



Campus Cops Corner

-Public Safety Tips for the PPCC Community-

Public Safety Newsletter

Just like the rest of you, I'm struggling to make sense out of the madness which impacted Tucson and the rest of the country earlier this month. In the wake of John Hinckley's 1981 assassination attempt of President Ronald Reagan, the April 13, 1981, issue of Time magazine quoted President John Kennedy who said, "If anyone wants to do it, no amount of protection is enough. All a man needs is a willingness to trade his life for mine." While the discussion regarding civility during public discourse is interesting, I prefer to focus on the more tangible issue of "What do we do if we're present when it happens?"

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Another Spree Shooter

The January 24, 2011, issue of Time magazine reports that the emotionally disturbed Tucson gunman fired 31 rounds in 15 seconds. Nineteen people were wounded and six died. Reports indicate that while Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords was the shooter's intended and first victim, shooting her from a distance of two - three feet, the remaining victims were struck as the shooter randomly fired rounds at the crowd.

The shooter was stopped when bystanders, men and women alike, pounced on him. As we study similar random acts of violence involving spree shooters, we see that this has repeatedly been the answer to stopping the violence. We've covered this in a previous issue of the Campus Cops Corner titled "Surviving the Spree Shooter" (2/24/10: www.ppcc.edu/about-ppcc/public-safety/campus-cops-corner ..., cut n' paste this url into your browser). You'll remember it as the one which encouraged you to "Figure it **OUT**; Get **OUT**; Call **OUT**; Hide **OUT**; Spread **OUT**; and lastly, Take **OUT**" the gunman as a last resort.

I recognize, however, that not everyone has the will, skill, or abilities to do this successfully. I continue to recommend you lock your classroom doors to prevent random gunmen from having easy access to large numbers of victims. When that's not possible, such as being in an outdoor area, as was the case in Tucson, being "situationally aware" is key. Who is standing around you? Are they too close? Are they acting rationally? Where's the exit or escape route? Trust your instincts. You don't need a specific degree or certification to make that call. If the hair on the back of your neck begins to stand up and / or your "Spidey sense" begins to tingle, that's good enough. You're not being "silly," and don't let social niceties prevent you from taking steps to ensure your personal safety. No one has a right to expect you to put yourself at risk in name of "good manners." Strangers have no right to engage you in conversation nor maintain it against your will if it makes you uncomfortable. Keep your eye on the person, and watch their hands (99% of the time, that's where the danger will come from), create some distance and seek to put physical barriers between you and them.

We know the Tucson gunman was a community college student whose behavior had resulted in him being suspended from his school. Despite horrific headlines regarding incidents like these, colleges and universities remain a safe place to be. My intention is to keep you informed and empowered to assure your own safety.

Important Numbers & websites:

- 24-7 Emergency Number: 502-2911
- Emergency Alert Sign Up: www.ppcc.edu/alert
- Crime Stoppers
634-STOP (7867)
- Anonymous Reporting
www.SAFE2TELL.org

1-877-542-7233