research.

This research includes limitations as well as strengths. A limitation of this research was that only three different news sources will be analyzed. This limitation means that there are many news sources that were not be represented in this research. Another limitation of this research was that it only includes news in the form of articles and not social media posts or video

broadcasts, therefore not including other methods of indulging the public interest. The fixes to these limitations would include more individuals working with data analysis and more time to be able to dissect multiple different mediums and sources. A strength of this research is that it utilized a coding sheet that provides quantitative data to the literature of this research, where many current studies are not based in quantitative as well as qualitative evidence.

REFERENCES

- Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training. N.d. "ALERRT Active Shooter Data."
(<http://www.activeshooterdata.org/index.html>).
- Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. "The Social Construction of Reality." *Anchor Books*.
- Branson-Potts, Hailey, Ben Poston, Matt Pearce, and Kate Mather. 2017. "Las Vegas Shooting; Mayhem in Vegas: 'Like a War Zone'; Gunman Kills 58, Injures 527 at Concert; Scenes of Chaos and Heroics Unfold as Bullets Rain on Country Music Fans on the Strip; Shooter is Found Dead in 32nd Floor Hotel Room." *Los Angeles Times*. (<http://proxy-etown.klnpa.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy-etown.klnpa.org/newspapers/las-vegas-shooting-mayhem-like-war-zone-gunman/docview/1945530938/se-2?accountid=10773>).
- Callahan, Valerie and Jared Rosenberger. 2015. "Media, Gender, and Fear of Crime." *Criminal Justice Review* 40(3):322-339.
- Carazo-Barrantes, Carolina. 2021. "Agenda-Setting in a Social Media Age: Exploring New Methodological Approaches." *Agenda-Setting Journal: Theory, Practice, Critique* 5(1):31-55.
- Chandler, Jesse and Brad Bushman. 2007. "Mean World Syndrome." *Encyclopedia of Children, Adolescents, and the Media*.
- Chong, Dennis and James Druckman. 2007. "Framing Theory." *Annual Review of Political Science* 10(1):103-126.
- Croitoru, Arie, Sara Kien, Ron Mahabir, Jacek Radzikowski, Andrew Crooks, Ross Schuchard, Tatyanna Begay, Ashley Lee, Alex Bettios, and Anthony Stefanidis. 2020. "Responses to

- Mass Shooting Events.” *American Society of Criminology* 19:335-360. doi: 10.1111/1745-9133.12486.
- Dahmen, Nicole. 2018. “Visually Reporting Mass Shootings: U.S. Newspaper Photographic Coverage of Three Mass School Shootings.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 62(2):163-180.
- Davies, Emily, Craig, Tim, and Natanson, Hannah. 2019. “‘It’s Haunting Now’: Ex-Girlfriend says Dayton Shooter Had Hallucinations.” *The Washington Post*. (<https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/ex-girlfriend-says-ohio-shooter-heard-voices-talked-about-dark-evil-things-2080967>)
- Ellingson, Laura, and Kristian Borofka. 2014. “Grounded Theory.” *SAGE Reference: Encyclopedia of Health Communication* 538.
- Gun Violence Archive. 2021. “Charts and Maps.” *Gun Violence Archive*. (<https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>).
- Harcup, Tony and Deirdre O’Neill. 2017. “What is News?” *Journalism Studies* 18(12):1470-1488. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2016.1150193>.
- Holcombe, Madeline. 2021. “The US has Reported at Least 45 Mass Shootings in the Last Month.” *CNN*. (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/16/us/mass-shootings-45-one-month/index.html>).
- Jaffe, Alexandra, Aamer Madhani, and Michael Balsamo. 2021. “Biden Orders Gun Control Actions – But They Show his Limits.” *The Associated Press*. (<https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-violence-merrick-garland-gun-politics-gun-violence-7ddb30681ca3abbf1a0faa286e3df7b2>).

- Jamieson, Patrick and Daniel Romer. 2014. "Violence in Popular U.S. Prime Time TV Dramas and the Cultivation of Fear: A Time Series Analysis." *Media and Communication* 2(2):31-41. doi: <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v2i2.8>.
- Lacanlale, Rio. 2020. "After Mass Shooting, Las Vegas Police Decide Which Deaths Count." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. (<https://www.reviewjournal.com/crime/shootings/after-mass-shooting-las-vegas-police-decide-which-deaths-count-2129464/>).
- Lankford, Adam and Eric Madfis. 2018. "Don't Name Them, Don't Show Them, But Report Everything Else: A Pragmatic Proposal for Denying Mass Killers the Attention They Seek and Deterring Future Offenders." *American Behavioral Scientist* 62(2):260-279.
- Lapadat, Judith C. 2010. "Thematic Analysis." *SAGE Reference: Encyclopedia of Case Study Research* 926-927.
- Levin, Jack, Julie Wiest, Adam Lankford, and Eric Madfis. 2018. "Covering Mass Murder: An Experimental Examination of the Effect of News Focus—Killer, Victim, or Hero—On Reader Interest." *American Behavioral Scientist* 62(2): 181-194.
- Meindl, James and Jonathan Ivy. 2017. "Mass Shootings: The Role of the Media in Promoting Generalized Imitation." *Am J Public Health* 107(3): 368-370.
- Nowell, Lorelli, Jill Norris, Deborah White, and Nancy Moules. 2017. "Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16(1).
- Oktay, Julianne. 2012. "Grounded Theory." *Oxford Scholarship Online*. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199753697.001.0001.
- Potter, W. 2014. "A Critical Analysis of Cultivation Theory: Cultivation." *Journal of Communication* 64(6):1015-1036. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12128>.

- Przybyla, Heidi. 2020. "Gun Violence Grows During Coronavirus Pandemic Group's Data Shows." *NBC News*. (<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/meet-the-press/blog/meet-press-blog-latest-news-analysis-data-driving-political-discussion-n988541/ncrd1223551#blogHeader>).
- Shanahan, James, Nancy Signorielli, and Michael Morgan. 2014. "Cultivation Theory." *Encyclopedia of Health Communication* 1:276-277.
- Silva, Jason. 2019. "A Media Distortion Analysis of Mass Shootings." *CUNY Academic Works*.
- Silverstein, Jason. 2020. "There Were More Mass Shootings than Days in 2019." *CBS News*.
- Society of Professional Journalists. 2014. "SJP Code of Ethics." *Society of Professional Journalists*. (<http://www.sjp.org/ethicscode.asp>).
- Times Editorial Board. 2020. "Another Sign of the Times: Mass Shootings are Spiking." *Tribune News Service*. (<https://www.courant.com/opinion/editorials/hc-ed-latimes-mass-shootings-0924-20200924-koa5cmr7qnbipac3vfdmbwdyqq-story.html>).
- Towers, Sherry, Andres Gomez-Lievano, Maryam Khan, Anuj Mubayi, and Carlos Castillo-Chavez. 2015. "Contagion in Mass Killings and School Shootings." *PLoS ONE* 10(7) doi:e0117259.
- Thompson, Derek. 2017. "Mass Shootings in America are Spreading Like a Disease." *The Atlantic*. (<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2017/11/americas-mass-shooting-epidemic-contagious/545078/>)
- Williams, Kevin, Knowles, Hannah, and Whoriskey, Peter. 2019. "Gunman Killed Sister, Eight Others in Second Deadly U.S. Mass Shooting in 24 Hours." *The Washington Post*.
- Wright, Valerie and Heather Washington. 2018. "The Blame Game: News, Blame, and Young Homicide Victims." *Sociological Focus* 51(4): 350-364.

APPENDIX A

Summary of the Mass Murders Studied in this Research

Event	Date	Killed*	Injured	Description
Las Vegas Concert Shooting Las Vegas, NV	October 1, 2017	60 (Including one who died in 2019 and one in 2020)	527, 411 by gunfire	On October 1, 2017, 64 year-old Steven Paddock was on the 32nd floor of the Las Vegas Strip Mandalay Bay Hotel when he opened fire on the Route 91 Music Festival on the Strip below (Branson-Potts et al. 2017; Lacanlale 2020).
Dayton Night Club Shooting Dayton, OH	August 4, 2019	9	27, 17 by gunfire	On August 4, 2019, 24 year-old Connor Betts approached the Ned Peppers bar in the Oregon District in Dayton, Ohio and opened fire (Williams, Knowles, and Whoriskey 2019).

*Not including the shooter, both shooters died following their respective shootings, the Las Vegas Shooter by suicide and the Dayton Night Club shooter was killed by police.

APPENDIX B

Table 1.1.
Descriptive Statistics of Articles

<u>Variable</u>	<u>APV (%)</u>	<u>VS (%)</u>	<u>Total N</u>	<u>Total (%)</u>
Need for Change or Mention of Past Events				
Yes	39.1	24.0	15	31.3
No	60.9	76.0	33	68.8
Focus of the Article				
Victim Focused	56.5	72.0	31	64.6
Perpetrator Focused	21.7	16.0	9	18.8
Even	13.0	0.0	3	6.3
Unsure	8.7	12.0	5	10.4
Was Community Response Mentioned				
Yes	52.2	72.0	30	62.5
No	47.8	28.0	18	37.5
Was the Motive for the Shooting Mentioned				
A focus of the article	4.3	8.0	3	6.3
Mentioned	34.8	12.0	11	22.9
Not Mentioned	60.9	80.0	34	70.8
Was the Perpetrator's Name Mentioned				
Yes	65.2	28.0	22	45.8
No	34.8	72.0	26	54.2
Was the Perpetrator's Background Mentioned				
Mentioned	39.1	20.0	14	29.2
Not Mentioned	60.9	80.0	34	70.8
Was the word "killed" or Synonyms Used (P)				
Yes	43.5	12.0	13	27.1
No	56.5	88.0	35	72.9
Were any Victim Names Mentioned				
Yes	39.1	60.0	24	50.0
No	60.9	40.0	24	50.0
Was the word "killed" or Synonyms Used (V)				
Yes	100.0	92.0	46	95.8
No	0.0	8.0	2	4.2

Table 1.2.
Descriptive Statistics of Articles

<u>Variable</u>	<u>APD (%)</u>	<u>DD (%)</u>	<u>Total N</u>	<u>Total (%)</u>
Need for Change or Mention of Past Events				
Yes	52.4	21.1	15	37.5
No	47.6	78.9	25	62.5
Focus of the Article				
Victim Focused	23.8	63.2	17	42.5
Perpetrator Focused	71.4	5.3	16	40.0
Even	4.8	5.3	2	5.0
Unsure	0.0	26.3	5	12.5
Was Community Response Mentioned				
Yes	71.4	84.2	31	77.5
No	28.6	15.8	9	22.5
Was the Motive for the Shooting Mentioned				
A focus of the article	19.0	5.3	5	12.5
Mentioned	47.7	0.0	10	25.0
Not Mentioned	33.3	94.7	25	62.5
Was the Perpetrator's Name Mentioned				
Yes	76.2	63.2	28	70.0
No	23.8	36.8	12	30.0
Was the Perpetrator's Background Mentioned				
Mentioned	71.4	15.8	18	45.0
Not Mentioned	28.6	84.2	22	55.0
Was the word "killed" or Synonyms Used (P)				
Yes	66.7	57.9	25	62.5
No	33.3	42.1	15	37.5
Were any Victim Names Mentioned				
Yes	76.2	42.1	24	60.0
No	23.8	57.8	16	40.0
Was the word "killed" or Synonyms Used (V)				
Yes	100.0	100.0	40	100.0
No	0.0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 2.1.
Perpetrator Name by Las Vegas Source

Perpetrator Name	Source (Percent)		
	APV (n=23)	Vegas Sun (n=25)	Total (n=48)
Was the Name of the Perpetrator Mentioned?			
Yes	65.2	28.0	45.8
No	34.8	72.0	54.2

Note: $\chi^2 = 6.684$; $p = 0.010$

Table 2.2.
Perpetrator Background by Las Vegas Source

Perpetrator Background	Source (Percent)		
	APV (n=23)	Vegas Sun (n=25)	Total (n=48)
Was the Perpetrator's Background Mentioned?			
Mentioned	39.1	20.0	29.2
Not Mentioned	60.9	80.0	70.8

Note: $\chi^2 = 2.122$; $p = 0.145$

Table 3.1.
Perpetrator Name by Dayton Source

Perpetrator Name	Source (Percent)		
	APD (n=21)	Dayton Daily (n=19)	Total (n=40)
Was the Name of the Perpetrator Mentioned?			
Yes	76.2	63.2	70.0
No	23.8	36.8	30.0

Note: $\chi^2 = 0.807$; $p = 0.369$

Table 3.2.
Perpetrator Background by Dayton Source

Perpetrator Background	Source (Percent)		
	APD (n=21)	Dayton Daily (n=19)	Total (n=47)
Was the Perpetrator's Background Mentioned?			
Mentioned	71.4	15.8	45.0
Not Mentioned	28.6	84.2	55.0

Note: $\chi^2 = 12.477$; $p = 0.000$

Table 4.1.
Perpetrator Name by Las Vegas and Dayton Source

Perpetrator Name	Source (Percent)		
	Las Vegas (n=48)	Dayton (n=40)	Total (n=88)
Was the Name of the Perpetrator Mentioned?			
Yes	45.8	70.0	56.8
No	54.2	30.0	43.2

Note: $\chi^2 = 5.194$; $p = 0.023$

Table 4.2.
Perpetrator Background by Las Vegas and Dayton Source

Perpetrator Background	Source (Percent)		
	Las Vegas (n=48)	Dayton (n=40)	Total (n=88)
Was the Perpetrator's Background Mentioned?			
Mentioned	29.2	45.0	36.4
Not Mentioned	70.8	55.0	63.6

Note: $\chi^2 = 2.364$; $p = 0.124$

Table 5.1.
Perpetrator Name by National and Local Source

Perpetrator Name	Source (Percent)		
	National (n=44)	Local (n=44)	Total (n=88)
Was the Name of the Perpetrator Mentioned?			
Mentioned	70.5	43.2	56.8
Not Mentioned	29.5	56.8	43.2

Note: $\chi^2 = 6.669$; $p = 0.010$

Table 5.2.
Perpetrator Background by National and Local Source

Perpetrator Background	Source (Percent)		
	National (n=44)	Local (n=44)	Total (n=88)
Was the Perpetrator's Background Mentioned?			
Mentioned	54.5	18.2	36.4
Not Mentioned	45.5	81.8	63.6

Note: $\chi^2 = 12.571$; $p = 0.000$

Table 5.3.
Focus of Article by National and Local Source

Focus of Article	Source (Percent)		
	National (n=44)	Local (n=44)	Total (n=88)
What was the focus of the article?			
Victim Focused	40.9	68.2	54.5
Perpetrator Focused	45.5	11.4	28.4
Even	9.1	2.3	5.7
Unsure	4.5	18.2	11.4

Note: $\chi^2 = 17.400$; $p = 0.001$

Table 5.4.**Perpetrator Name by Shooting Month Date**

Perpetrator Name	Shooting Month Date (Percent)						Total
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Not in Shooting Month	
	(n=42)	(n=11)	(n=5)	(n=11)	(n=1)	(n=18)	(n=88)
Was the Name of the Perpetrator Mentioned?							
Yes	66.7	81.8	60.0	36.4	0.0	33.3	56.8
No	33.3	18.2	40.0	63.6	100.0	66.7	43.2

Note: $\chi^2 = 11.721$; $p = 0.039$

	National		Local		Mean Difference	T-test
	N=44	N=43	N=44	N=43		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Number of times Perpetrator Name is Mentioned	6.6136	11.014	2.227	3.517	4.386	2.517*
Number of times Perpetrator Background is Mentioned	3.140	4.931	0.628	1.512	2.512	3.193**

Note : *Significant at the .05 level

**Significant at the .01 level

^aNational and Local Source is coded 1= National, 2= Local

APPENDIX C
Coding Sheet

ID Number:

Date:

Length:

Perp Named?	Yes	No	# of times:		
Victim Named?	Yes	No	# of times:		
Focus?	Victim	Perpetrator	Even	Unsure	
Law Enforcement Based?	Yes	No	# of times:		
Heroic Actions	None	Few	Some	Most	All
Community Response	Mentioned	Not			
Motive for crime	Grief	Sad	Anger	Support	Family support
Something about background of perp	Not mentioned	Mentioned	A focus	Describe:	
Overall Feel of article	Mentioned	Not	# of times:		
	Hopeful	Sad	Angry	Supportive	Other:

Common Phrases/Words

"Thoughts and Prayers"	Yes	No	# of times:	
Killed (Perp)	Yes	No	# of times:	
Killed (Victims)	Yes	No	# of times:	
Suicide or synonyms	Yes	No	# of times:	
Need for change/past events	Yes	No	# of times:	

Comments:

[Empty box for comments]