

# Episode 59- Violence Interrupters in the Time of COVID-19

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

gun violence, community, people, home, brady, shooting, gun, participants, stay, city, area, violence, student, understand, neighborhood, implemented, continues, safe, hospital, occurring

## SPEAKERS

Clayton Rosenberg, JJ Janflone, Kelly Sampson



JJ Janflone 00:08

Hey everybody, this is the legal disclaimer where we tell you that the views, thoughts and opinions shared on this podcast, belong solely to our guests and our hosts, and not necessarily Brady or Brady's affiliates. Please note that this podcast contains discussions of violence that some people may find disturbing. It's okay, we find it disturbing too. Welcome back everyone to Red, Blue, and Brady. Now today, we're here to talk about what happens when gun violence continues during the time of COVID-19. Namely, what are those in community based organizations doing to help gun violence in this unique period of time? To find out the great Kelly Sampson and I are joined by former podcast guest Clayton Rosenberg, to talk all about new challenges facing his organization, the Alliance of Concerned Men and Women, a nonprofit with the goal of saving lives of at-risk youth residing in the high-crime areas of Washington D.C. Then, in our "Unbelievable but" segment, we're talking about the dangers of guns, even in virtual classrooms. Finally, then, in our news wrap-up, we're remembering victims of gun violence, and exploring some of the shootings that have happened this past week. Thanks so much for continuing to be with us, everybody. It really does mean a lot. So I'm really excited to have you both back. But I'm so sad that we can't be in person together with one another again. But I think we really just, we have to talk about what COVID-19 is meaning for those that are fighting gun violence on the ground, what this has meant for them, so I don't want to waste any time. So let's go ahead and jump right in maybe Kelly and Clayton, could you both

reintroduce yourself to our listeners?



Kelly Sampson 02:02

Hi, everyone. I'm Kelly Sampson. I'm an attorney here at Brady.



Clayton Rosenberg 02:05

Hello, everyone. I'm Clayton Rosenberg, I'm the Chief of Staff for the Alliance of Concerned Men and Women.



JJ Janflone 02:11

And thank you both so much for joining me again. We're doing virtual studio today so I appreciate it.



Kelly Sampson 02:19

Physical distancing.



Clayton Rosenberg 02:20

Yes, indeed.



JJ Janflone 02:23

Can we I want to chat a little bit about, you know, what it is that Alliance of Concerned Men and Women is still doing in, in this time of physical distancing, and sort of, what you've been up to since the last time you were in studio?



Clayton Rosenberg 02:39

Yes. Well, we are, you know, still being prevalent in the community. Because of our initiatives, we were still on, you know, on the streets, really inside of the schools, as of now, as we pass out lunches from two different schools and different communities. So what we've been doing just to stay relevant, is trying to gather out participants, that we do have, the high-risk, at-risk individuals, and getting them more involved in community service aspect of it. We've been basically they love that type of work, you know, just to give back to the community after the ones that, pretty much, was taking from the

community. And from their perspective now, they are doing something amongst this crisis, is giving them a little bit more hope to move on, and to progress. Once we, you know, we passed out over, I want to say, 1500 bagged lunches, since over the past two weeks/week and a half. And, and just trying to really help the families out, because we know a lot of people, you know, don't have things in place right now. And they're waiting for, you know, certain assistance. So our job is to make sure that we can do all that we can without, you know, under our best abilities, but just to let the community know we're still here. We're not going to go nowhere even though, you know, we're respecting the social distancing, and we want everyone to stay safe, and understand that the COVID-19 is not the, nothing to play with. But we're there, you know, even we're passing out gloves or passing out masks, we're trying to do all that we can to help out the community, even a little bottle of hand sanitizer. So it's been that type of, you know, environment in moving, progressing for ACMW.

K

Kelly Sampson 04:24

During this time, I know every day is kind of changing, and we keep getting new information and new directives, but in the past few weeks or so, have you still also had to, in addition to community service work in terms of providing supplies, also still had to do some of the violence interruption work as well?

C

Clayton Rosenberg 04:42

Yes, um, that's been something that, you know, we've been working in, because a lot of our violence interrupters are teleworking with their participants that they have in the community. So as of now, we know who are the high-risk, we know who the ones that were doing all the misuse, in the community and we got them as participants. And now our job is to stay on them heavy, to communicate with them, and to make sure that we have something in place to keep them involved, and let them know that we're not giving up on them. But we're trying to bring down the violence. But we noticed that, you know, even amongst these orders, a lot of the violence that happened across the city, not technically in our targeted areas, but just in general in the city, you know, and that's not good. So we're trying to figure out a way to, you know, really combat that. But making sure that our participants understand this is the time to, where we build a closer bond, and really get to know them to the level that we understand what they want to do, before they do it. We're able to, you know, mediate it, stop it, and then transform them, you know, in this time because they have to be home too.



JJ Janflone 05:49

Yeah, I think that that's one of the things that might be difficult for people outside of gun violence prevention work to understand is that so many parts of like social justice, or just like community programs, like they are fighting gun violence. And it may be hard for people to sort of make that connection between, like, school lunches as a way to fight gun violence, but it is. But it's upsetting to me that again, sort of, what we've talked about when you've been in before is that organizations, like Alliance of Concerned Men and Women, have to step-in to provide what the state can't. And I was wondering if you could talk about the sort of unique position that D.C. is in too.



06:24

Yes, indeed. So for us, I think it's becoming more, because we're a community based organization, and we understand from a community perspective, what we need, you know, what with the, what the people that were serving need. So we, we know that we can't just stop, even though all of these things occur. We just can't, because you know, a lot of people are unfortunate at this time. And, you know, we even have people, not on our team, but family members who have the COVID-19, you know, who have, who have these things, and for us, it's like, we have to stay so, you know, involved to the point that we can't let the citizens down in our communities, we can't let the community down, we can't let none of these people down, because they need us. A lot of the children aren't getting no food and, and you know, we got to be there for them. And even the parents, everyone is struggling right now, you know. And our job is to do the best we can to stay, you know, committed to what we agree to and with and what's our goals since the beginning of time. So we were trying to really focus on all of the key aspects, when it comes to the community building, when it comes to the public safety, and knowing that the city is implementing different things. And the city I think is doing, you know, the best job that they can, as of now. But it's a lot more than needs to be done and I think that's going to take everybody who are essential workers coming together to, to really put this put something in place. Because as I'm now, it's just not, it's a lot that needs to be done. When all the cases that we experience, and all the deaths that we had, I think a lot, a lot of stuff needs to be put in place in DC -- ASAP.



Clayton Rosenberg 06:28

I was wondering too, Clayton, how things like the stay-at-home order have been affecting folk. Because that was actually the first thing that I saw, when I saw that the, you know, DC amongst a lot of other places had instituted a stay-at-home order, for a lot of people who live in communities, that's not necessarily a thing that they can do, right. And so I was

wondering, if you've seen, sort of, an increase, and people who are worried about like, an increase of policing in their neighborhood in a way that is not actually beneficial to them.



08:43

Yeah, that's like a, it's like a catch 22 with that. Because, so for us, in the work that we do staying at home, we implemented different strategies for our workers, just to let them know how we can be more effective working from home, because a lot of you know this work from home is new to them. They just want to know, how to work from home and mediate, you know, mitigate balance, right? So we put in place there is, like we do Zoom calls, to connect with the participants, you know, 15 minutes a day to see everyone doing. We check on the temperature in the neighborhoods. We do phone calls to maintain contact with one another, and our participants, at least three-to-four times a day. We monitor the social medias, to make sure you know we can interrupt or try to prevent retaliation for any gun violence. We, we're trying to include things with the participants as far as creating public education, letting them help with some fliers, palm cards, posters, you know. Anything like that, that we can do from home, create a way for them to just express how they feel about the gun violence in the community. We're connecting with a lot of the youth on creating community events that, once this stuff goes down, and we can have in place for, you know, hopefully the summer, if the crisis is down by then. And then then we're just really reaching out to the parents of the participants. And just seeing how well we can help them, you know, transform the environment inside the household, from working from home. Just giving them just different tips, and just saying if their children need any help, you know, with the homework, because a lot of the students are doing the work from over online, and just trying to just reach out to them, because we know there's a crisis. And we know that, you know, everything is, is moving so fast for them. This is really building a leverage in that community. I think that the main part for us is, is really trying to separate, okay, keeping people safe, and then over-policing, right. You know, when it comes down to, and that's the tricky part is like, now we're going to a stage where we have a curfew almost, right. People have to be in a house at a certain time. Now, we don't want that to lead to, you know, racial profiling, we don't want that to lead to, you know, just people being harassed. But we, you know, however, we do understand that the public safety aspect of it, and essential workers should be out there, like no one should be, you know, we're trying to keep keep the community safe, trying to keep people quarantined and clean, and things like that. But it's just so tricky when you, you implement things like this, and knowing just the history that the committees have with the law enforcement, it's just not always a positive sense of, you know, I guess, respect or urgency from the community perspective.

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Kelly Sampson 11:43

One of the interesting things that I think has come out of the COVID-19 pandemic is how, in a lot of ways, the same inequities that drive gun violence disparities are also driving some of the disparities with this disease. You know, for example people, people's ability to access technology to be able to work remotely, or who has health insurance and who doesn't. Or in a D.C.-specific case, before COVID-19, in the gun violence arena, I saw, you know, there was a huge outcry for more hospitals and more trauma centers, east of the river, because in a lot of cases, people don't have access to trauma care, because there's a disproportionate amount of trauma centers in more wealthy white neighborhoods. And now, this is a public health crisis and so, you don't have access to the same amount of hospitals. So I'm just wondering, what are some of the, kind of, similarities that you've noticed between some of the ways that gun violence is impacting DC and some of the ways that COVID-19 is impacting DC?

C

Clayton Rosenberg 12:53

Okay, so from that perspective, I think that when it comes to the gun violence, and it's crazy, because you would think once we implemented these laws, or a stay-at-home order, that it would have a drastic effect on violence, because people should be home. But especially gun violence, but as we know, there's been so many shootings, since this thing was implemented. And, you know, we're looking at how now we using some of the hospitals to really treat the COVID-19. And you have a lot of gun violence patients coming in there, you know, trying to get treated and then it goes to show you where the violence is occurring, especially over in southeast DC, in Ward 8/Ward7. It's like, they don't have a hospital that deals with trauma related incidents over there. And now, we see how you know how much now we're going to put the strain on, not even the workers, but just the whole community. Because people have gone to the hospital getting treated for COVID-19 and they're taking up bed spots and things like that. And then also when the gun violence victims come to the hospital, they know, over in that community is like the one hospital that doesn't have a trauma unit. And it goes to show the government, like we should be prepared for things like this, instead of, you know, almost playing catch up. And trying to tear down the only hospital that has a trauma unit over there, it just doesn't make any sense, right. There's a lot of people, you know, suffering and a lot of people will, now wondering why, why are these things occurring to them. And then we go look on the other side, even though most of the shootings that have been happening recently has been uptown, and you know, where the shootings usually don't happen, it's starting to wake people up. They start, you know, wonder what's going on, but the only difference is they have a hospital that can treat, you know, trauma patients, and they do COVID-19 over there. The only hospital that we have over on Ward 7 and Ward 8 is United Medical Center, which is not a trauma unit. And because of that they are treating now, and then

now they wanted, the hospitals actually are doing the drive through for COVID-19 testing. But you see, that stuff is going to take up different resources and now we're just putting a lot of strain on those communities that's experiencing a high uptick in gun violence. Because this has been occurring over the past few weeks. So you know, it's something that I think everyone needs to step back and take a look at, to see what is going on, especially in the communities where, you know, it's not used to happen.



JJ Janflone 15:32

Well, and I think that that's echoed by, sort of, the stories that we're hearing now out of Milwaukee and Wisconsin, which is, you know, that they're seeing the majority of the deaths from from COVID-19, coming from individuals who live in inner-city, poor neighborhoods, and it being predominantly Black, despite the fact that Black and Brown people make up a small percentage of the population, in Wisconsin. And so this fear, I think being replicated, that gun violence is an epidemic that's not stopping, and it's still claiming people's lives. But now that there is a pandemic happening as well, that almost the same communities are getting targeted, or even that the same communities that are targeted, aren't getting the care that they deserve.



Clayton Rosenberg 16:16

I agree with that. And that, and that's what I think, I think that that's what the focus is, as of now. A lot of them aren't getting the attention that they need. And then we were wondering if the stay-at home-order is in place, then where is the law enforcement then? You know, how is a lot of these shootings occurring and, you know, daytime, even some at night, after the order is in place? And so it goes to show you what's really going on? Are people really trying to do the job or is everyone taking precaution? Because, you know, they still got to go home to their families, like law enforcement, and everyone got to be around. So do they really want to get involved? You know, do they have, does everyone have the protective equipment, to be out there doing this work. And even with us, are we fully, you know, closed with PPE, and we understand that this is the way that we need to be when we're going out there interacting with the community. Because it once we get it, it literally will stop a lot of things. Because once one of our workers gets COVID-19, and we're trying to you know, mediate, or are we trying to you know, help out participants, and we out here on the front line, then it might cause some other things to occur, which we do not want, you know. So we got to make sure that we're, we're protected. But that we're also giving the community the public education, the right information to keep them safe. Because when it first came out, I know we noticed before the actual stay-at-home order was in place, when it you know it was, it was discussed that it was in D.C., a lot of

people still we're partying, still having parties, still having cookouts, everything, because the weather was getting better. But we noticed like once people start catching it heavy, now everyone is taking more precaution. But there's still a lot of people that's not really taken as seriously. And that's why we're coming in, just providing that public education to them and letting them know how serious it is. Because, you know, at the end of the day, we all got to take care of each other as now.

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Kelly Sampson 18:17

One of the things, as I hear you talking, I don't know, if you've been seeing, you know, in cities and states where there are gun stores, there's been as states to do stay-at-home orders. In some states, they've kind of deemed guns stores non-essential and a lot of the gun industry has kind of pushed back on that and said, you know, we need to get guns right now. And a lot of the thinking that they're using to justify that is there's going to be, you know, mass lawlessness, and rioting and looting and all this other stuff, and so we need to get guns. And as I hear you talking, I think it's just a good reminder of, kind of, the fallacy of that argument. Because it's not as though, a lot of the areas that have always been advantaged, remain advantaged, during COVID-19. And in the ways that gun violence is, you know, disproportionately impacting communities, it continues to disproportionately impact communities during COVID-19. And, you know, the best way to deal with that, instead of fear and paranoia, is to actually resource the groups that are working to stop it, like Alliance of Concerned Men and Women, and to have, you know, strategic policy decisions, rather than having, you know, civilians who don't even live in neighborhoods that are really dealing with concentrated gun violence in the first place, kind of, arming up for no real, actual threat but then spreading the very virus that's hurting communities.

C

Clayton Rosenberg 19:57

Yes indeed and I concur. That's exactly what needs to happen, because there's a lot of community-based organizations that out here on the front line, that are passing out a lot of equipment, that are passing out, you know, different sanitary items, but they are not getting the right support. And if we want to really invest, and help out the community, and we need people who knows the community, who knows the people who need it the most in those communities, so that we can get them the right resources to make sure that their family and everyone else in that community is protected. But you know, we just notice that if you bring certain things to the community, it looks like a lot of the communities in particular areas are heavily-policed now, and they feel like, you know, the shelter-in-place-order is discriminating against them. Then we have a problem, now we have a situation to where we don't want anyone feel like that, I think everyone should begin the

same attention, because COVID-19 doesn't have no name on it, you know, it doesn't, it doesn't target a particular community. But when that COVID-19, and also the gun violence, and we're saying that gun violence is now, there's a heavy uptick, not in a particular area that it's used to. So it goes to wonder the, you know, what is going on? And how can, you know, law enforcement be better suited to deal with that, but also making sure that if they're dealing with the gun violence, and we're dealing with the gun violence, that we all have the equipment, you know, to protect us from the COVID-19 while we're doing this type of work?



JJ Janflone 21:32

Well, and I'll say, again, as someone who stalks your Instagram, I see, I see people out from your organization, you know, doing this really good work, and you guys don't seem to have like, the protective gear or the the PPE, so are you just sort of, you know, out there with like, a, with a hope and a prayer that things, you know, work out, or do you just, sort of, think it's inevitable eventually that some of you end up sick.



Clayton Rosenberg 21:57

I think that, um, you know, we definitely have hope and prayer that, you know, things will work itself out. But because of how, how everything was just so backed up, we could not get all of the gear, but we're working on that to make sure that we have, most of, most of the gear that we need in order to stay out in the community. You know, we have the basics, like some masks and some gloves, but there's a lot of other things that we need, that we're working on getting, and that we're working with our funders, in order to have for our, you know, specific programs, because we're still out here with deemed essential workers. So we need something in place to make sure that we're safe. And, and to make sure that these people can go home to their families and, and be safe, and not anything out to their loved one so. Those are the things that we are definitely focused on, and we're trying to put in place.



JJ Janflone 22:52

And I think too, one of the things that everyone's been a little bit afraid of who works in gun violence prevention is just is the increased amount of individuals, people who are home all day, is this going to increase the risk of suicide? Is this going to increase the risk of domestic violence, particularly as you know, the economic downturn part of COVID-19 continues? And I wonder, I know that you guys do a little bit with that, but are you concerned about that too, moving forward?



Clayton Rosenberg 23:20

I think that we're, we're not, we're not majorly concerned, but it's something that we're definitely thinking about. And we just have to be, you know, more just diligent with what we're doing. And we have to be more prepared for anything, really the uncertain, at this point. So we're trying to just come together, and work together, and just communicate with one another about symptoms, about if any of us are experiencing anything. You know, we have to be honest with one another, and make sure that we're keeping each one safe. Because even where there's a lot of the stuff, like that they're implementing, as far as, because organizations, some employees can't come in, you know. And some fundings are stopping and like they're implementing, so many different, like tools, but I think for us, it's it's more we have to just be more prepared for anything. And that's what we want. That's what we're trying to do. We're just getting ahead of it instead of, you know, trying to play catch up,



JJ Janflone 24:21

I saw that a week ago thatm you know, there was even, you guys had almost, you know, a celebration of the fact that in the Washington Highlands, you went over 30 days without a shooting, right?



Clayton Rosenberg 24:33

Yes, yes.



JJ Janflone 24:34

And so it's it's so impressive to me that like this amazing work is continuing but again, obviously getting overshadowed by coronavirus.



Clayton Rosenberg 24:45

Yes indeed and, and that's one of the things. So and we have, we have two Instagrams and one is a particularly for our Ward 7 sites like curethestreets\_ward7, as I said Alliance of Concerned Men and Women. And we got more, more pictures and videos on there, of what we're doing over in the Ward 7 community. Even though on the ACM page, we try to combine both, but we don't want to overflow with all the information, we just put some one there. But, but just in general, we know that in our communities, when we accomplish something great, especially in Washington Highlands, that is an accomplishment, you know, a month, that's a big accomplishment. Like Washington Highlands, it's never two

days without a shooting. And for us to go, you know, 30, it was 35 before, it was a shooting over it not in our target area, but next to our area, so we counted that as one in the Highland community. So you know, and it broke the streak. But just things like that, when we are on the ground, and really doing the work and able to get results like that. That's monumental. You know, imagine how that community felt. That community so good, they didn't have to look over their shoulders, they didn't have to worry about, you know, someone's trying to shoot them or anything like that. It was literally peace in the community. But once this stuff broke out, and Coronavirus, things like that, people begin to get anxious and people begin to, to like worry and panic. And when they enter that worry and panic mode, they begin to do things that, you know, they shouldn't be doing, whether it's going to rob somebody or, you know, trying to commit gun violence. We see that they saw doing it 'cause they scared, nobody know what's going to happen. So a lot of people now, that they're hoping this, this isn't coming back, and that it's coming back, they're trying to scramble and figure out how they're 'bout to provide for their own family. And that's what we didn't want it to come to but, you know what, with this, you know, COVID-19 coming, everyone, you know, they're confused. They don't they don't have the right things in order, in place, in order to help their family out, whether it's gloves, masks, etc., hand Sanitizer, you know, soap things like that, they didn't have those things in place.

K

Kelly Sampson 27:09

And that's were I see a lot of parallels between, you know, the way that fear and, in a lot of ways circumstances, even in an ordinary time, you know, that same feeling, in a lot of ways, can lead to violence. And just the fact that we do live in such an unequal society and, you know, even in ordinary times, people may not know how they're going to provide for their family or where their next meal is going to come from, or even be able to have access to mental health to deal with trauma, and how to, how to deal with those feelings and COVID-19 is just another pile on top of that. And, in a lot of ways people who are the most, who are suffering the brunt of inequity, even during the ordinary times, are like the least protected now. And that's where I see like, in addition to all the work that you're doing, and all the work that the city is doing, like, fundamentally, society, we need to take those sorts of issues seriously, from you know, a societal perspective, and recognize that people are not different in a fundamental human way. Like, even if someone lives in a different neighborhood than you and has different skin color than you, like, we all have the same concerns. We want to have food on our table, we want our loved ones to be safe, and we could do more, I think, to really help people, and not have to have so much worry and so much anxiety about those economic concerns, to the extent that now they're doing things they shouldn't do.



Clayton Rosenberg 28:50

That is really, I think all of our jobs, to make sure that we understand how, like, together, this is the time where we're supposed to be coming together and getting things done like that. But if we are in a particular circumstance where we're not really helping one another coming together, especially amongst this time, then we really have a problem that we have to, you know, solve right away, because it's a humanity thing. You know, we all are in the same boat right now and we have to really figure this out.



JJ Janflone 29:23

And so what what are some things that people you know, in D.C. or in the, in the sort of surrounding area, because it's been a while now, since I've been able to go into the city, I'm trapped in Virginia. What are some things that we can be doing to support, you know, Alliance of Concerned Men and Women, to support the violence interrupters or to support other like grassroots organizations in our area? You know, so if I'm out, all the way out in Chicago, what can I be doing? If I'm in Baltimore, you know, do you have any sort of general tips people could be doing?



Clayton Rosenberg 29:57

Yeah at this point, if folks can really, you know, reach out to the VIs reach out to the team and just give them encouragement. And then also, if they can, donate any supplies that you can, because we are giving a lot to the communities, and they need more, you know, supplies. And also, because of the funding situation, and a lot of funding has to be ceased or a lot of employees and, you know, some are doing it just off the, the will of caring they have for people, you know. Just donate to make sure that, you know, they have something in place where we can keep employees on and retain them amongst us, because, you know, they have to provide for their families too, while they're going there trying to protect everybody else. And I just want to, you know, appreciate everything that, you know, Brady has done for ACM, and what you all continue to do for different communities throughout the country. And I think that it's going to take all of us coming together to really put this, to put this behind us. And hopefully, this is the situation that brings everyone closer. You know, when people experience tragedy like this, and it usually brings people together, and I'm hoping the same, you know, once this is all over, and I hope that we all could come together and we all could begin to you know, really support the Violence Interrupters, support organizations that really have a niche for the communities and just trying to make a better society for everyone. I think if this, if this comes to truth, and after this thing is over, and we all come together, I think we'll be living in a better world. So that's what we want. We want to make sure that, you know, we just have the

resources, we have the people that are committed to this type of work, and that we just keep supporting one another as some people do, do the jobs that everyone can't do. But we know people need to do it. And so you know, I just want people to really understand that and keep that in the back of their mind. Because we're going to be committed, we're going to continue to do the work. And we're going to sacrifice a lot because this is how much we care for the well-being of others. And we just want everyone to know that.



JJ Janflone 32:09

Well, thank you so much for, for hopping on and talking with us. I again, I really appreciate it. It's so great what you do.



Kelly Sampson 32:17

I just want to echo the thanks. And also you know, we're just hoping that all of you are staying safe.



Clayton Rosenberg 32:26

Yes indeed. You all are here with us spiritually, we can feel it. We out here but we feel the spirit, so you're with us and we appreciate it.



JJ Janflone 32:38

So this week's "Unbelievable, but" is a little disturbing. So many of us have moved to doing things virtually meetings, happy hours school. Hey, I've even taken a ballet class virtually. So for this week's "Unbelievable, but," we thought it was only appropriate to highlight this story. Now Harvard Law School students were participating in an online class this week, when a student unexpectedly brandished a gun, on-screen, for all his classmates to see. Students weren't quite sure what was happening. Was he cleaning his gun during class? One student told the media outlet, Slate, that the student with the firearm began, "cocking it back and looking inside the barrel and practicing to make sure it clicks. At one point the barrel was facing his face." The students were rightfully startled, not knowing whether or not the gun was loaded or what might happen, or why the student even brought it out in the first place. While Harvard Law School doesn't allow guns on campus, there's no clear policy regarding online classes. Something that I'm guessing that they, and so many others are now thinking about creating. And just a note, all, this was not the only gun brought out during Zoom class "Unbelievable, but" story that you all sent me this week. There were multiple. So we opened this week's news wrap up by remembering Kurt Cobain

who was killed by gun violence 26 years ago. On April 8, 1994, Kurt Cobain, the lead singer and guitarist of the grunge band Nirvana was found dead of firearm suicide at his home in Seattle, Washington, at the age of 27. Law enforcement had previously removed guns from Cobain's home due to volatile situations and the threat of suicide. The firearm used in his death was purchased by a friend just days before Cobain was supposed to leave for treatment facility. This week, meanwhile, shootings continued across the US. Last Tuesday, Chicago experienced the most violent day of 2020 when seven people were killed, and an additional 14 people were injured by gun violence, across the city. The city's mayor and Interim Police Superintendent shared the need to end the violence, noting that while it's never acceptable, it's particularly difficult during this time, when the city's health services are already so strained. Wednesday followed with more gun violence. Two people were killed and eight others were wounded. Some of those 15-year-old, Demetrius Hardy, he was one of those killed in a drive by shooting. While only a few minutes later, a man was killed and a woman was wounded in a shooting, in the back of the Yards neighborhood, on the south side. In two separate instances, a 16-year-old boy and an 18-year-old boy were also wounded, when they were struck by stray bullets while walking outside. Less than an hour before that, two men were shot in the Austin area on the city's west side while sitting in their car. And minutes earlier, a 20-year-old woman was unintentionally shot inside an Englewood home. These are just some of the shootings the city experienced. In Chester City, Delaware, a 7-year-old boy was killed by an apparent stray bullet, during a drive by shooting. At a news conference Monday outside City Hall, mayor, Thaddeus Kirkland, called the shooting quote "a demonic act" and said the community was, "heartfelt saddened," by the boy's death. It was the 14th homicide the city has experienced this year. Police Commissioner Otis Blair said the senseless violence has to stop, and pleaded for witnesses or tipsters to come forward. Additionally, as families stay home together during the coronavirus pandemic, the San Diego County District Attorney acknowledged that home is not safe for everyone because of domestic violence. District Attorney Summer Stephan said Saturday, "we are expecting, from past experience and anecdotally, seeing examples of domestic violence on the rise because of additional contact. We want victims to know that there is a lifeline for them." Stephan also cited increased stress from economic hardships, like losing a job, as a possible factor in domestic violence cases. Having children at home every day can also create tension and create an environment where they could be caught in the crossfire. As Stephan said, children may not have safe counselors to turn to, like they might in a school or community setting. Organizations providing assistance to victims of domestic violence have also reported an increase in cases of physical and verbal abuse since the stay-at-home order was issued, in response to COVID-19. If you, or someone you know, needs help, please call 1-800-799-SAFE and that "safe" is 7233 for the National Domestic Violence Hotline. Also check out the domestic violence COVID-19 and guns podcasts we did, it's linked here if you would like access to more resources. Looking for more gun violence prevention

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