

## **Workplace Violence: The Role of Fear in Paralyzing Modern Business/Corporate Security**

**Nick Nykodym**  
**The University of Toledo**

**Brian Anse Patrick**  
**The University of Toledo**

**Sonny Ariss**  
**The University of Toledo**

*Workplace violence is a sad reality of the modern age. Many options exist in helping deal with workplace violence, yet fear of these options place businesses and organizations at great risk. All too often security training consists of “RUN, HIDE and CALL 911” rather than a real defense that could save a life. Currently fifty (50) out of fifty (50) states have some form of CCW (Concealed Carry) permit training, and certification. Trained organizational members / university professors are currently discouraged from protecting themselves and others by those who have Hoplophobia (Fear of Firearms).*

### **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: THE ROLE OF FEAR IN PARALYZING MODERN BUSINESS / CORPORATE SECURITY**

Workplace violence and the modern need for corporate security are well documented phenomena (Nykodym, Ariss, Patrick, & Holman 2013). The recession, combined with job layoffs, prison closings and the added dynamic of a decreased police presence have added to this problem (Nykodym, Patrick & Toussaint, 2010). Violence extends to elementary schools, high schools and universities, where it has been dramatically noted that “blood has been mixed with books” (Nykodym, Patrick, & Mendoza, 2011). Recently, such violence has even targeted public events such as the Boston Marathon.

Two of the most publicized and significant threats to modern corporate activities are terrorism and gun violence, either from lone individuals, organized terror groups or independent sleeper cells. Accordingly, virtually every large university and corporation nowadays has an “action plan” for what has come to be called an “active shooter” situation. Powerful, reassuring words such as “lockdown” are used in workshops conducted by human resource personnel. Employees are instructed in flight and hiding. The most common advice, however, gleaned by observation of these workshops, can be summarized as “run, hide and call 911.” But is this really effective?

Human resources managers (included in this category are security and university public safety department personnel) have additionally been advising employees to resist in any way possible. This includes throwing chairs, or the use of other improvised devices to attack or resist armed gunmen. But is this truly sensible advice, or is it merely a way for corporation management to reassure, placate and to

otherwise seem as if they are reacting responsibly to a situation over which they have no control? Then again, are they acting responsibly, or are they dodging the main issue? No one has ever stopped a shooter by throwing a chalkboard eraser at him, a traditional means that professors and teachers have used in classrooms to target unruly students. Avoided, or cavalierly dismissed, from these training sessions is the proposal that certain employees or university students should be able to legally carry guns concealed for their own protection, as well as the protection of others, following proper training and certification from national training organizations.

Certainly, from a pure cost benefit viewpoint, corporate managers are acting responsibly, according to traditional wisdom. This might even be good practice from the public relations aspect of things as well since murdered innocent employees garner sympathy at minimal costs to the organization. There are fairly standard, predictable payouts of known dimensions, as based on legal precedents. Medical insurance picks up the costs of injuries at predictable, known rates. Moreover, corporate CEO and human relations functionaries can issue pious and concerned statements that win public sympathy and show themselves as concerned corporate citizens. If it happened, however, that an armed employee or student injured someone in the course of one of these armed shooter events, even if that person injured were the armed transgressor, the costs to the corporation/university might be limitless. It's cheaper (albeit heartless) to have employees die. How ethical and socially responsible is this?

Effective communication has been suggested as a vital tool to combat crime (Nykodym & Taylor, 2007), and one would imagine that these "active shooter" workshops constitute an essential step in that direction. The common thread tying organizational/corporation security and these workshops is, of course, fear. Fear, however, manifests at various levels, some of which are reasonable and others not so reasonable. It is reasonable to prepare for the worst. It is reasonable to scan the environment. It is reasonable to form action plans. But at some point fear-preparations and security displace the real business of life and become too costly to maintain over time. An open society is efficient and productive precisely because the energies of society are not burnt up in the heat and friction of internal or external security fears, e.g., the garrison state, but can be expended creatively to achieve individual and social good.

But all the same, neither individuals nor organizations can function very long in a Pollyanna dream world that ignores real threats. It is thought that employee training that remedies the fear of guns actually interferes with effective ethical corporate actions.

Fear, paranoia or phobia is an extreme, irrational, overwhelming and disabling fear of an activity situation, place, item or object (Eimer & Korwin, 2013). One of the most wide spread fears is "Glossophobia or fear of communication. Glossophobia can be characterized by avoidance of communication events, physical distress, nausea, and feelings of panic ([www.glossophobia.com](http://www.glossophobia.com)). Possible reactions may include increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, dilated pupils, increased perspiration, increased oxygen intake, stiffening of neck/upper back muscles and dry mouth (Hamilton, 2008).

Phobias (fear) have been proven to decrease business and organizational effectiveness (Nykodym, Nielsen & Christen (1985). Fears (phobias) stretch over age groups and include the young in the organizational / business world as well and decrease effective decision-making (Nykodym, Simonetti & Christen, 1988).

## **OPTIONS FOR BUSINESS/ ORGANIZATIONAL SECURITY**

Possible options are to do nothing, create additional alert systems / surveillance cameras, train and implement S.W.A.T. teams, as well as to train and allow trained/ certified organizational members to carry concealed firearms (Nykodym, Patrick, & Mendoza, 2011) .

Hoplophobia (fear of firearms ) is listed as a phobia by *The Encyclopedia of Phobias, Fears, and Anxieties, Third Edition* (Doctor, Kahn, & Adamec , 2009) and is also listed as a phobia in the *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology* (Coleman, 2009) published by Oxford University Press. Hoplophobia is also

included as a phobia in *Concise Dictionary of Modern Medicine* (Segen, 2006). Kopel (2005) defined Hoplophobia as “fear of armed citizens.”

However, researcher Bruce N. Eimer, PHD (Eimer & Korwin, 2013) suggests that HOPLOPHOBIA (fear of firearms) is the most dangerous of all phobias! Patrick (2013) defines hoplophobics as people with hysterical, unwarranted, irrational fears of guns, usually derived from media stereotypes. Eimer & Korwin (Eimer & Korwin, 2013) detail that it is NOT just a dislike or even HATE of firearms, it is FEAR of firearms that drives some “anti gun” advocates. The dynamics given above for fear/ phobia applies. Reactions can include avoidance, physical distress, nausea, feelings of panic, increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, dilated pupils, increased perspiration, increased oxygen intake, stiffening of muscles and dry mouth (Hamilton, 2008 & Rothwell, 2004). Eimer & Korwin (Eimer & Korwin, 2013) posit that hoplophobia is real, widespread and clinically recognizable and a specific phobia. They further advance that hoplophobia is more dangerous than any of the other phobias. Patrick (2013) also notes that Hoplophobes seem to imagine that firearms just simply “go off”. Hoplophobes equate firearms with mayhem. Mainstream mass media, both news and entertainment, teach and constantly reinforce such frightful notions.

People with other phobias do not appear to take their fears (phobias) into the social and political arena (Eimer & Korwin, 2013). Hoplophobics attempt by law, legislation and court action to FORCE their fears on others by gun ban legislation, and other court actions (Eimer & Korwin, 2013). Continued evidence of the harm of Hoplophobia is the result of information from cities where the “Guns Kill People” concept has prevailed. The United States of America is third in murders throughout the world, but if the high gun control cities of Chicago, Detroit & Washington, D.C. (cities with some of the most intense anti gun laws in the USA) are removed from the data, the USA ranks toward the bottom of murders in the world (Hill, 2013). PEOPLE KILL PEOPLE, guns just make it easier.

While Hoplophobia is REAL to those who have the condition, vast quantities of evidence exist that proves that that gun violence is greatly exaggerated (Patrick & Hart, 2011). Patrick & Hart (Patrick & Hart, 2011) document via extensive quantitative data collection and analysis, that people who receive their information via the public media have an exaggerated perception of VIOLENCE associated with firearms vs. people who receive their information on firearms from other sources. Additionally, extensive quantitative data are available to prove that populations who have attempted to remove firearms from their culture have NOT resulted in decreased crime rates, and in some cases have NOT decreased suicides either. Some of these locations include New Zealand (Forsyth, 2011), Canada (Mauser, 2011), England (Malcom, 2011), and Australia (McPhedran & Baker, 2011).

Ohio’s Buckeye Firearms offers a thirty hour training workshop, with continued training and certification for teachers and administrators (Patrick, 2013). This “armed teacher“ program has been called FASTER i.e. Faculty Administrator Safety Training and Emergency Response (Armed Teacher Training Program, 2013). No running and hiding, and throwing chalk here. The teachers/school administrators receive extensive training by police and emergency personnel. This training was conducted with classes being performed simultaneously at locations in southern and northern portions of the state of Ohio. Twenty-four teachers and administrators from public and private schools attended each class, selected from hundreds of applicants, thus 96 individuals were trained in two sessions, and the program was successful, it has continued (Patrick, 2013). The program has been so successful that a FASTER II program has been added for even more advanced scenario training.

This creative effort is financed entirely by a non-profit voluntary association, and it is virtually the only serious effort in the state intended to realistically prevent or stop future school shootings. Accordingly, training and instruction were quite thorough. Participants were required to certify at a higher level than police officers on the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy pistol qualification course, firing 93 percent proficiency or better on a course that police officers are only required to score 71 percent. This higher standard is probably as it should be considering the environment.

The justification for the program is practical and empirical. Cho, the Virginia Tech shooter, killed seven to eight persons per minute of his rampage. No police agency can possibly respond to such an event in time to save lives. An armed teacher, administrator or school facilities worker possibly can. These are

very quick events, and experience shows that such shooters tend to kill themselves at the first show of serious armed resistance. Current police doctrine is to respond, immediately, not to wait or surround the school as was done at Columbine, for even single officers armed and acting aggressively can defeat killers who tend to be disorganized and untrained. Hence the armed teacher, who is already there on the scene, knows the environment, and is well trained with a concealed pistol. If anyone will have a chance to respond and save lives, this hidden human asset thus becomes the first and perhaps the only true line of defense. Everybody else arrives later and writes reports on what they saw—a case of the true IMMEDIATE RESPONDERS vs. so-called First Responders who really arrive too late.

Let no one think that anyone is advocating that teachers in general be armed. These are a select few, well trained and certified at high levels of performance. The average teacher is possibly not capable of this.

Training also included emergency medical first aid, e.g., treating a sucking chest wound, tourniquet and compression techniques that would keep someone alive long enough to make it to a medical facility. Special training and emphasis on gunshot wounds, and knife wounds is central to the emergency medical training. Training includes how to stop the bleeding and how to stabilize victims until EMT's (Emergency Medical Technicians) arrive and transport victims to a medical facility.

SWAT team instructors and other law enforcement experts convey a great deal of marksmanship training and related tactics. Teachers and school administrators shoot approximately 1,000 rounds of ammunition during the training, a number that seems incredible. But, trainees confirm that they did in fact shoot 1,000 rounds of ammo in this training program (Patrick, 2013). In addition to qualifying on the OPOTA (Ohio Police Officer's Training Academy) pistol range, the last day of the class was spent in simulations at a nearby school that was scheduled for demolition. These involved active shooter scenarios that were, to say the least, intense. The teachers acted responsibly and well. They were a highly motivated group. Many will go back to their districts, where responsible local school boards and administrators under Ohio law, have exercised the option of allowing them to carry under their concealed pistol permits while teaching. A voluntary citizen association has stepped in where many government officials fear to tread. Colleges, universities, and businesses, in time, will follow. Creative social action by horizontal interpretive communities. i.e., voluntary association of citizens who have developed their own media of communication, trumps the empty, self-serving rhetoric of bureaucratic inertia (Patrick, 2013).

The positive response has been overwhelming with over 650 Ohio Teachers and Administrators volunteered for training (See appendix chart: *Armed Teacher Training Program*, 2013). So far, the Armed Teacher Training Program has attracted, in addition to the 650 Ohio teacher/administrator applicants, interest in taking training from several other states, including Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and West Virginia (*Armed Teacher Training Program*, 2013).

Many school zones have signs warning "NO FIREARMS" which are seen as an "open hunting" invitation to anyone would be killers. However, an Arkansas Christian school, has a sign stating "WARNING - STAFF IS ARMED AND TRAINED ANY ATTEMPT TO HARM CHILDREN WILL BE MET WITH DEADLY FORCE". (See Attachments for sign, & Starnes, 2013). News stories state "TRY TO HARM OUR CHILDREN --- BE PREPARED TO MEET YOUR MAKER." When asked if his school was showing a "Christian Spirit," Pastor Perry Black responded by saying "we are ministers as shepherds of God's sheep." He went on to say "we would prefer to limit our activities to just loving and caring for people in our care, but occasionally there are predators outside who would like to harm the little sheep in our care (Starnes, 2013)." When asked for examples from Jewish-Christian living that would justify killing, Pastor Black responded, "David is a great example. He took out a lion. He took out a bear to protect his flock, and ultimately David had to take out a giant (Starnes, 2013)."

Basically, the institutional fear of firearms is unfounded and media driven. As John Lott discovered, firearms are used to prevent crime and to save lives more than as tools to destroy (1998).

## CONCLUSION

The reality of organizational/business security is that executives who are in a position of power may be hoplophobic. The destructive power of phobias has been well documented. Indecision and bad decisions flowing from phobias by people in power and who make decisions over the life and death of others decrease the security of organizations. Decision makers who have the power yet are filled with fear and disinformation will place many organizational members at risk.

Companies and organizations need to evaluate the fear level of those in power as they make decisions on the welfare of others. First responders (Police and SWAT teams) take minutes to arrive, however immediate responders (firearm carriers & emergency medically trained and licensed employees, managers, teachers, administrators) are already on the scene of the crime. The Immediate Responders are trained not only in firearms, but also in life saving emergency medical first aid. For the hoplophobic, run, hide, throw chalk, and call 911 are their only options, which could result in countless losses of life compared to actually taking a stand against aggressors.

Hopophobia; Hoplophobic; Fear of Firearms; Workplace Violence; Economic Downturn; Recession; Prison closings; Layoffs of Police/Law Enforcement Officers; College Campus Security; CCW (Carry Concealed Weapons); CHL (Carry Handgun License); Students/faculty/staff CCW (Carry Concealed Weapons) CCWCC (Carry Concealed Weapons on college campuses); SCCC (Students for Carry Concealed on Campus); RTC (Right-to-Carry); Gun Violence; 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Rights; 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Constructionism.

## REFERENCES

- Armed Teacher Training Program* (2013). [www.buckeyefirearms.org](http://www.buckeyefirearms.org) FASTER (Faculty Administrator Safety Training and Emergency Response).
- Coleman, Andrew M. (2009). *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, England.
- Doctor, Ronald M., Kahn, Ada P, & Adamec, Christine (2009). *The Encyclopedia of Phobias, Fears, and Anxieties, Third Edition*, InfoBase Publishing: NY, NY.
- Eimer & Korwin (2013). HOPLOPHOBIA: Gun Fear --The Most Dangerous of all Phobias [www.alan@gunlaws.com](http://www.alan@gunlaws.com) Accessed 29 April 2013.
- Forsyth, C. D. (2011). The New Zealand Firearm Control Laws Impact upon Firearm Misuse and upon Firearm use? *Journal of Firearms & Public Policy*, Vol. 23, 7- 59.
- Hamilton, C. (2008). *Communicating for Results: A Guide for Business & the Professions*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Hill, D. (2013). <http://www.successories.com/iquote/author/3648/david-hill-quotes/1> Accessed 29 July 2013 Monday
- Kopel, David (2005). "The licensing of concealed handguns for lawful protection: support from five (5) state Supreme Courts" *Albany Law Review*, 68 (20) 205+
- Lott, J.R. (1998). *More Guns Less Crime Understanding Crime and Guns*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Malcolm, J. L. (2011). Self-Defense in England: Not Quite Dead, *Journal of Firearms & Public Policy*, Vol. 23, 60-74.
- Mausser, G. (2011). Ten Myths about Firearms Violence in Canada, *Journal of Firearms & Public Policy*, Vol. 23, 75- 95.
- McPhedran, S. & Baker, J. (2011). An Econometric Evaluation of the Impact of Method Restriction of Suicide Rates among Australians aged 45 and over. *Journal of Firearms & Public Policy*, Vol. 23, 96- 113.
- Nykodym, N., Ariss, A., Patrick, B.A., & Holman, C. (2013). Workplace Violence and Cyber Crime Prevention, *Journal of Applied Business & Economics*. Vol. 3 (4), 20- 29.

- Nykodym, Nielsen & Christen (1985). Technological advances can create worker apprehension (Phobia) *Personnel Administrator*, Vol. 34, 54- 56.
- Nykodym, N. Patrick, B.A., & Mendoza, J., (2011). “Mixing Blood and Books-- Killings at Universities: Campus Violence - What Are The Options?” *Journal of Management Policy and Practice*, Vol. 12 (6), 20- 29.
- Nykodym, Simonetti, & Christen (1988). Compustress © : The Fear of computer usage among College of Business Administration Students, *The Journal of Applied Business Research*, Vol. 4, 84- 87.
- Nykodym & Taylor (2007). Communication: A Vital Tool to Combat Cyber Crime, *Journal of International Commercial Law & Technology*, Vol. 2, Issue 3.
- Nykodym, N., Patrick, B.A. & Toussaint, T. (2010). “Recession and Business Security: An Analysis of the Combined Effects of Law Enforcement Layoffs and Second Amendment Constructionism.” Proceedings of the NBES (National Business & Economics Society) International Meeting of 2010.
- Patrick, Brian Anse (2010). *Rise of the anti-media: In-forming America’s concealed weapon carry movement*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Patrick, Brian Anse (2013). *Rise of the Anti-Media: In-forming America’s Concealed Weapon Carry Movement* (2nd Edition) London: Arktos Media
- Patrick, Brian Anse, & Hart, KPR, (2011) The Gun as symbol of Evil: Exaggerated perceptions of firearms violence as a media artifact, *Journal of Firearms & Public Policy*, of Vol. 23, 114—129.
- Rothwell, J D. (2004). *In the Company of others: An introduction to Communication*. NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Segen, Joseph (2006). *Concise Dictionary of Modern Medicine*, NY: McGraw Hill Publishers.
- Starnes, Todd (21 August 2013). Pistol- Packing Private School Takes Aim at Bad Guys, <http://radio.foxnews.com/toddstarnes/top-stories/pistol-packing-private-school-takes-aim-at-bad-guys.html> Access: 21 August 2013
- [www.glossophobia.com](http://www.glossophobia.com) Accessed 29 April, 2013