

00:00;19;20 - 00:00;37;25

Stephen Gutowski

All right. Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to another episode of the Weekly Reload podcast. I'm your host, Stephen Gutowski. I'm also a CNN contributor and the founder of theReload.com, where you can head over and sign up for our free newsletter today. If you want to keep up to date with what's going on with guns in America from a sober, serious perspective.

00:00;37;28 - 00:01;00;06

Stephen Gutowski

This week on the show, we are talking about, two killings that, have made a lot of news recently and maybe a bit more intertwined, than they seem at first glance. To do that, we have, back on the show, a guest, from a while back. But, who I think will bring a very interesting perspective to this conversation.

00:01;00;12 - 00:01;13;02

Stephen Gutowski

Katherine Schweit, who, was an FBI agent that actually ran there, created and ran their active shooter, investigation team there. So, welcome back to the show. Katherine. Thank you so much for joining us.

00:01;13;04 - 00:01;20;13

Katherine Schweit

Oh, I think so. I, I'd say I haven't seen you in a long time, but but we were just, downtown on a CNN panel together.

00:01;20;16 - 00:01;24;03

Stephen Gutowski

That's right. So, talking about one of these two shootings.

00:01;24;06 - 00:01;32;23

Katherine Schweit

Talking about one of these two shootings, and it said, hey, we need to we need to reconnect because we there's more conversation to have about, but about, these two incidents.

00:01;33;00 - 00:01;43;05

Stephen Gutowski

Yeah, absolutely. And I just, give people a little more, broad view of your background. Can you just tell, people you know, your history at the FBI? And then what you're doing today?

00:01;43;07 - 00:02;12;27

Katherine Schweit

Sure, sure. I'm. I spent 20 years in the FBI as an agent. Before that, I was a prosecutor in Chicago. So I got a little bit of lawyer in me. Don't hold that against me. And, because of that, I teach a class in the Second Amendment at DePaul University College of Law. I've taught that course for a long time in Chicago, and I just I actually live in the DC area, but I just I fly home, so to speak, to, to teach a class, probably once a year, because I think the Second Amendment in the, you know, the issue around guns is fascinating.

00:02;12;27 - 00:02;53;01

Katherine Schweit

And so absolutely, I after my after 15 years in the FBI. Sandy hook, the Sandy hook shooting happened at the elementary school, and then I was plucked, you know, from that corridor and said, okay, you know, create a program, see what's wrong. Find out what the protocols should be. And from that, we, I joined a white House team, with other, people from other agencies, and there were just, like, five of us, and we, we, concurred on, run, hide, fight as a, as a messaging system for the country to just the idea that it's a quick it's, translatable, you know, from a language standpoint, it it's the basics about what

00;02;53;01 - 00;03;12;21

Katherine Schweit

physically everybody does when, when shootings occur, they run or hide or fight or some combination of that. And then we also because I was the only law enforcement member on the team, I pushed out our team, pushed out the police protocols that now police uses. But at the time, we didn't have a consistent protocol for how police responded.

00;03;12;23 - 00;03;32;27

Katherine Schweit

And also how we handled victims and how we handle communications. And so we're a lot more, consistent about when we arrive at the scene, who arrives, what they're doing. And so that was kind of boring policy sort of stuff that I worked on, too. But I think it's made a difference. I see it just in the impact of just the, the latest shooting that one of the shootings that we're going to talk about.

00;03;32;27 - 00;03;54;01

Katherine Schweit

The police chief got up. He had four press conferences in one day. You know, he had a very, very steady script of what he needed to have. Ting ting ting ting ting ting. And that's great that that shows us that we've made a lot of changes for the better in the last few years in terms of communicating with the public and dealing with the public and, you know, helping victims and survivors.

00;03;54;04 - 00;04;14;00

Katherine Schweit

So that's, you know, that's the kind of stuff. Then I left the FBI because I was, mandatory in 2017, mandatory age. They kick you out at a certain age and so then I kind of started my own consulting business, but I spent more time writing a book called Stop the Killing How to End the Mass Shooting Crisis and starting a podcast by that name, stop the killing.

00;04;14;02 - 00;04;14;17

Stephen Gutowski

Yes. Very good.

00;04;14;24 - 00;04;25;27

Katherine Schweit

But the gun stuff is just there. So I actually have a book that I have a book specifically on, how to talk about guns with anyone. It's basically a simple guide to the second Amendment.

00;04;26;00 - 00;04;45;23

Stephen Gutowski

Yes. So you have, spent a lot of time focused on this, this area that we're going to be talking about, throughout your career here. And I think you have a lot of really, interesting insight. And so let's get into those these two shootings that we've seen, because they don't they might not necessarily seem completely, you know, connected at first glance.

00;04;45;25 - 00;05;23;00

Stephen Gutowski

But you had the the murder of the UnitedHealthCare CEO, Brian Thompson in New York City. And then you also had a school shooting at a Christian school in Wisconsin, this week. And, you know, one of the interesting things about that school shooting, one of the concerning things that's been concerning for now, 25 years, is that the shooter was enamored by and inspired by, it seems, from the reporting we have, the Columbine shooter's Columbine happened in 1999.

00;05;23;03 - 00;05;57;08

Stephen Gutowski

And you still have school shooters today who will use a similar playbook. And you actually also saw a bit of a, a similar playbook in the United Health care killing because that shooter manifestos are kind of something that came about in large part because of Columbine. And so you even saw that in that shooting. But what would interest me about the connection here is the the reason why Columbine has stayed with us for so long.

00:05:57;10 - 00:06:20;09

Stephen Gutowski

And, you know, I, I've had Professor James Dent, densely on the show, is one of the coauthors of the Violence Project, where they they researched this and they found Columbine was a very important, touchstone, I guess, in this mass shooting era we've had in the last several decades. And one of the reasons was that the shooters wanted to be remembered for this.

00:06:20;09 - 00:06:44;08

Stephen Gutowski

They wanted other people to follow their lead. They they did a lot of messaging. And that's something we see, has followed through all the way to this latest shooting in Wisconsin. And it's also something that seems to me this, you know, health care CEO shooter is also trying to do. He's a but he's doing it in a new way for a new media environment.

00:06:44;10 - 00:07:11;04

Stephen Gutowski

I think he may be, you know, sort of the first TikTok killer. He's very he got, a lot of notoriety for this, this killing and, and he, he left a lot of messaging. He left he did a lot of things similar to how, the Columbine shooters did their attack in the sense that, you know, he's leaving sort of, a blueprint, maybe for future attacks here.

00:07:11;04 - 00:07:28;04

Stephen Gutowski

I know that's that's what troubles me about, zooming out in these two pictures, the long term effects of perhaps this United Health care killing. Like, is there some possibility that it will look like the long term effects of Columbine?

00:07:28;06 - 00:07:49;00

Katherine Schweit

Yeah, I think that, I see what you're getting at, the idea that you're saying that Columbine, you know, happened in 99, and we still have people who idolize the Columbine shooters and want to want to duplicate what they what they think they did, because I think most people don't unders. Most people don't know the real facts in the Columbine case.

00:07:49;05 - 00:08:03;09

Katherine Schweit

Sure. But the theories that are out there in the, you know, the, the glorified, you know, romanticized images of what the who the Columbine shooters are and what they did and what they were trying to accomplish.

00:08:03;09 - 00:08:04;13

Stephen Gutowski

The mythos around it.

00:08:04;18 - 00:08:06;08

Katherine Schweit

Yeah. It's very it's very.

00:08:06;10 - 00:08:06;19

Stephen Gutowski

Kind of.

00:08:06;19 - 00:08:25;10

Katherine Schweit

Person. Yeah. We've so we've done and we've done a tremendous disservice over the years as we continue for I have a whole bunch of in my I have a whole bunch of issues with Columbine in how it's covered and how it's talked about, but there's no question that there's a segment of the population that, and not just in the United States, but worldwide.

00;08;25;13 - 00;08;26;06

Katherine Schweit

Yeah. Who even.

00;08;26;08 - 00;08;29;24

Stephen Gutowski

Cousins, dozens of shooters have have, reference to the Columbine.

00;08;29;24 - 00;08;54;16

Katherine Schweit

Right over overseas. Other countries. Right. Yeah. And they, they, they make references to the Columbine shooters. And like I said, even though they're working with the wrong facts in the wrong information, it doesn't matter because they're working with a romanticized version of it. But the difference between so that's a second shooter, that we're talking about, the, the individual who shot the CEO from the health care company, both of them.

00;08;54;16 - 00;09;10;27

Katherine Schweit

And I never use the word manifesto unless it's like the Unabomber, because our manifesto was a political statement. And I think sometimes people who who deliver writings, we see writings that are delivered or left behind, sometimes they're just rants about kind of everything in the world.

00;09;10;29 - 00;09;12;23

Stephen Gutowski

And that's what's.

00;09;12;23 - 00;09;31;23

Katherine Schweit

Wrong. And then sometimes they're very specific. You know, the Unabomber had very specific things, and it really was kind of a manifesto. And sometimes the shooter, you do see, people who commit violent acts and they do give something. They've got a very specific kind of political agenda or, you know, social agenda that they want to translate and tell the whole world about.

00;09;31;23 - 00;09;56;25

Katherine Schweit

And I get that a lot of times, like I said, we we see a page or two of somebody and also I'll say this about Columbine killers, the copycat aspect, sometimes somebody will, leave behind on purpose of five, six, seven page document, but that document is actually cut and pasted from other people's writings. We've seen that a lot.

00;09;56;28 - 00;09;57;28

Stephen Gutowski

But Buffalo Shooter did.

00;09;57;28 - 00;10;20;29

Katherine Schweit

That exactly right. The Buffalo Shooter did that right. So but all of that aside, I think your point is are they are I think your comment, was about, you know, the CEO shooter being like the first one off and just like the Columbine shooters were the first ones of and sometimes I think, no, sometimes I think yes.

00;10;21;06 - 00;10;49;09

Katherine Schweit

But the nose come from the idea that, targeted violence isn't new and, you know, assassinations aren't new. Right? And, the idea that somebody is going to with this assassination, it was clearly a political intent over a social issue, that that he wanted to make that statement and he wanted those. That's why he had those pages of writings that said, here's my issue with the healthcare industry.

00;10;49;09 - 00;11;11;19

Katherine Schweit

And I, I wonder and I kind of question, which is all I'm doing, really questioning aloud whether or not others will choose to do that, to take out congressmen, to take out company, you know, presidents to take out because that, like you said, that CEO didn't do anything to this guy. His company didn't do anything to this guy.

00;11;11;24 - 00;11;31;02

Katherine Schweit

He just took somebody out for the sake of, you know, the action on message, sending a message. Right. And whether that's, you know, religious leaders or political leaders or other social leaders, you know, I don't we haven't seen that even though. That's right. You know, so I kind of I maybe that's wishful thinking, you.

00;11;31;08 - 00;11;31;24

Stephen Gutowski

Know.

00;11;31;27 - 00;11;33;07

Katherine Schweit

Maybe that's wishful thinking. There's only.

00;11;33;07 - 00;11;34;07

Stephen Gutowski

Been two weeks or.

00;11;34;07 - 00;11;44;20

Katherine Schweit

One, right? That we're not going to. It doesn't mean that. But I think that to your point, very much, there's always every time something happens and there's a lot of news coverage on it, people get inspired.

00;11;44;22 - 00;11;53;26

Stephen Gutowski

And I mean, and it's not even just news coverage, right? It's like the broader space. It's people focus on the news coverage aspect and that's that's fair, right?

00;11;53;26 - 00;11;54;04

Katherine Schweit

No.

00;11;54;04 - 00;11;57;23

Stephen Gutowski

Yeah. I mean, we cover these things and we're probably more responsible ways of doing it than.

00;11;57;26 - 00;12;20;00

Katherine Schweit

But it's this that you're right. I mean, I agree with you that it's the social media commentary that's more significant. I mean, I've heard from people, we've all seen comments on Facebook, on Twitter, on Instagram, on, you know, threads on you fill in the blank about how, yeah, too bad, you know, too bad. He, this happened to him, you know, and in in this sarcasm.

00;12;20;00 - 00;12;40;22

Katherine Schweit

Right. It's sarcasm and in and you know, social media allows us to be very cold and without a fit, without a maybe appreciation that those comments don't go away. And, and they don't communicate, they just communicate hatred and

sarcasm and anger, you know, but I, I maybe I want it to not be I want it to not be a trend.

00;12;40;22 - 00;12;44;12

Katherine Schweit

But I think it's smart that you can see that it could be. But, you know, it's.

00;12;44;12 - 00;13;07;02

Stephen Gutowski

Not a trend to. But here's the thing like that, that I, I guess what I see in it is like Columbine was not the first school shooting. It wasn't even the first school shooting that year. Right. But it was something different about it. And it happened at a specific moment in time. What the one thing that was different about is one, they intended to send a bunch of messages to people to try and inspire other people to do similar acts.

00;13;07;04 - 00;13;13;26

Stephen Gutowski

Right? They they did this. They did a whole script making process, right? Like they planned out a whole playbook of how.

00;13;14;00 - 00;13;23;23

Katherine Schweit

They should do this. Right? They spent months and months, particularly one of them, you know, months and months and months and months. There was the planning was like the event was nothing compared to the planning.

00;13;23;25 - 00;13;47;13

Stephen Gutowski

And so, you know, that was part of it. They wanted other people to see what they did and recreate it in some way or be inspired by it. And then the other hand to, is that it happened at a specific time in media, right? Like it happened at the, the forefront of the, the, the new age of cable news, 24 hour news and the internet.

00;13;47;15 - 00;13;56;02

Stephen Gutowski

So where, you know, officials might have been able to, their writings might not have spread as far in a previous generation.

00;13;56;04 - 00;14;14;28

Katherine Schweit

Yeah. There was no there's no ability at that point forward to control information. I think there was a time period, though, for maybe ten years where people thought they could control it. I remember having conversations with police chiefs, you know, who would say, well, we're only going to release this or we're going to release that. And I said, you know, no, that that cat's out of the bag.

00;14;15;01 - 00;14;34;10

Katherine Schweit

You're not in. You're not in control of information anymore. Look at the the writings of this Madison, Wisconsin shooter, this piece of this piece of writing that may or may or may not be hers because it hasn't been validated by the police. But everybody's already done the analysis on it. Everybody's already read it because it was released by somebody else.

00;14;34;12 - 00;14;57;24

Stephen Gutowski

Yeah. And that's the thing too, that I see with this, another similarity between what the Columbine killers did and what the United Healthcare, CEO killer did is that he's sending messages, and he's doing it in a way that is much more savvy to how our media atmosphere works today. A agree. You know, he didn't send letters to a newspaper or whatever.

00;14;57;27 - 00;15;23;12

Stephen Gutowski

He she did something in front of cameras in a spectacular way that calls to it. Looks like it's out of a movie, right? Probably because it is inspired by, you know, movies. And then in a similar way that a lot of this stuff is inspired not just by Copycatting from news reports, but sort of copycatting the idea that we all have of what a school shooter is or what a assassin is like.

00;15;23;12 - 00;15;37;22

Stephen Gutowski

An assassin is somebody who has a silencer on their guy when they go to to murder somebody, even if that doesn't make sense in real life. So how I carried it out, like I think that's more a part of him emulating what we expect an assassin to do.

00;15;37;24 - 00;15;38;28

Katherine Schweit

I think targeted violence.

00;15;38;28 - 00;15;39;02

Stephen Gutowski

Is.

00;15;39;09 - 00;16;01;24

Katherine Schweit

Cool. Yeah. I mean, targeted violence is definitely sorry. I'm talking over you. Targeted violence is definitely a situation where the person planning it, comes up with all kinds of plans, and they over plan because they want to be in so in charge of the situation, and they plan and plan and plan a plan. And they want to add these extra things that are kind of cool because they have time to think about it.

00;16;01;24 - 00;16;11;25

Katherine Schweit

Right? Oh, I'm going to get this black shirt and it's going to symbolize this, and I'm going to get this hoodie because it's going to symbolize that I'm going to put this belt on because it's going to, you know, and I'm going to put this guy to.

00;16;11;25 - 00;16;17;25

Stephen Gutowski

Write these messages on the, the casings. I'm going to have monopoly money in the backpack that I leave behind.

00;16;17;26 - 00;16;18;15

Katherine Schweit

Exactly.

00;16;18;15 - 00;16;59;10

Stephen Gutowski

You know, he's doing all these things to, to create, an image of what he's trying to accomplish with this, and, and it's that the thing is that, it is getting that level of notoriety that the Columbine killers were able to achieve. Yeah. And that's what makes me wonder, really, in the end, whether or not this is something that and the other, the other half of it is that, you know, there are there, you know, before the Columbine killing, there were dejected kids who felt like outcasts and lash out, after the Columbine killing, a lot of those kind of kids looked at the they would sympathize with what the Columbine killers did.

00;16;59;10 - 00;17;29;05

Stephen Gutowski

They would see themselves in that, now. But it's a very small group, right? Most people don't feel, connection to school shooters or mass shooters. Whereas this situation, a lot of people, a lot more people seem to feel a connection to what

motivated, this shooter, even if they may not, you know, be agree with going out and killing somebody in cold blood, as a, you know, response to how they feel.

00;17;29;05 - 00;17;34;27

Stephen Gutowski

They definitely feel a connection with them. And you kind of wonder. And I think it's a lot more people than feel ever I've ever felt. Yeah, I.

00;17;34;27 - 00;17;35;14

Katherine Schweit

Think once.

00;17;35;14 - 00;17;36;12

Stephen Gutowski

That Columbine kids.

00;17;36;12 - 00;17;47;28

Katherine Schweit

One thing, one thing about that, you know, has to go. And one thing about the UnitedHealth guy is, you know, his company impacts 1 in 4 people in the United States. So a lot of people.

00;17;47;28 - 00;17;49;25

Stephen Gutowski

Don't like the healthcare system for sure.

00;17;49;25 - 00;18;11;05

Katherine Schweit

Right? Right. So if a lot of people don't like the health care system, there's a lot of potential, angry people. And it makes it hard for law enforcement to even say, who would have perpetrated this act. Right? When it's a school shooting, we know it's a it's likely somebody from the school or who, you know, previously attended the school by a year or two.

00;18;11;07 - 00;18;36;28

Stephen Gutowski

Not. I think it extends to even beyond just anger at the health care system or health insurance to just anger at, you know, rich, powerful people generally in the system. Right. The sort of, you know, like the Joker movie, that sort of, antihero feeling that's out there, people just being angry at society and feeling, you know, that it's treated them unfairly.

00;18;37;01 - 00;19;01;20

Stephen Gutowski

There's a lot of that sentiment coalescing around what he did and killing this, the CEO. That makes you wonder if it's, like, something that people might might, you know, take, a lesson from it. Like, if you're feeling that this is the problem with Columbine really unlocked a new, it's it's hard for me to describe this.

00;19;01;20 - 00;19;18;18

Stephen Gutowski

It's called. So the science project calls it social proofing. Like, it's not so much that society approves of school shooters and thinks that that they do is right, but it thinks that this is how a certain kind of person may react to their how they're feeling, if that makes sense.

00;19;18;21 - 00;19;18;27

Katherine Schweit

Yeah.

00;19;18;27 - 00;19;39;26



Stephen Gutowski

And so that reinforces the idea that somebody who feels that way might think, oh, this is what I should do in this, because this is what society expects. And we have a school shooter trope stereotype, right? We know what just inherently we understand what what you mean when you say that kid struck me as a school shooter, right.

00;19;39;28 - 00;20;03;26

Stephen Gutowski

And it similar here in like, if somebody is feeling they see themselves in, in this, this killer in his actions and how he felt before he decided to do this. And society recognizes this as not necessarily an acceptable thing to do, but a thing that is something people do when they feel this way. You are more likely to see more people do that.

00;20;03;28 - 00;20;06;10

Stephen Gutowski

Does that make sense? What? I'm struggling with this.

00;20;06;14 - 00;20;42;03

Katherine Schweit

Yeah it does. And I think that something that may be is, you know, informative is that idea of, you know, a couple of decades ago, we were saying someone would go postal, right? And and that what we meant by that was, you know, shooting up their office. But when you look at targeted violence right now and over the last 25 years, looking at targeted violent, when I say targeted violence, what I mean is not, bank robber who goes in to rob a bank and then he's committing a crime, and then the security guard pulls a gun on him, and the bank robber pulls his gun out and fires at him.

00;20;42;05 - 00;20;57;27

Katherine Schweit

Or two gangs who decide they're just going to fight each other. And some of them have guns on them, and they choose to pull guns out and start firing at each other. That's not targeted violence. That's violent, plain old, violent crime that that occurs at the moment. And but different. Bad but different in the heat of the moment.

00;20;58;00 - 00;21;24;02

Katherine Schweit

There's so there's kind of two kinds of ways that you, you know, pull the trigger. One is anticipated, right? And one is unanticipated and the, the anticipated one is planned violence. And that's what active shooters are, an individual who actively engages in in choosing, shooting or attempting to kill people in a crowded space. That's what the FBI started researching, because they're different than serial murders.

00;21;24;02 - 00;21;53;13

Katherine Schweit

They're different than gang murders. They're different than drug murders. And different than murders that occur incident to a to a criminal act that where a gun is just pulled. So the idea of just doing, just looking at those targeted violent acts, you can't have situations like this, like the CEO shooting. But if you if you date back to the days of going postal, what we meant by that, of course, was an employee who shot up his post office.

00;21;53;16 - 00;22;20;01

Katherine Schweit

And then people started to use that terminology. But in fact, when the bureau started looking at active shooters over the last 25 years, of the data from the last 25 years shows us that almost half of all, or at least half of all targeted violent violence occurs in places of business. There is a reason why that fits. Schools are like 20% of these shootings, but places of business.

00;22;20;01 - 00;22;57;06

Katherine Schweit

So employees are angry and former employees are angry and customers are angry. And that's where most of this type of

shooting occurs. So it's not surprising that somebody would lash out at a CEO in a targeted violence act because they do that. But I think the one difference for me is that in this one is that historically, right, 20 years or so of data, the shooter generally goes to the place they know to shoot the boss, they know to shoot the, you know, the person who got their job or somebody who, you know, took their desk and or the.

00:22:57;13 - 00:23:03;19

Stephen Gutowski

Shooter didn't have he didn't have UnitedHealthCare. The difference he didn't wasn't affected by this particular company.

00:23:03;22 - 00:23:21;28

Katherine Schweit

Yeah, it's definitely a political position or it's a political stance. I'm going to do this. You know, when there was an assassination attempt on the former president, that future president, even to date, you know. Right. It's kind of murky as to why bother to do that? Other than that, he just wanted to become famous, right? Right.

00:23:21;29 - 00:23:24;05

Stephen Gutowski

I mean, we still don't have a lot of his motivation.

00:23:24;12 - 00:23:51;13

Katherine Schweit

And because it because sometimes people choose to lash out and do something, because they're angry and they're just internally in turmoil. And so they, you know, they might go to someplace, you know, just as a random. But, I'll say this, they might end up shooting someplace where, you know, eight of the ten victims are black or Hispanic or Jewish, but it might not have anything to do with that particular subset of society.

00:23:51;16 - 00:24:08;17

Katherine Schweit

It might just be that that's where they happen to pull the trigger, because that was close to their house or on the way to work, or because the people in their office, you know, were that. But this, this type of assassination attempt or a true assassination, as we saw, we call it an assassination because it was an execution.

00:24:08;17 - 00:24:35;18

Katherine Schweit

Right? But it's he also didn't shoot and try to shoot other people around it. And I think that's, you know, that's different. But again, like you're saying he's he's doing it out of a political stance, right? Political socioeconomic policy. You know, whatever his issues are, he made it clear and I think that he does potentially open the door to other people who want to say, oh, I did it just like him.

00:24:35;18 - 00:25:00;05

Katherine Schweit

And and that makes us look for, you know, as investigators, that makes us look for, the next, person, you know, put on your list of behaviors of concern building, you know, 3D guns, building 3D suppressors, buying the t shirts that are from that band in, in Germany. Who? The band who's disavowed and said they have nothing to do with it.

00:25:00;05 - 00:25:20;27

Katherine Schweit

But now people realize. Right. Exactly. And so that's what this shooter up in Madison happened to have that t shirt on, when she was at the range shooting, you know, trap and or trapper Clay, whatever she was shooting with her, her dad. But she clearly was manifesting some things that say somebody didn't see ahead of time.

00:25:21;00 - 00:25:45;07

Stephen Gutowski

Right? You know, he brought up the going postal thing, and I. That's interesting to me for a couple of reasons, because one. So and this gets back to what I'm talking about, like we focus a lot on news coverage of these events and maybe how, you know, we shouldn't name the names, of the shooters of their fame seeking, which, you know, we try to, but I think it's a very small effect, frankly.

00:25:45:07 - 00:26:07:29

Stephen Gutowski

But we do try to keep to that, you know, here we we we talk a lot about news coverage of this stuff, when really the effect is much broader. And one example of that from going postal is like one that's the term everybody knows. And then, I think it's kind of lost some of its meaning. People don't really you know, if you're under a certain age, you don't really understand what that's referring to necessarily.

00:26:07:29 - 00:26:35:09

Stephen Gutowski

And it's kind of become a more generic term at this point to the, to the level that in where my mom's farm is, there's a like postal store which is named, going postal, which is kind of dark if you think about the origin of this, this term, because that was about people who there was a period where postal employees, there was a stretch of, mass shootings where they would kill a bunch of people in a post office.

00:26:35:12 - 00:27:01:21

Stephen Gutowski

And, it became sort of a, a rash of these attacks. But the other half of that, so I, you know, I think that sort of the use of going postal to even be an innocuous term today, it's kind of gets at the point I'm trying to make with, like, me, like our societal impression of of these kinds of attacks not necessarily being good, but being a thing that people do.

00:27:01:23 - 00:27:21:19

Stephen Gutowski

And that reinforces for certain people that this is a thing I can do. But, you know, and then beyond that, you know, we did see a, that trend come to an end, right? We don't have the same level of postal employees, you know, shooting up their coworkers or what have you.

00:27:21:23 - 00:27:23:10

Katherine Schweit

Yeah, I think that. So, yeah.

00:27:23:17 - 00:27:46:05

Stephen Gutowski

It kind of now it's transitioned into a different sort of problem. The Columbine school shooting, mass shooting epidemic that we've seen or whatever you want to call it, like this, this trend that we've seen in the last couple of decades. And, you know, I do sort of wonder if we aren't transitioning to a new I think it's super early for this, but this year we've had fewer mass shootings by whatever count you want to look at.

00:27:46:07 - 00:28:11:07

Stephen Gutowski

And we've had more of these high profile assassination attempts. Both of the the president, the former president, former and future President Donald Trump then and then this killing now this very small number. I don't want to get too far into the speculation. I but I do wonder if, like, there's the potential for transitioning from one form of, you know, mass media violence to another here.

00:28:11:07 - 00:28:30:17

Katherine Schweit

Well, he actually, that's what I was going to say is, I mean, I think one thing that we I think it's a valuable, it's valuable to recognize is that we have developed a desire to see coverage and read and hear about school shootings. And if there isn't school shootings to see and hear about, let's move on to whatever's the next hot thing.

00:28;30;19 - 00:29;08;02

Katherine Schweit

And and I, you know, I worry about that, because the people who are, who are, you know, idolizing the Columbine shooters, you know, the Columbine shooters didn't have some, you know, they didn't have the motivation and and the desires and the problems that the people who idolize them think they had. Right. Like this whole image of, oh, these are two shooters who they were isolated and they were bullied and they wanted to shoot the jocks because they were part of the Trenchcoat Mafia.

00:29;08;02 - 00:29;41;26

Katherine Schweit

And and we and those of us who study these areas know all of that was wrong. But it became right. It became the story, the myth that existed, and also it became the myths in books and in movies and in television shows over and over and over again. And those are the erroneous facts are constantly repeated by very knowledgeable people who who, you know, didn't, didn't have the opportunity, like maybe that I had to go back to the source, like, you know, you spend a week in Colorado with Frank DeAngelis, who's a principal of the high school there.

00:29;42;02 - 00:30;14;15

Katherine Schweit

When the shooting occurred and spent time talking to the police, responded. And, and and you know, you learn little bits and details and stuff about what they planned and what they wanted to do. And, you know, like one of the shooters was that the prom a couple of days before the shooting? You know, they were. But the idea that these people and they want to do this and they want to create that image and that they want that persona of of, of whatever they think that shoot those shooters were they want to continue that.

00:30;14;15 - 00:30;35;11

Katherine Schweit

And I, you know, like now I live in, you know, Nebraska or I live in Virginia, and I want to I want to be like, Mike, I want to do that. And I think that you we may not have the same ability to do that with what you, you know, like with what you're saying with the CEO shooter, those are going to be looked at.

00:30;35;11 - 00:31;03;14

Katherine Schweit

If somebody does something, commits a violent crime like that against an individual, I don't think that they'll be using the term assassination. As much as I heard this time. I think it's just a killing, right? It's a killing. You know, the company president of this packing facility or this hospital or this, you know, lawyers firm. And the anger that somebody has that they develop over, that brings them to do that kind of shooting.

00:31;03;17 - 00:31;23;07

Katherine Schweit

One guy's mad at the health care industry, but then the next guy's mad at the politician in the next guys. I mean, if you think back to, you know, the guy who came on to in Virginia and, and, tried to kill people at the, baseball practice, and Steve Scalise was, Steve Scalise was injured there and his security detail was there.

00:31;23;07 - 00:31;31;17

Katherine Schweit

So and that's the reason that they were able to take out the shooter. But there have been those kinds of attacks on individuals.

00:31;31;19 - 00:31;48;27

Stephen Gutowski

Yeah. I mean, that's not you know, obviously there's, assassination attempts on political leaders all the time. They usually don't get as far as the more recent ones. And that may be one of the things that sort of colors our, you know, our view of it maybe, which seems like there's some shift going on where maybe it's just kind of you're looking at small

numbers.

00;31;48;27 - 00;32;06;29

Stephen Gutowski

Same thing with the potential decline in mass shootings. I mean, these are relative, relatively speaking. They are rare events. And so it can be hard just because we had seven this year that meet the violence I think we've had for this year that meet violence project criteria, which and, you know, these criterias.

00;32;07;00 - 00;32;07;22

Katherine Schweit

And, you know, I think.

00;32;07;22 - 00;32;08;29

Stephen Gutowski

They talked about definitions before.

00;32;08;29 - 00;32;28;17

Katherine Schweit

But yeah, I think there's something beneficial to talk about and I apologize for talking to you. I think that's something that's beneficial to talk about. Is that of the criteria that we use. And because, you know, in the FBI, active shooters don't, you don't have to have anybody die if you've got somebody coming in and shooting that count, that is an active shooter incident.

00;32;28;19 - 00;32;38;09

Katherine Schweit

But there are other research efforts that use, three dead or four dead. And it just depends on what their data collection is, their methodology or.

00;32;38;09 - 00;32;41;27

Stephen Gutowski

For shot for that. So yeah, that's what you get for shot.

00;32;42;04 - 00;32;45;19

Katherine Schweit

Right. The that's why the numbers are all really different and it doesn't really matter.

00;32;45;20 - 00;33;04;05

Stephen Gutowski

Strengths and weaknesses. Yeah. You know like the bonds project I think gets the the incidents in there get the closest to what people think of as a mass shooting. But it is limited to like this school shooting in Wisconsin with the wooden count because only two people were killed during that. And so there's there's obviously limits either way.

00;33;04;05 - 00;33;14;17

Stephen Gutowski

The gun combines archive they use for more shot, and they don't do any sort of felt, any sort of filtering for other kinds of, of gun violence like gang crime or what have you.

00;33;14;17 - 00;33;16;23

Katherine Schweit

Yeah. And shot and not killed. Right, right.

00;33;16;24 - 00;33;17;25

Stephen Gutowski

So there are.

00:33;17;26 - 00:33;22;07

Katherine Schweit

Others. Yeah. So you have two people killed and ten people injured.

00:33;22;09 - 00:33;33;24

Stephen Gutowski

That's that's for the troubles. But it doesn't. Right. Trying to, like, draw hard conclusions from these things because it kind of depends on how you're even looking at it, whether or not there has been a drop. I mean, I think by and I.

00:33;33;24 - 00:34;00;17

Katherine Schweit

Think all the data is hard, though, because the data is so hard because the because you are talking about really small numbers. So statistically, you know, according to the FBI data, the last 25 years, the last two years, active shooter incidents have gone down two years in a row. To me that's significant. But it is. You know, if 100 people in the last five years, 100 people have died from active shooter incidents every year, actually, it's 9090 people have died from active shooter incidents every year.

00:34;00;22 - 00:34;23;26

Katherine Schweit

That's 90 people died from, with by gunfire out of 45,000 in the United States. So you're really talking about such a small amount of of of coverage, you know, a small amount of the type of gun violence that occurs. And I think that one of the reasons why maybe some, in some cases, the shootings are going down is I think we're doing a better job of finding shooters ahead of time.

00:34;23;29 - 00:34;42;22

Katherine Schweit

And there are that we there are a lot of states that have passed, you know, you know, red flag laws and those are preventing shootings from happening just before they're going to shoot. Right. And look what happened in the case of the Madison, Wisconsin shooter was texting with a 20 year old in California who was planning on trying to shoot up some place.

00:34;42;26 - 00:34;53;13

Katherine Schweit

Maybe it was aspirational, right. But, they were police were concerned enough about it to go in and issue a red flag and not order and take the individual's guns away.

00:34;53;15 - 00:35;14;19

Stephen Gutowski

Right. So, you know, and then I would say to like, you can look at the, the coastal shootings as another potential framework for how we might address these kinds of school and mass shootings, down the line because, you know, the post office actually themselves tried to undertake a program to prevent these. And it seems to have worked.

00:35;14;19 - 00:35;37;19

Stephen Gutowski

Right. They, they have like, warning signs that that people are supposed to, report. And then they have, I think, even mental health, help for, for somebody in that sort of situation. So, you know, it's sort of, something that worked, apparently, you know, you're not 100%, but we don't have the same level of issue there.

00:35;37;22 - 00:35;49;04

Stephen Gutowski

Maybe, you know, so, yeah, I'm taking those broader, they're applying those lessons to a broader, approach. Could could be helpful as well. Right?

00;35;49;06 - 00;36;23;17

Katherine Schweit

Yeah. I, you know, I feel like we're, I think I, I think we maybe agree on this. I feel like we're kind of entering a little bit of a new phase. Now the internet has kind of settled down. People understand and I say the internet in a broad way, but I mean, all of social media and, you know, there's there's we all know now that there's a ton of social media and there always will be, and there's a ton of stuff on through you can access through the internet so that some guy in Germany can talk to somebody in France who can talk to somebody in California who's on the same channel, talking to

00;36;23;17 - 00;36;51;03

Katherine Schweit

somebody in Madison, Wisconsin. So there's a lot of room for people to be inspired without anybody knowing it. Right? Until they actually strike. And then people say, oh, he was such a nice guy. And I never thought about that. I never thought about him doing that. Right. But there's a whole, like, just like, in your neighborhood when the gang, you know, when there's a gang there, and the gang wants everybody to join and you see him all the time, or you feel like you need to belong to somewhere, you can always find your gang online.

00;36;51;09 - 00;36;52;13

Katherine Schweit

Right?

00;36;52;15 - 00;37;02;24

Stephen Gutowski

Which is a hard thing. That's a harder thing to interdict, right, to, to get in and absolutely. And agree with somebody before they carry out an attack when they're in these more isolated online communities.

00;37;02;26 - 00;37;27;16

Katherine Schweit

But, you know, I think even now, I think, though, that when we talk about, interdiction, the idea that you are going to, try to find somebody online who's communicating might be difficult. But the thing is that in a targeted, violent act, it is planned and it's they they often generally write out their plan, and they're like out there driving.

00;37;27;18 - 00;37;28;16

Stephen Gutowski

The car that weekend.

00;37;28;16 - 00;37;50;14

Katherine Schweit

Right. They leakage. They tell other people, do you know that in school shootings, FBI research shows that when they when they researched, the largest group of school shooters that I was ever research was the FBI's behavioral experts. And when they researched, leakage, they found 92% of the students leaked the intent to commit the violent act to another fellow student, 92%.

00;37;50;17 - 00;38;18;11

Katherine Schweit

So there's leakage. But also there are things like, if they're going to commit suicide, they have a tendency to stop taking their medications, to give their things away. They all change their physical appearance. It all requires a certain t shirt. Right? So people around them, family, friends, peers, and teachers, for, for people who are students, but for business people.

00;38;18;12 - 00;38;49;03

Katherine Schweit

Right. More than half of them coworkers, bosses, the the visible signs are there. The planning and the preparation is there. They do surveillance on their locations. They ask questions. So how many people I see, I see, you know, internal, data. I feel like, every week I see, you know, Intel bulletins from places and they're saying, so we stop this guy, and he

was asking, you know, the security guard at the front, how many security people do you have working here?

00:38:49:04 - 00:38:54:12

Katherine Schweit

Who runs the cameras? What time does a place open? And they're doing their surveillance, asking questions.

00:38:54:12 - 00:38:55:26

Stephen Gutowski

So it seems like.

00:38:55:26 - 00:38:56:26

Katherine Schweit

The shooter.

00:38:56:29 - 00:39:03:12

Stephen Gutowski

Did the same thing in that he was planning this out for a while in advance.

00:39:03:15 - 00:39:05:25

Katherine Schweit

Yes. The, I'm sorry, which one?

00:39:05:28 - 00:39:07:00

Stephen Gutowski

The CEO.

00:39:07:07 - 00:39:30:02

Katherine Schweit

Oh, yeah. Oh, for sure. Yeah. He had a he had it all planned out because he took the time to do it. He came in. What? He came in ten days, they believe, before the shooting came into New York City. Well, that's to do reconnaissance. That's to walk by, see if he knows where he's going to make sure that he has all the supplies and the equipment that he needs, that he figures out how to get a bike and how to do a getaway.

00:39:30:02 - 00:39:53:29

Katherine Schweit

And what's the next plan? You know, the plane ticket that he needs or the train ticket that he needs? You know, according to the surveillance video footage that was followed afterwards, you know, he he went he went right from the site down to get a bike, took the bike that was prearranged, took the bike through the park, dropped the backpack and ended up going to the bus station.

00:39:54:02 - 00:40:08:20

Katherine Schweit

And took a bus just like that. He had a plan, but that for a guy they believe had not been to New York City before, he had to figure that out. All that preplanning. But, you know, how do you know somebody who's buying a plane ticket or a train ticket, you know, and they're paying cash. So what?

00:40:08:22 - 00:40:18:26

Katherine Schweit

Right. But cash is an actually is an indicator paying cash for tickets is an indicator. I know that from my work on counterintelligence, after 9/11, counterterrorism after nine over 11.

00:40:19:01 - 00:40:25:27

Stephen Gutowski

But that's the that's where it becomes hard, right? Because not everybody 3D printing a gun or paying with cash is is can



be a,

00;40;25;29 - 00;40;49;09

Katherine Schweit

Exactly. And I think where we're looking for is, behavioral changes in that individual and, and in more than one. Right. You shoot a gun all the time and you decide you're going to go shoot, you know, every week. Maybe that's because you're going to be in some competition. Maybe that's because you're getting ready for hunting season. But that's enough to be concerned that you're shooting more.

00;40;49;09 - 00;41;18;06

Katherine Schweit

You buy a lot more ammunition, or you shave your combination with other. You give your computer away, right? You stop taking your medication and your grades drop. FBI behavioral experts say that grades will drop and communication capabilities will degrade long before you show any anger. That's what the research shows. So, you know, if your work product is it drops and you know, and you're late for work and you're not doing your work or you're not doing your schoolwork.

00;41;18;08 - 00;41;19;25

Stephen Gutowski

Cut off contact with with.

00;41;19;25 - 00;41;42;14

Katherine Schweit

Yeah, cut off contact with you. Those are all things together. Just like you think of like, for suicide. Right? Somebody who who might be dealing with a suicidal tendencies. It's it's kind of the same things people who isolate themselves. And and if we see those behavioral cues, then it isn't just about somebody who's, you know, shooting at the range, shooting at the range, at a picture of somebody's shooting at the range isn't significant.

00;41;42;14 - 00;41;49;27

Katherine Schweit

But when you add to it, a t shirt, this is the same with the same band from Columbine High School. You know, shooter.

00;41;49;29 - 00;41;50;08

Stephen Gutowski

Yeah.

00;41;50;13 - 00;41;51;07

Katherine Schweit

So that's the.

00;41;51;07 - 00;42;32;18

Stephen Gutowski

Kind of becomes more concerning, right? Yeah. You have to recognize these things together. And it is hard, I think, for people who are very close to some they don't. It's very difficult to imagine that your loved one is somebody who may be going down this, this spiral. But, but, you know, in the end here, I think, we perhaps agree that, there's the potential that this UnitedHealthCare CEO shooting to draw copycats in a similar way to Columbine has, but also that perhaps some of the same strategies used to counter school shootings or mass shootings could be used in, to counter, you know, people who are considering carrying out targeted killings, like,

00;42;32;18 - 00;42;33;25

Stephen Gutowski

like this one, right?

00;42;33;28 - 00;42;58;16

Katherine Schweit

Yeah. I think what was unnerving, I completely agree with you on that. I agree with you 100% on what you just said. And I think in addition to that, you know, the part that's unnerving for, corporate America, you know, for the world of business is, the vulnerability. Absolutely. You know, a lot of CEOs have, you know, have security.

00:42:58;19 - 00:43:23;25

Katherine Schweit

I talked to somebody who works with the health care company after the shooting and said, who said our entire, corporate block is in basically bunkered down, and, all travel has been canceled. We don't want to have any risk of any copycats or anybody doing something this next week. And we do know that copycat shootings and targeted violence occur in the next in the following, you know, 10 to 14 days general clustering.

00:43:23;28 - 00:43:44;11

Katherine Schweit

They cluster together. Right. So so it's possible. But somebody who's at the, you know, big, big corporation, they may have, you know, security around them and they're getting it, they're coming through the back door and they're traveling with security that's taking care of them like the security executive protection, you know, for the president of the United States and for people like that.

00:43:44;14 - 00:44:09;05

Katherine Schweit

But there's a whole host of other people who can't afford that type of security as part of their business plan. Right, right. And they're running the small car dealership who, you know, won't refund somebody's money on a lemon car. And I think those are kind of things that if we over time, we'll be able to tie together what appears to be targeted violence, especially if there's statements left behind, or there's the pattern.

00:44:09;05 - 00:44:26;11

Katherine Schweit

Once we, we look at it ahead of time about what prompted this person to get to that point, and then I think we'll be able to, you know, next year, will we be able to tie those together? Maybe not. But, you know, in a couple of years, we'll be able to see whether or not, you know, what you're predicting is, that pattern is out there.

00:44:26;16 - 00:44:27;27

Katherine Schweit

I agree with you. Yeah.

00:44:27;29 - 00:44:33;16

Stephen Gutowski

But, but there is some hope that we can counter these things with, with the strategies that you discussed. Right.

00:44:33;18 - 00:45:06;20

Katherine Schweit

I'm I'm telling you, you know, not everybody buys it. But I see the changes. I see the changes in, in the number of people who are, preventing shootings just because they know what to look for. I think, you know, you know, we had a, podcast in our last, when the fifth season of Stop the Killing last season, we, I spent time with a vice principal of a school who came to us to say, hey, we listened to your podcasts all the time, and we found these circumstances, and we stopped a school shooting at our school because of that.

00:45:06;22 - 00:45:25;11

Katherine Schweit

And I think that wouldn't have happened ten years ago or 20 years ago, because nobody kind of knew what those things were. And we're just sharing information that, you know, I don't want to say everybody knows, but we're sharing common information. Right. We just tied together in a fun package because Sarah Ferris is so fun. My co podcaster.

00:45:25;13 - 00:45:35;26

Stephen Gutowski

Well, speaking of, your podcast, I really appreciate you coming on our show, but, why don't you tell people a little bit more about where they can, where they can find your writings and and your podcast?

00:45:35;29 - 00:46:06;10

Katherine Schweit

Oh. Thank you. My everything, ties back to katherineschweit.com. So if you can figure out how to spell my name, which is complicated. It's old fashioned name. You can find the books. Stop the killing. How to end the mass shooting Crisis. And, my, what I call my gun book, which is actually, we're going to rebrand it, this week.

00:46:06;10 - 00:46:30;22

Katherine Schweit

You're getting, like, the news this week. We're rebranding it to a simple guide to the Second Amendment, because that's really what it is. And then my podcast, our podcast is on its fifth season. It's called Stop the Killing and it's not. And I will say this about the books and the podcast. There's no politics in it. Deaths and killings are not a political statement for me.

00:46:30;24 - 00:47:05;18

Katherine Schweit

All my time in the FBI, you know, you do your job and you follow the law and politics. Everybody, politics aside, because nobody wants people to be killed, you know, with guns in the United States. And so there's no politics discussions or arguments in the book. Either way, it's not a gun versus no gun. It's a it's a much more and much more, engaging discussion about it, facts and figures and information that helps you to draw your own conclusions, and also to help other people decide what they can do to stop the killing.

00:47:05;22 - 00:47:32;02

Katherine Schweit

So the podcast itself is, as I said in its fifth season and available, you know, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, wherever you can find your podcast or your favorite podcasts, we encourage you to, subscribe. And we send to subscribers. We send out, news hits in addition to that, when something's happening with facts. Right. Because a lot of times you hear stuff in the news, you don't really know what the facts are.

00:47:32;04 - 00:47:43;16

Katherine Schweit

We'll we'll pop out something, you know, that's, that's ten minutes. That gives you, the real, real details that are up to date. And you don't have to go find the rumors or sort through a thousand new stories.

00:47:43;18 - 00:47:51;00

Stephen Gutowski

All right, well, I, I recommend it. I think it's a great podcast, and I appreciate you coming on the show, and we'll have to have you on again in the future as well.

00:47:51;02 - 00:47:55;00

Katherine Schweit

Maybe for something fun. Maybe we could just talk about, like, our favorite wines or something like that.

00:47:55;01 - 00:47:57;20

Stephen Gutowski

Yeah, that would be great.

00:47:57;23 - 00:48:01;05

Katherine Schweit

Great. It was great to talk to you. Thanks for thanks for making the time.

00:48:01;12 - 00:48:06;12

Stephen Gutowski

Absolutely. All right. That's all we've got for you guys this week. We will see you guys again real soon.