

# 196-workplace-shootings-what-employers-employees-and-custome...

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## SPEAKERS

Steve Albrecht, JJ Janflone, Kelly Sampson

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JJ Janflone 00:09

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JJ Janflone 00:22

Everybody, welcome back to another episode of Red, Blue, and Brady. I'm one of your hosts, JJ, flying solo this week. I'm so excited to be introducing you to a new series of podcasts, all detailing workplaces and gun violence. So this is everything from the type of gun violence that people will face in the workplace, to how you, maybe as a business owner, or a client of businesses, we all live under capitalism, right, how you can do better with supporting gun violence prevention in all its many forms? Now to kick off this series, I cannot think of someone better than our next guest, Dr. Steve Albrecht. So Dr. Steve is, in addition to being a prolific author and longtime law enforcement veteran, he runs his own business, consulting and training on human resources and security. He wrote the first book on defusing violence in the workplace called "Ticking Bombs." And he joined us to break down really important things like how components in the workplace can play out, you know, what folks can be doing to better protect themselves and their clients and so much more.



Steve Albrecht 01:46

I'm Steve Albrecht, I work in threat assessment and threat management. I have a background in security and law enforcement. For the past almost 30 years now, I've been working in workplace violence prevention, school violence prevention, domestic violence, especially in the workplace, stalking cases, so I've had an interesting career.



JJ Janflone 02:01

Well, and I'm so curious, since you've had such a long career, what brought you into this field?

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Steve Albrecht 02:06

Yeah, my thing is really about an experience of being robbed. When I was 15-years-old, I worked at a little grocery store in San Diego where I lived most of my life. I'm from Baltimore originally, but we got out to California. When I was in high school, I worked at a little grocery store and my partner and I were in there and we got robbed by two guys. One night I came in, I was 15, I weighed about 100 pounds, I was a skinny kid, and they grabbed us and threw us on the ground and the guy put a 357 on the back of my head and cocked the trigger and said, I'm gonna kill you if you don't give me the keys to the safe, and of course, we gave him the keys to the safe and they ran off with about 900 bucks, which was a lot of money in 1978. And that was my first exposure to workplace violence being a robbery victim. And the parallels in my work is that workplace violence as robbery is the most common category. So there are OSHA measurements for all this stuff, and criminals is the number one category. Most people don't think about robbery being a workplace violence incident. And it had a ripple effect on me. I was laying on the ground and I thought if I survive this experience, I never want to be in a tactical disadvantage like this ever again. I wanted to be a baseball player. That was my original plan, play for the Orioles. And I said I'm gonna go be a cop. So I started lifting some weights and doing some push-ups and I went through, I worked there all through high school in college and two months after I got out of the University of San Diego, I went on the police academy.

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Steve Albrecht 03:22

And in the police academy in 1984, I had been a cop eight whole days when a guy went into the McDonald's in San Diego, in the last San Diego city called San Ysidro, which is before you cross over into Mexico, which is the biggest port of entry in the world, and he killed 21 people and. And inside the McDonald's, parents and their kids, he was armed with an assault weapon and handguns and he killed all these folks and that was the worst thing I ever saw in my police career and all I looked at was the Polaroid photographs. Some people don't know what those are. But Polaroids, 110 pictures of dead little kids and their parents were brought in by the homicide team that happened to be teaching one of the classes my academy. And I looked at that, I was 21, and I said, oh my god, this is the worst thing I've ever seen. People looked like mannequins, they looked like it was staged like Hollywood. It didn't seem real to me. That was the worst mass murder in the history of the United States and it happened in my city in San Diego.

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Steve Albrecht 04:14

Also right after that, I was in the academy still and we lost two cops to being murdered in one incident. And when I got out into the field, we lost another one about three months later. So in five months, we lost three cops in San Diego, who were murdered. The parallel to my workplace violence work was that the psychologists that did the debrief for all the officers and coroners

and first responders and paramedics and firefighters, even politicians who came to that scene, was a guy named Michael Mantell. And Dr. Mantell was the police psychologist in San Diego and I had met him a couple of times before this happened in '84.

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Steve Albrecht 04:48

In 1992, a guy went into the General Dynamics plant in San Diego, right by the airport, and he killed his boss and he killed the HR manager that was handling his termination. Classic workplace violence scenario. He was on suspension. He was going to be fired. They notified him by letter, he came back to a termination hearing, they didn't let him talk during the termination hearing. They gave him the two S's: sit down and shut up. He was going to commit suicide during the meeting and he changed his mind. He shot and killed these two people. That happened in January of '92. So I went to Mantell. And I said, you know, there's no book on workplace violence. And most of workplace violence. And you can remember this, JJ from looking at history, is the Postal Service. So the 80s and up until the early 90s, was all about postal shootings. And so Mantell and I said, let's, let's do a book on workplace violence from his perspective as a psychologist and mine as a cop, and I was also a writer, English degree. And I had been writing a lot of police tactical articles and books and things by the time '92 came around. So I decided to interview who was the perpetrator in the General Dynamics case in prison in California, which was a pretty rare thing to do. Most of the time, they would talk to cops or investigators, but I managed to get into the prison interview, I spent four hours with the guy and said, "Why did you do what you did?" And that became the first of three interviews that I've done with workplace violence perpetrators in prison. And so I interviewed him in '93. The book came out in '94. Nobody cared about workplace violence until Columbine in 2000. And then, you know, the rest from there as kind of where we are today.



JJ Janflone 06:11

I mean, I, one of the things too, that like I want to put out for listeners, especially like our younger listeners, too, is that for yeah, pre-Columbine, the mass shootings that you would hear about in the news, there was this really terrible phrase of like "going postal" that they would use because of the shootings that had happened in post offices or government buildings, but you didn't hear about them to the degree that you do now, both because they didn't happen as often, and then I think, because of the probably media exposure.

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Steve Albrecht 06:38

For sure. And, you know, when we wrote the "Ticking Bombs" book in '94, the Postmaster General of the United States, a guy named Marvin Runyon, he wrote the foreword for us. And so he talked about what the Post Office was doing about the culture and the work culture and how they took care of employees and how they need to focus more on the safety and security of the employees. And they really did a good job of eliminating the going postal perspective, in the, in the post office, we haven't had a postal shooting in decades.

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Steve Albrecht 07:06

And and but really for me Columbine sort of flipped a switch And I know from your work as

And, and, but really, for me, Columbo sort of tipped a switch. And I know from your work as well, that the things that you have seen, but it felt like that's where these perpetrators decided to become infamous. And, you know, Lady Gaga is famous, you know, George Clooney is famous, but I want to be infamous, which is worse. And also, I think these perpetrators having talked to at least three of the workplace murderers, they want to have a negative impact on their community for as long as possible, which is a puzzling approach. I want to be known horribly in this community for the next decade. So you think about the Buffalo shooter in the grocery store incident, that person will be connected to the city of Buffalo and that event for a decade, which is horrific. I think that's a shift. There's so many factors, you see it in your work, the social media part and the exposure, this perpetrator, especially if we use the Buffalo white supremacist shooting, as an example, this guy's famous around and infamous around the planet within 15 minutes of who we discover who he is. That's heady for these people that's very tantalizing for them. The biggest driver for workplace violence that I see is revenge, the desire for revenge. You fired me, you discipline me, you bullied me, you embarrassed me, you are going to fire me, I need to get back at you in the most horrific way. And I need to exact my revenge in such a way that I feel superior, narcissistically superior to you. And also I want to have a negative impact on this business in this community. It's puzzling to me why this exists.



JJ Janflone 08:36

Well, as part of your work, you've interviewed several workplace shooters, you know, after their arrest and I'm wondering if there's anything sort of that you learned that was that was common amongst all of them.

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Steve Albrecht 08:51

The number one factor, which I said to you before is the desire for revenge. And then the second, which is so, so hard to hear them say, is I'm not upset about what I did, I'm upset about where I ended up. I'm not, I don't regret doing what I did, I'm sad that they caught me and put me in prison. There is a sense of entitlement, so there's not a lot of remorse from these guys. They got from their perspective, they get screwed by the system, and so they have this outrage about how they were treated by the system, whether it's HR or the court system. And so there's this narcissistic distancing they do, which is it's not my fault. And I'm not sure how to beat that. I'm not sure how to stop those guys, if that's the perception they have.



JJ Janflone 09:27

Well, I think access to firearms plays a lot in this too. You know, I'm thinking of the shooter in the case of the beauty salon shooting, one of the men that you interviewed, who had multiple guns, correct?

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Steve Albrecht 09:40

Yeah, I mean, he killed all these people at his ex-wife's beauty salon. They had no connection to him whatsoever. He was angry at his ex-wife because of a child custody issue. He believed she was abusing their child and he was trying to go back to court, that got the way they got an argument he killed her, but he killed all these other people as well. He was a proud NRA

member. And the NRA has said, I have some issues about their financial dealings and such, the NRA has said we've never had a mass shooting committed by an NRA member. And I'm like, well, I interviewed one. You showed up at that beauty salon with Dirty Harry 40, you know, 44 Magnum revolver, a nine millimeter handgun and a 45 on a semi auto, he was wearing a tactical vest, he expected to be killed by the police. He wanted to survive the incident. He thought he was going to be killed by the police. He was arrested wearing a tactical vest. And so when you look at him saying I'm a proud NRA member, I'm like, well, okay, there goes that theory that we've never had an NRA member engage in a mass shooting, these guys have over armed themselves in these situations.



JJ Janflone 10:37

On sort of that definition then of what workplace violence even is, is it just violence that happened in a place of business? How would you break down that definition?

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Steve Albrecht 10:47

So it's a great question. If you look at how OSHA categorize this, and you say, Well, why does OSHA care about workplace violence? Well, they care about anything that involves injury or death to an employee. And employers have something called a general duty clause, which is when you're at work, we have a duty to take care of you. Poisons, hazmat, radiation, you know, electrical hazards and workplace violence. So OSHA said there are four categories, and the first one is criminals. Category One is crooks and that is actually the largest category, robbery being the most common.

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Steve Albrecht 11:14

The second category is people we provide services to, and this includes passengers, patients, students. And of those categories, you can guess in number two, its students K through 12, especially, and some college university shootings we've seen, and also healthcare. Healthcare is a really dangerous environment, talk to nurses and doctors and people who work in the ER, it's terrifying when you think of what they, not only tolerate, but they also in healthcare accept as, "part of the job." You and I would not tolerate those same things happening to us if it happened in our workplace, but in healthcare they do.

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Steve Albrecht 11:45

The third category is current or former employees. And that's when the news media thinks is the most prevalent, it's actually not, and then the fourth is the one that always concerns me the most. When I worked for the PD in San Diego, I was a domestic violence investigator, I handled 1500 cases in about six years and most domestic violence victims work. The perpetrator now feels less concerned to come to the workplace and threaten the woman that he used to date. We have same sex, sexual orientation, because it's primarily male perpetrators and female victims, and attack her there. And if you, you know from your life, if you talk to every woman that you've ever met, and you said, fill in the rest of this statement, if I can't have you, every woman on the planet, including my 28-year-old daughter knows, you

know, no one else will, that's a dangerous guy. So the fourth category of domestic violence in the workplace is the one that concerns me really the most, because I feel it is underreported. And for women, it is underreported, not because they're not afraid of these perpetrators, but because they're afraid of being fired. And there's only about 13 or 14 states in the United States, which protect domestic violence victims at work, the rest of them say don't bring that stuff in here, you're fired. And then she has two problems: no job and same perpetrator. So I really spend a lot of time looking at those cases and going: how do we protect the organization, the employee, the other employees from these perpetrators showing up in a domestic violence situation? So those are the four categories from OSHA.



JJ Janflone 13:03

What it seems like so much of this, as you, as you pointed out, is the shooter and perpetrator looking for a control element almost. And I'm wondering if, you know, certainly that can't be unique to workplace shootings, I suppose. But what kind of maybe then sets workplace shootings apart from say other other shootings?

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Steve Albrecht 13:23

Yeah, I think the workplace has a couple of things in it, which, there's an emotionality. This is a place where I earn my money, and you have now made that, put it at risk, you're going to fire me or discipline me. There's also a sense that I have been either bullied by other people in the organization, including bosses, that's not an excuse for what they do, but it's a driver for them. I talk a lot in my training about let's let's create a better workplace environment. Let's treat people with dignity and respect. Let's set up a HR discipline and termination process that has some humanity attached to it. We don't want to drag these people into this type of behavior, and we can do it in how we mistreat people during the during the HR process, you know, you're fired, get out of here, as opposed to here's the severance package or here's some continued benefits, or here's what we're willing to do for you as you exit this organization in a humane way.

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Steve Albrecht 14:09

And I think the notoriety piece, as you talked about is big in the workplace, and also that I don't discount the copycat factor I am always sort of terrified around April of every year. That's when Columbine happened. And that's, you know, Hitler's birthday and the Oklahoma City bombin. April's a horrible month for people in my world in terms of threat assessment and security issues, the copycat factor can't be denied. And I think these perpetrators learn from the police response. They learn from what these perpetrators do, and they're going to do something different. You look at Virginia Tech, I mean, he was one of the first guys to say I'm going to lock the doors with a chain and a padlock so the cops can't get inside the building where I'm doing these things. I mean, he learned that as he looked at the police response, so it's difficult in my work, and maybe you feel the same way in yours, is not to feel discouraged about these things. I'm not giving up. But I'm certainly discouraged when I look at Buffalo, one of the things that happened and so these continue.





JJ Janflone 15:05

It does feel a bit relentless when you look at the timeline from generally what's accepted as the first sort of mass shooting in the U.S. at the University of Texas, and then you just sort of look to now and that does, it gets frustrating, I think, as you articulated, and on that end, as you pointed out, since really the mid to late 90s, there's been a lot more workplace mass shootings than there have been school mass shootings, it's terrifying that that's a sentence I have to say. You know, why, why do you think that is? If you have an opinion on it, and why do you think that they tend not to get as much attention? I know that I see workplace shootings, I think of at the UPS facility, as you said, in Buffalo, but before Buffalo, there was one in Colorado, and they don't tend to keep that media attention for as long.

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Steve Albrecht 15:55

Yeah, it's a great question. Two questions. I'll take the school one first. I really point to the movement in this country, which is a very positive thing in my perspective, of threat assessment teams in school environments. So Columbine really drove that process. It also dramatically changed the police response. And I've trained thousands of cops in my career to the active shooter run, hide, fight modality, how do you get there and stop this person that's doing these things? In the Columbine days, we sat outside with a the perimeter, which was the usual SWAT team approach, but set up a perimeter and see what happens. And then we watched kids getting killed, they changed that dramatically. We're going inside, we're going to engage. But what happened after Sandy Hook and after Columbine, and after really after especially, you know, from Virginia, at Virginia Tech, was states started mandating to school districts, look, you need to have a threat assessment process for current or former students or people that have a security threat to the organization. We need to get together and have a formal discussion about what we do about this. So you know, Virginia became mandated, K through 12, schools had to have a threat assessment team process, colleges and universities as well.

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Steve Albrecht 17:04

So two things in schools. One is we do not address bullying in the workplace very well. We address sexual harassment in the workplace or racial harassment, we have policies for that and investigated protocol and we do stuff, consequences to perpetrators of sexual or racial harassment. We don't do anything about bullying in this country. There's no formal workplace bullying definition. Well, guess where they have one: schools! And I've always said we should take what the schools taught us about bullying and on campus and put it in the workplace environment. So schools have an advantage. One is the bullying programs, anti-bullying programs. Second is more districts, more schools have a threat assessment team, even a loose one, to get together the stakeholders and say, what do we do? The third one is that they have oftentimes also a school resource officer, an SRO, someone who may have that school and other schools, but is on campus at the high school, or the or the junior high on a pretty regular basis.

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Steve Albrecht 17:54

The workplace doesn't have any of those things. And you know, you've seen in our world that



we're mostly driven by events, what happens is usually as a result of something else, and in schools, we said enough, enough with these school shootings, we're gonna get a threat assessment team process, we're going to have school resource officers, we're going to focus on anti-bullying. And I think there's a missing piece. And I believe you probably feel strongly about this as well, which is we do a lousy job in this country, educating parents about protecting their guns at home, the idea of no gun safes and no trigger locks. And there was just a case in Chicago where a woman had her Glock under the bed, and the kid brought it to school and he shot at another kid, and they use the phrase, you know, accidental discharge in the newspaper article, and wounded this child and she got arrested. And I don't see a lot of consequences for that behavior. And I don't see a lot of national education. If it's the NRA or gun manufacturers or people that sell trigger locks or gun safes should be saying, Look, if you own a firearm, you have to have protected better in your house. If you have children, even children coming to your house, you know, kids that come from your relatives or something, we do a horrible job in this country with that issue, and I don't know what to do about it. I've been talking about this gun safety, lock it away. Where do these kids get these guns? They steal them from home, they get them from home, you know, a parent who says well, my kid never goes in my sock drawer where that gun is a fool.



JJ Janflone 19:15

Well then I wonder what you would say to folks who say that, you know, we just need to to increase this outward security. More, I don't know, metal detectors, more wandings, things of that nature.



Steve Albrecht 19:29

You know, I have some friends that work in Israel and they're security experts. A lot of them came out of the IDF defense force and a lot of consultants, you know in California and where I was, came from Israel and they're really a kind of a model for how we protect bombings and shootings and things like that because of what's going on in Israel. And you know, people in my work have talked about do we want in this country, an Israeli type approach to security, which is there's metal detectors at the mall in Israel, and there's there's three or four layers of security before you get to the airport in Israel? And the answer is no. We don't have the infrastructure, we don't have the money. You know, there are 95,000 schools in the United States. And in Israel, there's a cop or a security guard armed or a soldier at every school. We don't have that infrastructure possibility here. So, and I always ask sort of for the larger picture is, do you want to go to the movies and go through a metal detector every time you go to the movies? I mean, we already do it at concerts, we already do it at football games, national football games, MLB, baseball, things like that. But to switch that around and say, we're going to go do that at the grocery store. And at the convenience store, it's not possible. So that's the part that discourages me. There's, these perpetrators know that the way our orientation is, as a society, in the United States makes it easy for them to come into these public places, hospitals, malls, schools, whether they're a student or not, and do the things that they do. It's difficult to say, you know, we can put a dome over everybody and protect them. It's not possible.



JJ Janflone 20:54

Well, and that leads me to ask you the question, you know, so you've many books, we're going



to link to some of them in the description of this episode, but you've been prolific. But you have a book called "Some People Are No Damn Good." And in that book, there's a chapter entitled guns at work coming soon to an office near you, which is a chapter that is great, in that it talks about sort of the rise of people carrying firearms concealed or otherwise. I know, I live in Virginia, where open carry is permitted. So if I go to a coffee shop, and I see someone with a firearm, I kind of have to think, just because of the line of work that I'm in, automatically, I do go kind of this calculation in my head, are they here to get coffee too? Or what are, what is their plan? And so I'm curious about what your thoughts are on sort of the rise of carry and of certain workplaces, allowing employees or customers to carry as well?

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Steve Albrecht 21:44

Well, I mean, you know, as a former cop, it gives me a great concern when I come into any place, I see somebody with an exposed firearm. I understand the world of concealed carry, I've written books for concealed carry, but I find the open carry thing narcissistic, which is, look at me, look at my gun, I'm gonna bring this in and I'm gonna be provocative as a result of this. You know, getting past the constitutional piece of this, their perception, I think it's too provocative. You come into a coffee shop, where you have an exposed firearm. What's the point of that? I mean, it's provocative. The other part is workplaces struggle with the idea that we can control who brings what into our facilities and most workplaces have policies that you can't bring firearms into our facility. But then they say, well, you can in certain parts, like in the South, for example, you can keep hunting rifles or deer rifles in your car or your truck in our parking lot, which is sort of an odd sort of disconnect between what you can do 25 feet away from where we are, as opposed to the parking lot. And every time we have one of these shootings, and I mean, if use the buffalo example is a perfect one, we had a former police officer, retired cop in there, and he could not stop the shooter based on the firepower this guy had. So there's always a discussion you see in your work all the time, which is if we had more guns in the workplace, if we had more armed teachers or more armed people at schools...



JJ Janflone 23:03

If we haa a good guy with a gun, it would...

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Steve Albrecht 23:05

Exactly. And I think that's really difficult to prove. And also, as a behavioral guy, and I look at at workplace violence from a behavioral perspective and a security perspective, I'd like us some sort of structured process about how we allow people to bring firearms into the workplace. For example, this gets my gun colleagues all excited in the wrong direction, which is I think, if you want to carry a firearm into our workplace, we have the right to demand a medical clearance. You have vision, you can see, you can hear, your doctors would say I would allow this to happen not you know, you can't, you can't operate a firearm because of vision problems or mental health concerns or anything else. I think there has to be proof of certification. I've trained with this firearm at a range, not just oh, I bought a gun and I want to protect everybody at work. So those barriers are not been crossed yet. And so there is no system or structure in place that says okay, we're going to carry inside of our organization. And I'm worried about things that you probably think about as well, like accidental discharge and theft, and horseplay,

and it changes sort of the dramatic intent of a termination hearing if you know that your employee is sitting across from you, who is already known to be armed. I always make the sort of joke in my training classes that you know, do you want Larry from accounting as the one who saves your life. I don't trust Larry from accounting with you know, with a pencil, and now he has the firearm.

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Steve Albrecht 24:24

My default position from a workplace violence, domestic violence, school violence, police perspective is always shelter in place, or evacuate until the cops get there. The cops are tactically trained. They have equipment, they have radios, they have vests, they have access to mutual aid, which is they can bring lots of cops to the situation. You'll see a workplace violence incident, 200 officers will show up from neighboring agencies. That's the kind of response I expect, not somebody from inside the organization who says I'm going to save everybody's life. And I say this with peace and love, which is I don't think some people who carry firearms have the ability to take another human's life. I had to make that decision. I didn't ever shot anybody. But I had to make that decision when I became a cop. If you can't do that, you can't be a cop. I mean, you can do something else, but you can't be a police officer if you can't use deadly force. And I don't think some people have crossed that bridge, and would not be able to do it in a moment of truth. The cops have to do that in the moment of truth. That's their job. And so I put my default trust back on law enforcement in those situations, not on an employee.



JJ Janflone 25:25

And do you think it's sort of, you know, this is an uncomfortable subject, and so do you think that it's its fear of not wanting to get into it? Fear, you know, stigma, like why, as you mentioned, are folks not more into doing these sorts of trainings in the workplace?

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Steve Albrecht 25:41

You know, I have a lot of folks that work with me, you know, that are ex-law enforcement and security folks, and we do a lot of this training from the run, hide, fight perspective. I have kind of a different approach to it. I've been through this training where people get terrified during the training. I have a lighter touch, I try to use a little bit of a sense of humor. I'm not making light of this situation, but I'm trying to say, you know, let's look at this in a way that doesn't terrify people not wanting to come to work. The chance of these things happening are rare, but you must be ready. And you know, the parallel I use is we don't expect or anticipate a fire in this facility. We've not had a fire in this factory ever, right? But we have a fire drill, and we have fire extinguishers and we have fire hoses and we have marked exits. We don't anticipate a fire but we have a process for it. And I think you know the run, hide, fight, or in the school model you may have heard called ALICE.



JJ Janflone 26:34

Yeah.

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**Steve Albrecht 26:35**

Run, hide, fight has been around for a long time before Columbine and before other things. And it never really sort of made sense to people until after these things started happening. Now, one of the things that I find positive and negative about my work is that workplace violence has become a mature subject. Like sexual harassment is a mature subject, we have policy, we have weapons policy, we have an investigative process, we have consequences for perpetrators and support for victims just like sexual harassment. That's a pro and a con. I wish we didn't have to. But now people look at these things and go okay, I understand the run, hide, fight concept. My process as a trainer is to make it easy to digest and to remember. That's my argument against ALICE. I'm a bearer of small brain and so I can't always remember what the ALICE steps are, but it's the same concept. And run, hide, fight says, your first option is to leave the building with as many people as you can take as possible, co-workers, clients, customers, little kids, whatever it happens to be. Second one, if that's not possible shelter in place. And we have seen people survive these mass shootings by sheltering in place in a room that is barricaded and dark, and they're away from the door or the fatal funnel, as we call it, where the perpetrator comes to the door can't get inside and moves on. Why? Because these guys know, these perpetrators know that there's about eight to 10 minutes before the police show up and engage. That's the national average. If you can be barricaded behind a safe place before the cops get there, but this person can't get inside, you have a higher likelihood of surviving.

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**Steve Albrecht 28:05**

The third choice, to fight back part, is always controversial. I'm not asking people to risk their lives tackling armed people you know, as an unarmed person, but I also say, look, if you can't, if you can't get out of the building, and you can shelter in place until the police get there, the police will engage. So we can do those three things, run, hide, fight, with fight being the last possibility, and run and hide being the first to. We have a chance of surviving and one of the challenges I have in my work is I can't get employers to do drills. I don't want to do the fight drill but I want them to do the run and hide part. I say can you give me a run hide drill once a year for 15 minute?. Before we open, you know, we have a public business, we'll say we'll practice leaving the facility or we'll practice sheltering in place. If I can't find you inside or outside the facility, you've done the drill successfully, let's get back to work. But they won't do it. They're afraid, they don't want to disrupt things. They've seen too many examples in other things where cops have done these drills and scared people and you know used fake blood and stuff. It's ridiculous stuff like that, which doesn't matter. I don't have to set the building on fire to do a fire drill. In my perfect world, we do a run, hide drill once a year.

**JJ Janflone 29:09**

Can I ask really quick, I want to touch on that a second, but what is this fatal funnel?

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**Steve Albrecht 29:13**

The fatal funnel is the doorway. So we want to be away from the doorway and masonry walls and stucco walls are not perfect for stopping bullets, but the doorway tends to be where the bad guy comes in or shoots out from and so the fatal funnel is the doorway. We want people

away from the doorway in those situations where they have to shelter in place inside a room. And, you know, I live in Missouri, which is there's tornadoes. Well we only have to go to the tornado shelter for about 15 minutes because it passes by at 70 miles an hour. You don't have to be in a shelter in place situation for five hours. These things happen very fast. And the quicker you can get put away and locked down and barricaded and away from the doorway and lights out, you know creating a dark environment and wait for the police response, which is going to be aggressive and assertive and rapid, and they know what to do, the better you're going to survive.



JJ Janflone 30:01

Well, I think I can speak for all of our listeners. And you know, if they're listening to this, and they're concerned, you know, what, what can people do? You know, what do you think would be very useful in general for them, that they could take home right now.

S

Steve Albrecht 30:14

So you really raise a great point, which is, the, I was trained by the U.S. Marshals and the FBI, and the Secret Service, and especially the Secret Service, who has really done seminal work in the area of threat assessment and violence. And you say to yourself, well, why would the Secret Service be involved in school violence, because they look at perpetrator behavior in general? And they say, what can we learn from these kids as to how we protect the people that we protect. And the biggest thing that we got, and this was the biggest sort of eye-opening thing in my entire career, is that when these people do these things, they leak information. And the issue is they don't leak to the target. The kid that wants to shoot the football coach does not tell the football coach, he tells the other kids on the team. The challenge in our work, and you just brought it up, is how do we get those kids, or those teachers, or those counselors to tell the safety and security stakeholders what's going on? If we have suicidal cops, who has the courage to come forward and talk to the command and say, this is what I'm hearing?

S

Steve Albrecht 31:08

One of the things we do in my work is I try to get schools and workplaces to have a hotline or a tip line, or some anonymous way for people to say, hey, I heard a guy on the work, you know, in the factory, say he was going to do this, this and this. I don't want to get involved, but here's the information. This leakage, Secret Service, Marshals, FBI, said they don't threaten the target directly because there'll be stomped, there'll be expelled, kicked out of school, fired, put in the mental health facility, cops would show up. So they leak to other people. And the question is, why? Sometimes they can't help, I think their mental illness drives them. I think also they want to be stopped and talked out of it. Also I think their narcissism drives them to do that. But this leakage is the most powerful thing in my work. And I tell people constantly, you hear things that we don't hear, the safety and security stakeholders, HR, security, law enforcement, you know, company attorney, that kind of thing. We don't hear these things, you do. You have to have the courage with a capital "C" to tell us if you hear that. And whether it's tip lines, or hotlines, or some relationship that schools or organizations have with their employees that they can share what we know, we can stop stuff, we do it all the time. That's what threat assessment is about. We put a fence around the issue and we stop this person from acting out,

but we don't do it. And guess when, you know this from your work, guess when we hear this stuff? After it happens. He said or I heard or he said or she said, I didn't know who to talk to. Breaks my heart.



JJ Janflone 32:24

I mean, that's so useful. Are there any additional resources that you would recommend? I mean, you have 21 books, we'll link to them in description of this episode, but beyond that.

S

Steve Albrecht 32:32

Yeah, there's a lot of stuff online, there's some boilerplate policies for workplace violence prevention. I think how we hire people, we do good background checks, we treat people with dignity and respect, and during the employment process, we use probationary periods to say it's not a good fit, or it is a good fit. I think that there's an awareness that we take from other incidents that happen. Say this happened at a particular thing that's similar to our business, what can we learn from it? And I think whatever, it doesn't have to be a formal threat assessment team, like a school might have or a large organization. But, how do we orient the safety and security stakeholders? HR and security if it's a function, and contact with law enforcement? Do we have any AP provider? How do we orient those people around together to get together quickly and say, let's talk about what affects our business, an outsider, ex employee, current employee. domestic violence, angry customer, stranger, bomb threat? I mean, if you google Steve Albrecht and bomb threats, you'll find a million times I say, stop evacuating the business if you don't find a suspicious package. That's called howler behavior, and do the things necessary to create a work culture where people are not tattletaling on each other, but they have the courage to say, here's what's concerning me, here's what I'm seeing or hearing. That's how we stop these things at the earliest levels. That doesn't always make the news. But that's the approach.

S

Steve Albrecht 32:38

Thank you so, so much Steve. This has been so helpful, and I think is the perfect framing as we move forward this month with talking about gun violence in the workplace, and then like, you know, what folks can do, you know, to help make this a better, safer place.

S

Steve Albrecht 34:03

I want to save the world. And I've been working in this area for 20 years, and we're not there yet. And I want to be. I was hoping that I'd be done with the workplace violence, school violence thing as part of my career. It's gotten worse.



JJ Janflone 34:15

I really think Steve said it all in the end there, right? You know, we're all working really hard to put ourselves out of business. But there are other businesses and business owners and folks like that who can be working to end gun violence as well. And it's really important that we use

like that who can be working to end gun violence as well. And it's really important that we we move forward, I think as a country, like unified through all these different avenues, through all these different ways to help end gun violence.



**JJ Janflone** 34:44

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**Kelly Sampson** 34:58

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