

FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

Mass Shootings at Virginia Tech

Supplement to the Report of the Review Panel

Presented to: Governor Timothy M. Kaine – Commonwealth of Virginia

December 2009

The following contains additional input from various families directly affected by the mass shootings that occurred at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007 in response to the Virginia Tech panel report addendum recently released. The focus of this document centers on the summary of findings and timeline of events based on what we believe to be accurate.

INTRODUCTION

On April 16, 2007, Seung Hui Cho, an angry and disturbed student, shot to death 32 students and faculty of Virginia Tech, wounded 17 more, and then killed himself.

The incident horrified not only Virginians, but people across the United States and throughout the world.

Tim Kaine, Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, immediately appointed a panel to review the events leading up to this tragedy; the handling of the incidents by public safety officials, emergency services providers, and the university; and the services subsequently provided to families, survivors, care-givers, and the community. Here is that Panel's mission statement:

“The Panel’s mission is to provide an independent, thorough, and objective incident review of this tragic event, including a review of educational laws, policies, and institutions, the public safety and health care procedures and responses, and the mental health delivery system. With respect to these areas of review, the Panel should focus on what went right, what went wrong, what practices should be considered best practices, and what practices are in need of improvement. This review should include examination of information contained in academic, health and court records and by information obtained through interviews with knowledgeable individuals. Once that factual narrative is in place and questions have been answered, the Panel should offer recommendations for improvements in light of those facts and circumstances.”

Since April 16, 2007, the families directly affected have continued to search for a thorough understanding of how such a tragic event could have happened, not only in order to heal, but also to help others prevent similar dreadful events in the future.

We had also hoped that by providing factual input to this addendum to the original panel report we would take further important steps through the grieving process. All along, we wanted to collaborate face to face with panel members and TriData personnel in creating the most thorough accounting of that day. Unfortunately, that opportunity never came, in our opinion, as our requests were rejected.

Subsequently, this supplement to TriData's recently published addendum to the Panel Report was created based on input from the families. Given the volume of the Panel Report, this document focuses only on the Summary of Key Findings as well as on the Timeline of Events. Based on what we believe to be true, it derives from meetings with law enforcement, VT administrators, state officials, and from our own research. Although grateful for the recommendations in the original report proposing changes to various laws, we believe that the investigating panel and TriData paid insufficient attention to the need for compliance to existing procedures and laws, and to how this deficiency in a university administration seriously impacted its preparedness for the unexpected, having already experienced such a dangerous situation in August of 2006. Finally, it is also recognized that there is still much more to learn.¹

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

1. No change proposed at this time
 2. No change proposed at this time.
 3. No change proposed at this time.
 4. The Cook Counseling Center and the university's Care Team failed to provide needed support and services to Cho during a period in late 2005 and early 2006. The system failed for lack of resources, incorrect interpretation of privacy laws, and passivity. *In 2007, Cho's records were missing from the Cook Counseling Center. Dr. Robert Miller, the Center's former director, said he found them at his home in the summer of 2009 while looking for them in response to the discovery process prompted by legal proceedings.* (Clarification)
 5. No change proposed at this time.
 6. No change proposed at this time.
 7. No change proposed at this time.
 8. No change proposed at this time.
 9. Some Virginia colleges and universities are uncertain about what they are permitted to do regarding the possession of firearms on campus. *However, in 2007, Virginia Tech had a "no guns on campus" policy in place.* (Clarification)
 10. No change proposed at this time.
 11. The Virginia Tech police *were wrong* in prematurely concluding that their initial lead in the double homicide was a good one. They did not take sufficient action to deal with what might happen if the initial lead proved erroneous. The Chief of the VT Police reported to the university President that the "person of interest" probably was no longer on campus. (Correction)
 12. Virginia Tech had two different emergency notification procedures in effect on April 16, 2007. These were documented in *Campus Safety a Shared Responsibility*, published in May of 2005 in compliance with the Federal Clery Act, and in its *Emergency Response Plan*, revision 3.0, published in May of 2005. (New Information)
- Note: The original panel report and the addendum both discuss revision 3.0 of Virginia Tech's Emergency Response Plan as being in effect on April 16, 2007. However, revision 4.0 was published and effective in November of 2006. That revision was never mentioned.
13. The VTPD did not issue a warning as specified in the timely-warning procedure found in *Campus Safety a Shared Responsibility* following the shootings at the West Ambler-Johnston dormitory. The VTPD had full authority to send out a warning without prior discussion with, or approval of, the university administration. In the hours prior to the second shootings at Norris Hall, there were no witnesses, no suspect, no weapon found, and bloody footprints leaving the

crime scene. Additionally, there were various means to indicate an emergency situation existed to the campus, however, none were activated. (New Information)

14. During his phone call with the President before the Policy Group meeting, the VT Chief of Police erred in not requesting that the President issue a campus-wide notification that two persons had been killed and that all students and staff should be cautious and alert. (Correction)

15. Per Virginia Tech's Emergency Response Plan in effect on April 16, 2007, the shootings in both the WAJ dormitory and Norris Hall were class III emergencies, the highest level. (New Information)

16. Senior university administrators, acting as the emergency Policy Group and, allegedly, also as the Emergency Response Resource Group, failed to issue an all-campus notification about the WAJ killings until almost 2 hours had elapsed. (New Information)

We use the term '*allegedly*' because we do not believe that the Administration activated the Emergency Response Plan in effect on April 16, 2007, or communicated its provision to university personnel until after the Norris Hall shootings had begun.

17. Virginia Tech's Emergency Response Plan dated May of 2005 was not executed as written, nor had it been updated following the Morva incident (August 2006) despite opportunities to do so. For example, when the plan was updated, and published, in November of 2006 to conform to requirements established by the Department of Homeland Security. (New Information)

18. No change proposed at this time.

19. No change proposed at this time.

20. No change proposed at this time.

21. No change proposed at this time.

22. No change proposed at this time.

23. No change proposed at this time.

24. No change proposed at this time.

25. No change proposed at this time.

26. Emily Hilscher (one of the victims of the double homicide at West Ambler-Johnston) survived for three hours and was transported from the scene to one hospital and later transferred to another. Despite the fact that her identity was known, neither Virginia Tech nor law enforcement nor hospital representatives informed her parents that she had been shot and seriously wounded, or where she had been taken for medical treatment, until after her death.²

Additional Input

A. Virginia Tech's Timely Warning Procedure in effect on 4/16/07 as found in Campus Safety A Shared Responsibility, published in 2005 to comply with the Federal Clery Act contains the following paragraph:

"At times it may be necessary for 'timely warnings' to be issued to the university community. If a crime(s) occur and notification is necessary to warn the university of a potential dangerous situation then the Virginia Tech Police Department should be notified. The police department will then prepare a release and the information will be disseminated to all students, faculty and staff and to the local community."

This procedure, although specific, was not executed by the VTPD following the shootings at the West Ambler Johnson dormitory although there were no witnesses, no weapon, no suspect, and bloody footprints leaving the area.

1. Since the "local community" would not have been dependent on the same electronic warning system as the Virginia Tech community, the VTPD could have used other means for issuing an alert.

Further, during the time **when** no warning was sent, the following was occurring:

- i. "VTPD had police on campus looking for the gunman while they pursued the person of interest." (page 80 of addendum)
- ii. SWAT teams were put on alert and staged in Blacksburg
- iii. Policy Group members/attendees were calling their families
- iv. Various campus buildings went into lockdown
- v. The local public school district began preparing for lockdown at 8:00 a.m. after the School Resource Officers (SRO) at Blacksburg High School and Blacksburg Middle School, who were both members of the Blacksburg Police Dept., were recalled from the schools at 8AM to support activities at Virginia Tech following the shootings at the dormitory. By police protocol, the SRO's notified their respective principals prior to departing.
- vi. There were many e-mail communications between the Director of Government Affairs at Virginia Tech to a Richmond colleague discussing the events as they unfolded, including a warning of a gunman on the loose and a caution not to release that information.³

- B. Virginia Tech's Emergency Response Plan (ERP) published May 19, 2005, specifically identifies responsibilities, including coordination of resources and communications in an emergency situation.

There was a specified chain of command, as follows:

1. The highest level group is the Policy Group, composed of the President, Executive Vice President, Associate Vice President of University Relations, University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Vice President of Business Affairs, Vice President of Information Technology, Vice President of Student Affairs, General Counsel, and Support Staff (Administrative/Clerical).
2. The next level group is called the Emergency Response Resource Group (ERRG). Some of its members include Vice-President in Charge (VPIC), Emergency Response Coordinator (ERC), Virginia Tech Police Department, Communication Network Services, Environmental Health and Safety, University Relations, and others. This group directs resources in support of emergency-response operations, assures the continuity of critical business functions, and implements business-recovery-and-resumption activities.
 - a. The ERRG's purpose: "The ERRG shall be used to provide centralized direction and control of any or all of the following functions as they pertain to Virginia Tech." Some of their specific responsibilities included:
 - i. The Vice President in Charge (VPIC) serves as the liaison between the ERRG and the Policy Group.
 - ii. The Emergency Response Coordinator (ERC) serves as the point of contact within the ERRG and is Chief of Staff to the Vice President in Charge.
 - iii. The ERC confirms the level of response needed and the situation level of the emergency.
 - iv. "Determine the scope and impact of the incident"
 - v. "Prioritize emergency actions"
 - vi. "Deploy and coordinate resources and equipment"
 - vii. "Issue communications and warnings through University Relations."
3. Lastly, an Incident Commander (IC) is the person directing immediate response efforts at the scene of the emergency; for example, the Fire Chief for fire emergencies.

Other sections of the ERP (published on May 19, 2005) specify requirements for maintenance and updating of the plan. For example:

- A. "Environmental Health and Safety Services (EHSS) is responsible for coordinating the preparation and continuous updating of the ERP, and for assuring the compatibility of the plan with similar Federal, state, and local (county and municipal) plans."

- B. "The ERP and each area plan are to be updated as soon as practicable after changes in organizational structure or resources occur. As a minimum, this plan and each area plan shall be reviewed annually."
- C. "The president is responsible for assuring that an adequate Emergency Response Plan is maintained."
- D. "All Virginia Tech managers (Senior Administrative Officers, Deans, Chairs, Directors, Laboratory and Facility Managers) are considered 'essential personnel' during level II and III events."

Discussion of ERP referenced in the Panel Report

- A. Although TriData referred to VT's ERP with terms such as "cumbersome," the plan was very specific about roles and responsibilities. Therefore, we note the following:
 - a. Per the plan, the Emergency Response Resource Group was not identified, or assembled, on the morning of April 16, 2007, following the dormitory shootings.
 - b. The shootings at West Ambler-Johnston and Norris Hall were both class III events as defined in the VT Emergency Response Plan. Additionally, the situation at West Ambler-Johnston was that two students were shot; there was no weapon at the scene, no witnesses, no suspect, and bloody footprints leaving the area. This information was available prior to the Policy Group meeting that began at 8:25 a.m.
 - c. There was no Vice President in Charge.
 - d. There was no Emergency Response Coordinator.
 - e. As per the written plan, the ERRG – not the Policy Group – had the authority to issue a campus-wide warning.
 - f. Both the Virginia Tech Police and the EHSS dept. (responsible for managing the Emergency Response Plan) reported to James Hyatt, who was also a member of the Policy Group during the Morva incident in August of 2006, as well as on the morning of April 16, 2007.
- B. Shortly after his 8:11 a.m. phone call with Chief Flinchum, President Steger decided to call for a meeting of the Policy Group. However, there is no statement, or written documentation stating, that the Emergency Response Plan was activated at that time or during the Policy Group meeting that began at 8:25 a.m. The panel report addendum only implies that the ERP was activated when the shootings at Norris Hall occurred since it notes that a level III emergency existed.

According to plan protocol, if it had been activated, this would mean that the Policy Group assumed the additional role of the Emergency Response Resource Group, thus assuming the responsibility for issuing a warning message and communications. There were no communications sent to "essential personnel" throughout the campus community in order for respective department emergency-operations plans to be executed as per the flow diagram on page 10 of the Emergency Response Plan.

- C. The panel report addendum (page 87-C) makes the following statement in response to the "conflicting" timely warning procedures in effect on April 16, 2007:

- a. "However, Virginia Tech's Emergency Management Plan also contained formal emergency alert procedures and these assigned authority for releasing a warning to the Policy Group only."

The foregoing statement is incorrect because the ERRG was authorized to issue a warning, not the Policy Group. A representative from University Relations on the ERRG could have issued a warning, or else the ERRG could have used other means of warning the campus as well.

- D. The ERP published in 2005, to which panel report refers, was not updated as stipulated in the plan. For example, there were at least 3 opportunities for this to have occurred following the Morva incident in August of 2006. These are listed below. That is when details relative to what steps would be taken in an unknown shooter situation could have been planned and disseminated to staff. As noted in both the original panel report and the addendum, this discussion was actually being conducted as part of the Policy Group discussions on the morning of April 16, 2007.

- a. Following the Morva incident in August of 2006
- b. During the ERP update, published as revision 4.0 in November of 2006. This update was to modify the response organization structure as required by the Department of Homeland Security's National Incident Management System (NIMS) as discussed in letters sent to state Governors beginning in 2004. The first letter was from Mr. Tom Ridge.

(The Panel/TriData failed to consider this version of the ERP)

- See attached web link for details and letters to Governors

<http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/>

- c. After the appointment of Wendell Flinchum to VT Chief of Police in December 2006.
- E. As noted in both the original panel report and the addendum, on the morning of April 16th there were many discussions among members of the Policy Group about what had occurred during the Morva incident in August of 2006 as well as considerable confusion about what to do.⁴

CHAPTER III. REVISED TIMELINE OF EVENTS

5:00 a.m.

In Cho's suite in Harper Hall one of his suitemates, Joseph Aust, notices Cho is awake and at his computer.⁵

6:45 a.m.

Cho is spotted by a student in the foyer area of West Ambler-Johnston dormitory where he has access to the building because his mailbox is located here.⁶

7:02 a.m.

Emily Hilscher enters West Ambler-Johnston (based on card swipe records) after being dropped off by her boyfriend, Karl Thornhill.⁷

About 7:15a.m.

Cho shoots Emily Hilscher and Ryan Clark in room 4040. Clark is the Resident Advisor whose room is right next door (4042). He is investigating noises in Hilscher's room and is fatally shot.⁸

Molly Donahue had been sleeping when she is awakened by a woman's scream. While getting dressed she hears another scream and two loud thuds. Molly sees bloody footprints coming from room 4040 and attempts to gain access. The room is dark and no one answers when she yells into the room. She goes to Resident Advisor Ryan Clark's room but receives no answer. Upset and confused, she leaves although female Resident Advisor Carrie Johnston had already arrived and contacted the police department from Donohue's room.⁹

7:20 a.m.

The VTPD receives a call on their administrative telephone line from Resident Advisor Carrie Johnson advising that a female student in room 4040 of WAJ had possibly fallen from her loft bed. The caller was given this information by another WAJ resident near room 4040 who heard the noise.⁷

7:21 a.m.

The VTPD dispatcher notifies the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad that a female student had possibly fallen from her loft bed in WAJ.⁶

7:22 a.m.

Virginia Tech Police Officer Darrell Sheppard is dispatched to room 4040 at WAJ to accompany the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad, which is also dispatched per standard protocol.¹⁰

7:24 a.m.

Officer Sheppard arrives at WAJ room 4040, finds two people shot inside the room, and immediately requests additional VTPD resources.⁶

7:25 a.m.

Cho accesses his university e-mail account (based on computer records). He erases his files and the account.⁶

7:26 a.m.

Virginia Tech Rescue Squad 3 arrives on-scene outside WAJ.⁶

7:27 a.m.

Police dispatcher is advised of two victims. Officer on scene requests supervisor.⁶

7:29 a.m.

Virginia Tech Rescue Squad 3 arrives at room 4040.⁶

7:30 a.m.

Additional VTPD officers begin arriving at room 4040. They secure the crime scene and in effect lock down the dormitory, with police inside and outside. Police start preliminary investigation. Interviews with residents fail to produce a suspect description. No one on Hilscher's floor in WAJ saw anyone leave room 4040 after the initial noise was heard.⁶ A housekeeper in Burruss Hall tells Dr. Ed Spencer, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and member of the Policy Group, that an RA and a student in WAJ were shot. (The housekeeper had received a phone call from another housekeeper in WAJ.)¹¹

7:31 – 7:32 a.m.

Virginia Tech Rescue Squad requests additional ambulance and all available personnel to respond to West Ambler Johnston.¹²

7:35a .m.

Police on the scene at WAJ say they need a detective. VTPD Detective Stephanie Henly responds.¹³

7:40 a.m.

VTPD Chief Flinchum is notified by phone of the WAJ shootings. Chief Flinchum tries repeatedly to reach the office of his supervisor, James Hyatt, Virginia Tech's Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, and member of the Policy group.⁶

7:50-7:55 a.m.

Two gunshot victims arrive at MRH from campus. One victim is dead. The other is treated and transferred to Roanoke Memorial Hospital Trauma Center.¹⁴

7:51 a.m.

Chief Flinchum contacts Chief Kimberly Crannis of the Blacksburg Police Department and requests a BPD evidence technician and BPD detective to assist with the investigation.⁶

7:55 a.m.

Dr. Spencer arrives at WAJ after walking from Burruss Hall. He calls his wife as well as his superior, Dr. Zenobia Hikes, Vice President of Student Affairs and a member of the Policy Group. Dr. Spencer explains the situation and remains at the crime scene.^{6 11}

7:57 a.m.

Chief Flinchum finally gets through to a support person in the office of the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer and notifies them of the shootings.⁶

8:00 a.m.

The Security Resource Officers (SRO) at Blacksburg High School and Blacksburg Middle School are recalled to assist at Virginia Tech. As required by Blacksburg police protocol, the SRO's notified their respective school principals because they are members of the police force.¹⁵

8:00 a.m.

Classes begin at VT. Chief Flinchum arrives at WAJ and finds VTPD and BPD detectives are already on the scene and the investigation is underway. A local special agent of the Virginia State Police (VSP), Chuck Eaton, has been contacted and is responding to the scene.¹⁶ The VTPD, BPD, and soon an officer from the VSP start to process the crime scene in Hilscher's room (4040) and gather evidence. They then begin to canvass the dorm for possible witnesses, search interior and exterior waste containers and surrounding areas near WAJ for evidence, and canvass rescue squad personnel for additional evidence or information.⁶

About 8:00 a.m.

An instructor drops his wife off at the Math Emporium building across the street from the main campus. As she enters the building, a co-worker informs her that she has heard of a shooting at the dorm from an employee working in janitorial services for the University. The Emporium locks down on its own.¹⁷

8:01 a.m.

Ralph Byers, Executive Director of Government Affairs and attendee in Policy Group meetings, replies to an e-mail from Dr. Surajit De Datta, VP for Internal Affairs & Director of International Research. His message is "We are in an emergency and I'll call as soon as possible".¹⁸

8:05 a.m.

At least two Policy Group members, Kim O'Rourke (Chief of Staff and member/attendee at the Policy Group meeting) and Dr. Lisa Wilkes (VP for Administration and a member of the Policy Group the morning of April 16th) communicate with their families about the shootings.^{19 20}

8:10 a.m.

President Steger is notified by a secretary that there has been a shooting. He tells her to get Chief Flinchum on the phone.⁶

8:11 a.m.(See note)

Chief Flinchum talks to President Steger via phone and reports that one student is critical and one is fatally wounded, and that the incident seems to be domestic in nature. He reports no weapon found and there are bloody footprints. President Steger tells Chief Flinchum to keep him informed. President Steger and James Hyatt discuss the event. Steger decides to convene the Policy Group no later than 8:30 a.m.^{6, 7}

Note: There were conflicting inputs concerning what was specifically stated during the phone call between Chief Flinchum and President Steger.

8:11 a.m.

BPD Chief Kim Crannis arrives on scene.⁶

8:13 a.m.

Chief Flinchum requests additional VTPD and BPD officers to assist with securing WAJ entrances and with the investigation. He also orders recall of all off-shift personnel.⁶

8:14 a.m.

Hilscher's roommate, Heather Haugh, arrives at WAJ to go with Hilscher to chemistry class. (Time recorded from swipe card.)⁶

8:15 a.m.

Chief Flinchum requests the VTPD Emergency Response Team (ERT) to respond to the scene and then to stage in Blacksburg in the event an arrest is needed or a search warrant is to be executed. Police are on campus looking for the gunman. The Emergency Response Team is the same as a SWAT team.⁶

8:16 a.m.

The interview of Heather Haugh, Emily Hilscher's roommate, begins with detectives.^{6 7}

The source for the original false timeline entry in the panel report showing the interview beginning at 7:30 a.m. and concluding at 8:00 a.m. (with a person of interest being identified) has never been explained. Chief Flinchum gave a written presentation to panel members on May 21, 2007, which clearly shows the correct start time of 8:16 a.m. (based on electronic card swipe records). The only documented source of this false start time found by the families was contained in an e-mail that Larry Hincker, Associate VP of University Relations, had sent to himself at 7:05 p.m. the evening of April 16, 2007.^{21 22}

8:19 a.m.

Chief Crannis requests BPD ERT to respond for the same reason as the VTPD ERT.⁶

8:25 a.m.

The Policy Group meeting begins in Burruss Hall. A topic of discussion involves how and when to notify students of the double shooting. At this point there is still no suspect, no person of interest, no idea who Heather Haugh or Karl Thornhill were, no weapon, and bloody footprints leaving the scene.⁶

8:25 a.m.

Sandi Merrix from the VT Funds Handling Office is notified by the VTPD to suspend until further notice, pick up bags going to the bank, and cancel bank deposit pickups.²³

8:40 a.m.

The interview of Heather Haugh has concluded. She has explained that on Monday mornings Hilscher's boyfriend, Karl Thornhill, usually dropped her off at WAJ and returned to Radford University where he is a student. She says he owns guns and practices shooting. Heather explains that Emily and Karl have a great relationship and that he would not do anything to her. Karl Thornhill is named a "person of interest" following the interview. She is also told not to speak with anyone.²⁴

8:40 a.m.

President Steger is notified by Chief Flinchum that Karl Thornhill is a “person of interest.”⁶

8:40 – 8:45 a.m.

Police begin the search for Thornhill as a “person of interest.” Phone calls are made from BPD to its units and to Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office and Radford University police to be on the lookout for Thornhill’s vehicle.⁶

Around 8:43 a.m.

Laura Fornash, VT’s Director of Government Relations in Richmond, is aware of the West Ambler Johnston shooting. She e-mails her supervisor, Ralph Byers and states that she just talked with Bill Murray, Commonwealth Legislative Director and Deputy Policy Director, and he is calling Bill Leighty, Chief of Staff to the Governor. She asks Byers if she should contact the Attorney General.²⁵

8:45 a.m.

Ralph Byers, Executive Director of Government relations, a member of the Policy Group sends an e-mail to Laura Fornash, Director of State Relations in Richmond, Virginia the following message: “This is not releasable yet, one student dead, one wounded, gunman on the loose. State police are involved. No details available yet.”²⁶

8:47 a.m.

Laura Fornash replies to Ralph Byers stating “Okay, I am in, how can I help.”²⁷

8:49 a.m.

Ralph Byers replies, “just try to make sure it doesn’t get out.”²⁸

8:49 a.m.

Sandra Ward, Office Manager, Cook Counseling Center, sends an email to staff stating that there has been a shooting at West Ambler Johnston involving two students and to be prepared to open up their schedule because there may be several students coming in today.²⁹

8:50 a.m.

First period classes end. The Policy Group begins composing a notice to the university about the shootings in WAJ. The Associate Vice President for University Relations, Larry Hinkler, is unable to send the message at first due to technical difficulties with the alert system, and he has to walk to his office to get his laptop. The Policy Group decides to wait for more information and to hold the notification until the next class change.⁶

8:52 a.m.

Blacksburg public schools lock down until more information is available about the incident at Virginia Tech. School superintendent notifies school board of this by e-mail.³⁰ The Virginia Tech Executive Director of Government Affairs sends an e-mail to his administrative assistant to “*Lock the door.*”³¹

8:53 a.m.

Ralph Byers e-mails Laura Fornash in Richmond: “*There will be a statement soon.*”³²

8:55 a.m.

Laura Fornash e-mails Ralph Byers stating that she will call the Governor's office.³³

Prior to 9:00 a.m.

Police allow students in WAJ to leave; students including Rachel Hill and Henry Lee (who are both killed as a result) go to 9:00 a.m. classes in Norris Hall.^{34 35}

9:00-9:15 a.m.

Virginia Tech veterinary college locks down on its own initiative.⁶

9:03 a.m.

Bernadette Mondy, Director of Environmental Health and Safety Services and document owner of Virginia Tech's Emergency Response plan, receives an e-mail concerning a communication from the Montgomery County School Superintendent that there has been a shooting involving two students on the Virginia Tech campus.

Her reply is: "*Yikes! No news about this on campus yet. I hope it's not true. Send me anything else you hear please.*"³⁶

9:05 a.m.

Classes begin for the second period in Norris Hall. Virginia Tech trash pickup is cancelled.³⁷

9:10 a.m.

Sandra Ward, Office Manager for Cook Counseling Center sends an e-mail to the staff:

*"Dr. Ferraro has asked that we keep this information confidential until we know more."*³⁸

9:15 a.m.

Both police ERTs are now physically staged at the BPD in anticipation of executing search warrants or making an arrest.⁶

9:15-9:30 a.m.

Cho is seen outside and then inside Norris Hall, an engineering building, by several students. He is familiar with the building because one of his classes meets there. He chains the doors shut on the three public entrances, from the inside. No one reports seeing him do this. A faculty member finds a bomb-threat note attached to an inner door near one of the chained exterior doors. She gives it to a janitor to carry to the Engineering School dean's office on the third floor.^{6 39}

9:24 a.m.

A Montgomery County deputy sheriff initiates a traffic stop of Hilscher's boyfriend in his pickup truck on Prices Fork road at the Virginia Tech campus. The boyfriend had received a text message earlier that Emily Hilscher had been shot earlier that morning and is driving back to the campus to search for Hilscher after she fails to answer his calls. Detectives are sent to assist with the questioning.⁶

9:24 a.m.

Virginia Tech Police Captain Joey Albert joins the Policy Group as police liaison and provides updates as information becomes available. He reports one gunman at large, possibly on foot.⁶

9:26 a.m.

The Policy Group sends e-mail to campus staff, faculty, and students informing them of the dormitory shooting. ^{6 40}

9:30 a.m.

Police pass information to the Policy Group that it is unlikely that Hilscher's boyfriend, Karl Thornhill, is the shooter (though he remains a person of interest). ⁶

9:31 a.m.

A VSP trooper arrives at the traffic stop of Thornhill and helps question him. A gunpowder-residue test is performed and packaged for lab analysis. (There is no immediate result from this type of test in the field.) ⁶

9:34 a.m.

Ralph Byers e-mails Laura Fornash in Richmond stating she should call the Governor's office now. ⁴¹

9:36 a.m.

Bernadette Mondy, Director Environmental Health and Safety Services, e-mails the following to her department:

*"Until we get further info on the shootings, we are in lockdown. Please do not go out on campus until you hear from one of the managers."*⁴²

9:38 a.m.

Laura Fornash e-mails Ralph Byers:

*"Okay, it is done. By the way, the Governor is out of the country. Bill Leighty is empowered to act in the Governor's behalf according to Bill Murray."*⁴³

About 9:40 a.m

Cho begins shooting in room 206 in Norris Hall, where a graduate engineering class in Advanced Hydrology is underway. Cho kills Professor G. V. Loganathan. ⁶

9:41 a.m.

A BPD dispatcher receives a call regarding the shooting in Norris Hall. The dispatcher initially has difficulty understanding the location of the shooting. Once the location is identified as being on campus, the call is transferred to VTPD. ⁶

9:42 a.m.

The first 9-1-1 call reporting shots fired reaches the VTPD. A message is sent to all county EMS units to staff and respond. ⁶

9:45 a.m.

The first police officers arrive at Norris Hall, a three-minute response time from their receipt of the call. Hearing shots, they pause briefly to check whether they are being fired upon, and then rush to one entrance, and then another but find the doors chained shut. An attempt to shoot open the chain or lock on one door fails. ⁶

About 9:45 a.m.

The police inform the administration that there has been another shooting. Virginia Tech President Steger hears sounds like gunshots, and sees police running toward Norris Hall, which is next to Burruss hall.⁶

9:46 a.m.

Virginia Tech employee Patricia Baker, whose office is in Norris Hall, sends the following e-mail to faculty:

“Something is going on in Norris Hall – Paul is on the phone with Police.”⁴⁴

9:50 a.m.

Using a shotgun, police shoot open the ordinary key lock of a Norris Hall entrance that goes to a machine shop and that could not be chained. These officers hear gunshots as they enter the building.⁶

9:50 a.m. (5 minutes after being notified of a second shooting)

A second e-mail is sent by the administration to all Virginia Tech e-mail addresses announcing that *“A gunman is loose on campus. Stay in buildings until further notice. Stay away from all windows.”⁴⁵*

Four outside loudspeakers on poles broadcast a similar message.

9:51 a.m.

Cho shoots himself in the head just as police reach the second floor.⁶

9:58 a.m.

Laura Fornash sends e-mail to Ralph Byers: *“Is shooter a student? I keep getting that question from Bill.”⁴⁶*

10:16 a.m.

Ralph Byers e-mails Laura Fornash: *“Gunman has been caught, there may be more victims. Don’t know who the shooter is.”⁴⁷*

10:22 a.m.

Heidi McCoy, Director of Administrative Services and Assistant to Executive VP and COO James Hyatt, sends an e-mail to her supervisor Lisa Wilkes, Vice President of Administration: *“Lisa R. had talked with Bernadette and that Zack Adams had left to set off the emergency alarm.”⁴⁸*

For reference, “Lisa R” would be Lisa Royal, Coordinator of Administrative Affairs. “Bernadette” would be Bernadette Mondy. Zack Adams also worked in the EHSS department with Ms. Mondy. All these individuals worked for James Hyatt.

2:48 p.m.

Gene Fife, Chairman of the silent phase of Virginia Tech's \$1 Billion Capital Campaign sends an e-mail to Dr. Elizabeth Flanagan, Vice President for Development and University Relations, and President Steger concerning a major fundraising event scheduled for the weekend of April 28th.⁴⁹

"I am also thinking of the ramifications to the Ut Prosim weekend. It seems highly inappropriate for a gala/party in the wake of the tragedy ---but it also represents an opportunity to communicate and draw the VT family closer together. One idea might be to have a large but low key working dinner during which we review the facts of today, what we have and will be doing to deal with the situation and to solicit support both financially and morally. A revamped program --- soberly presented, absent celebration or fanfare seems to be the most appropriate. The only other alternative I see is to cancel the planned events and reschedule it at another time---probably next fall."

For reference, efforts to re-schedule the Ut Prosim gala/party began quickly. A new date of October 20, 2007 was established and announced at the Policy Group meeting on April 24, 2007.

¹ TriData Division, . "Introduction." *Mass Shootings at Virginia Tech April Addendum to the Panel Report* (2009): pp 9 Web. 16 Dec 2009. http://www.governor.virginia.gov/TempContent/techPanelReport-docs/VT_Addendum_12-2-2009.pdf

² TriData Division, . "Summary of Key Findings." *Mass Shootings at Virginia Tech Addendum to the Report of the Review Panel* Nov. 2009: pp. 27 - 30. Web. 28 Dec 2009. http://www.governor.virginia.gov/TempContent/techPanelReport-docs/VT_Addendum_12-2-2009.pdf .

³ Virginia Tech, . "Campus Safety A Shared Responsibility." *2005 Clery Act Report*. Pp 1 – 12.

⁴ Virginia Tech Environmental Health and Safety Services Emergency Response Plan, May 2005, pp 1 – 17.

⁵ Roommates Data Communication.

⁶ TriData Division, . "Timeline of Events." *Mass Shootings at Virginia Tech April Addendum to the Panel Report* (2009): pp 56 - 62. Web. 16 Dec 2009. http://www.governor.virginia.gov/TempContent/techPanelReport-docs/VT_Addendum_12-2-2009.pdf.

⁷ Virginia Tech Review Panel, . "Timeline of Events." *Mass Shootings at Virginia Tech April 16th 2007* (2007): pp 24 - 29. Web. 16 Dec 2009. <http://www.governor.virginia.gov/TempContent/techPanelReport-docs/7%20CHAPTER%20III%20TIMELINE%20OF%20EVENTS.pdf> .

⁸ Hsu, Nelson, and Liz Heron. "The Sequence of Events." *The Virginia Tech Shootings*. 16 Dec. 2009. Washington Post, Web. 16 Dec 2009. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/metro/interactives/vatechshootings/shootings_timeline.html .

⁹ Johnson, Annie, and Nathan Thornburg. "Witness: The Dormitory Murders." 20 Apr. 2007: n. pg. Web. 27 Dec 2009. <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1613010,00.html> .

¹⁰ April 16, 2007 VTPD Report

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- ¹¹ Esposito, Greg. "A Time of Rebirth at Virginia Tech." *The Roanoke Times*. 13 Aug 2007. The Roanoke Times, Web. 27 Dec 2009. <http://www.roanoke.com/vtcampus/wb/127803> .
- ¹² Virginia Tech Review Panel, . "Virginia Tech Review Panel Documents." *Virginia Tech EMS Response*. 30 Aug. 2007. TriData, Web. 16 Dec 2009. http://www.vtreviewpanel.org/docs/2007/may/VA_Tech_Rescue_EMS_Response.pdf .
- ¹³ VTPD Report, Detective Stephanie Henly.
- ¹⁴ Virginia Tech Review Panel, . "Virginia Tech Review Panel Documents." *Montgomery Regional Hospital*. 30 Aug. 2007. TriData Division, Web. 28 Dec 2009. http://www.vtreviewpanel.org/docs/2007/may/Montgomery_Regional_Hospital.pdf .
- ¹⁵ Blacksburg schools lock down; heard of shooting on police radio." *Virginia Tech Documents*. 3 Feb. 2008. The Richmond Times Dispatch, Web. 16 Dec 2009. <http://static.mgnetwork.com/rtd/pdfs/VTContents.pdf> .
- ¹⁶ Ress, Dave. "Part 3: Virginia Tech Warning was Too Late." *Richmond Times Dispatch* 3 Feb. 2009: Web. 28 Dec 2009. http://www2.timesdispatch.com/rtd/news/state_regional/article/TECH03_20090202-221910/196413/ .
- ¹⁷ Instructor's Interview.
- ¹⁸ 8:01 a.m. Ralph Byers e-mail response.
- ¹⁹ Schulte , Brigid, and Anita Kumar. "Tech staff 1st told kin, not school, of shooting." *Washington Post* 4 Dec. 2009: Web. 16 Dec 2009. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/04/AR2009120401893.html> .
- ²⁰ Breen, Tom, and Zinie Chen Sampson. "Tech staff 1st told kin, not school, of shooting." *Associated Press* 5 Dec. 2009: Web. 16 Dec 2009. http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20091205/ap_on_re_us/us_virginia_tech_shootings .
- ²¹ Virginia Tech Review Panel, . "Virginia Tech Review Panel Documents." *Flinchum, Wendell Virginia Tech Chief of Police*. 30 Aug. 2007. TriData Division, Web. 28 Dec 2009. http://www.vtreviewpanel.org/docs/2007/may/Flinchum_Wendell_VA_Tech_Chief_of_Police.pdf .
- ²² Larry Hincker's email to himself @ 7:04pm, 16 Dec 2009. Virginia Tech, Web. 27 Dec 2009. <https://www.april16documentarchive.vt.edu/servient/> .
- ²³ "Bank pickups cancelled." *Virginia Tech Documents*. 3 Feb. 2008. The Richmond Times Dispatch, Web. 28 Dec 2009. <http://static.mgnetwork.com/rtd/pdfs/VTContents.pdf> .
- ²⁴ Heather Haugh Communication
- ²⁵ 8:43 a.m. Laura Fornash e-mail to Ralph Byers; in regards to contacting the Attorney General.
- ²⁶ 8:45 a.m. Ralph Byers e-mail to Laura Fornash; "This is not releasable yet..." .
- ²⁷ 8:47 a.m. Fornash e-mail response to Byers.
- ²⁸ 8:49 a.m. Ralph Byers response; "...just try to make sure it doesn't get out."
- ²⁹ 8:49 a.m. Sandra Ward e-mail to staff at Cook Counseling Center.
- ³⁰ 8:52 a.m. Superintendent Montgomery Public Co Schools e-mail; notification of shooting & lockdown.
- ³¹ 8:52 a.m. Ralph Byers e-mail; "Lock the door!"

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- ³² 8:53 a.m. Ralph Byers email; "There will be a statement soon."
- ³³ 8:53 a.m. Fornash response to Byers; in regards to calling the Governor's office.
- ³⁴ Ress, Dave. "Part 3: Va. Tech's warning was too late." *Richmond Times Dispatch* 3 Feb. 2009: Web. 16 Dec 2009. http://www2.timesdispatch.com/rtd/news/state_regional/article/TECH03_20090202-221910/196413/.
- ³⁵ April 16th Survivor Communication.
- ³⁶ 9:03 a.m. Mondy's response; "Yikes! No news about this on campus yet. I hope.....".
- ³⁷ 9:05 a.m. Trash cancellation.
- ³⁸ 9:10 a.m. Sandra Ward e-mail to staff of Cook Counseling Center; "...keep this information confidential".
- ³⁹ Williams, Reed, and Laurence Hammack. "State police on Tech shooter's motive: 'We just don't know'." *Roanoke Times* 11 Aug. 2007: Web. 29 Dec 2009. <http://www.roanoke.com/vtinvestigation/wb/127587>.
- ⁴⁰ 9:26 a.m. Policy Group e-mail regarding; "A shooting occurred.....".
- ⁴¹ 9:34 a.m. Ralph Byers e-mail to Fornash; in regard to call the Governor's office.
- ⁴² 9:36 a.m. Bernadette Mondy, EHSS, e-mails her department of shootings and lockdown.
- ⁴³ 9:38 a.m. Laura Fornash e-mail to Ralph Byers.
- ⁴⁴ 9:46 a.m. Patricia Baker e-mails Faculty of Engineering Science and Mechanics.
- ⁴⁵ 9:50 a.m. Larry Hincker e-mail; "A gunman is loose".
- ⁴⁶ 9:58 a.m. Laura Fornash e-mails Ralph Byers; "Is shooter a student? I keep.....".
- ⁴⁷ 10:16 a.m. Ralph Byers e-mails Laura Fornash; "Gunman has been caught,".
- ⁴⁸ 10:22 a.m. Heidi McCoy e-mail to Lisa Wilkes; in regards to setting off the alarm.
- ⁴⁹ 2:48 a.m. Gene Fife e-mail to Elizabeth Flanagan.