

Barricaded Captive Situations in Schools: Mitigation and Response

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Abstract Although not common occurrences, schools are occasionally the site of barricaded captive events. To date little research has examined these acts of school violence. The purpose of this article is to describe 19 school barricaded captive events that occurred between February, 1998 and September, 2007 in the United States. Data were analyzed by examination of news reports of each incident, and include the following variables: Incident location (state, community), school level and size, time of day of the event, location of the event within the school, age and sex of the subjects, information about the captives, presence of school resource officers, student screening mechanisms, behavioral changes of the subjects, the subject's expected outcomes, injuries or fatalities, demands and deadlines, captive escapes and releases, weapons, incident resolution, tactical

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team response, and negotiations. Results pertain to incident demographics, prevention/mitigation, and response.

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School violence takes many forms, from verbal altercations and bullying to assault, robbery, and violent death (DeVoe et al. 2004). Bullying has been given considerable attention and is often seen as a precursor to the more violent forms of aggression, such as school shootings (e.g., Greif & Furlong 2006; O'Toole 2000). Following the rash of shooting rampages of the 1990s, numerous agencies and researchers studied the phenomenon of school shooters, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (O'Toole, 2000), the U.S. Department of Education (Dwyer et al. 1998), and the U.S. Secret Service (Vossekuil et al., 2002). As a result of these and other efforts, much has been learned about adolescent school shooters; however, little attention has been given to other forms of potentially lethal school violence, such as barricaded captive and crisis situations in schools.

Daniels and colleagues have been studying two types of averted, yet potentially lethal school violence: thwarted school rampages and successfully resolved barricaded hostage and crisis situations in schools. Daniels et al. (2007c) conducted a content analysis of newspaper reports of averted school shooting rampages. Similar to findings from schools at which a shooting occurred, they found that the majority of plotters informed one or more people of their intentions and the most common motive was retaliation for being bullied. Unlike schools at which a shooting occurred, Daniels et al. (2007c) found that plots were frequently uncovered as a result of students coming forward and reporting their concerns. Following school shootings, it is often revealed that others knew of the impending attack but did not inform

anyone who could have prevented it; a phenomenon O'Toole (2000) termed the code of silence. Thus, an important preventive factor is breaking the code of silence.

In a qualitative study of thwarted shooting rampages, Daniels et al. (2010) found that the most commonly discussed preventive theme related to school conditions that had been set up to cultivate a safe, trusting environment. This school climate included efforts to break the code of silence, treating students with dignity and respect, and establishing meaningful relationships with all students. Additionally, Daniels et al. (2010) discussed the importance of school-community collaboration in averting lethal school violence. Similarly, Patterson (2007) reported that it is imperative that schools and law enforcement agencies develop trusting working relationships.

One form of school violence that has not received considerable research attention is the barricaded hostage or crisis situation. To clarify, Vecchi et al. (2005) identified a shortcoming in the literature regarding the definitions of hostage- and barricaded-related terms. They indicated that *barricaded hostage situations* entail taking one or more people captive “for ‘instrumental’ or tangible reasons” such as using the hostages as leverage for the hostage takers’ demands (p. 535). *Barricaded crisis situations* involve taking one or more people captive “for ‘expressive’ or intangible reasons” such as an expression of the subject’s emotional state or intentions ultimately to kill the victim (p. 535). Thus, individuals held in barricaded hostage and crisis situations are referred to as hostages and victims, respectively, with “captive” reserved as an umbrella term referring to either situation. It is therefore important to understand that barricaded hostage situations and barricaded crisis situations are subsets under the larger umbrella of “captive-taking” wherein a barrier exists that prevents law enforcement officers from directly confronting the subject. The captive is either a hostage or a victim, depending on the motivation (instrumental versus expressive) of the subject in holding the captive.

The most effective means of resolving barricaded hostage and crisis situations is through law enforcement negotiations. Regini (2002) reported that crisis negotiation has become the most successful policing intervention. The aims of negotiation differ depending on whether a given situation is a barricaded hostage or crisis event. Failure to adjust one’s negotiation strategy to reflect the type of situation may lead to tragic results. In general, the aims of crisis negotiations are to decrease the emotionality of the subject, appeal to reason, and convince him or her to release the captives and surrender (McMains and Mullins 2006). The ultimate goal of law enforcement negotiations is the peaceful resolution of the event.

Very few studies have been conducted on school barricaded hostage and crisis situations. Two studies

examined the psychological effects of being held captive at schools in Europe (Scrimin et al. 2006; Vila et al. 1999). Scrimin et al. (2006) evaluated 22 children and their caregivers who had been held captive at School Number 1 in Beslan, Russia. Vila et al. (1999) conducted an 18-month longitudinal study of 26 children who had been held captive in an elementary school near Paris, France. Results revealed significant posttraumatic stress symptoms among both samples, including symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among the children’s caregivers (Scrimin et al. 2006). Vila et al. also found that children in the school who were not held captive exhibited symptoms of PTSD.

Two studies examined the responses of school personnel who were involved in barricaded captive situations at schools. Daniels et al. (2007b) interviewed school authorities who were directly involved in classroom barricaded hostage or crisis events. Participants described the establishment and utilization of positive relationships with students/subjects as the most salient preventive factor. Additional findings included communicating with the subject in a calm, non-confrontational manner, negotiating for the release of the captives, and the importance of training for emergencies. Daniels et al. (2007a) presented a case study of a school counselor’s response following a classroom barricaded captive situation and reported similar findings. In addition to the previously described results from Daniels et al. (2007b), this school counselor expressed the importance post-incident recovery issues, such as provision of information about trauma and coping and coordinating counseling services to students and their families.

Recent efforts to prepare for a variety of crises have centered on the four-pronged approach of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), developed through the Department of Homeland Security (2004). This approach to crisis management focuses on mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. Mitigation and prevention refer to efforts to reduce the risk of hazards to individuals; preparedness helps individuals and agencies to plan for the worst-case scenario; response entails steps taken during a crisis; and recovery includes activities following a crisis that restore individuals and communities to a functional level.

The previous literature on school barricaded hostage and crisis events has focused on (1) the psychological effects of being held captive, and (2) successfully resolved barricaded captive situations in schools from the perspectives of the personnel who intervened. There has yet to be systematic investigations of barricaded school captive events that examine National Incident Management System (NIMS) guidelines pertaining to prevention/mitigation, preparation, response, and recovery. Therefore, the purpose of this manuscript is to begin this systematic inquiry by describing

19 school captive events that occurred between February, 1998, and September, 2007 in the United States. Descriptions of the schools and communities, the events, subject characteristics, and captive characteristics are examined in light of mitigation/prevention and response options. Limitations of the data preclude our ability to include preparation or recovery efforts.

Material & Methods

A search was conducted of the *LexisNexis Academic* database using the search strings “school & hostage” and “school & barricade.” *LexisNexis* is a database of news articles and can be narrowed to search for specific times and places. We found a total of 20 barricaded hostage and crisis events that had occurred between February, 1998 and September, 2007. On closer examination, it was determined that one incident, although reported to have been a “hostage” event, did not meet criteria for inclusion in this study (people were never confined by the subject, nor was he ever barricaded). Thus, 19 events were content analyzed for this study.

Content analysis is a method of searching text for common themes. The themes may be developed inductively, through the data, or deductively, wherein the categories are identified a priori from the literature (Matthes and Kohring 2008). In the present study, we inductively developed 20 variables, which were identified a priori by the research team, and were considered to represent critical information for first responders and negotiators. The variables of interest were location (state, community), school level and size, time of day of the event, location of the event within the school, age and sex of the subjects, information about the captives, presence of school resource officers, student screening procedures, behavioral changes of the subjects, the subject’s expected outcomes, injuries or fatalities, demands and deadlines, captive escapes and releases, weapons, incident resolution, activities of tactical teams, and negotiations.

News articles were examined for information pertaining to each of the variables of interest. Data were content analyzed and discussed until we reached consensus. Specifically, we searched news reports of each incident for statements that pertained to any one of the 20 variables of interest.

Results

In general, the NIMS conceptual model (mitigation/prevention, preparation, response and recovery) constitutes a timeline that begins prior to, and continues beyond a crisis. Neither the Preparation nor the Recovery component of the NIMS model could be ascertained

from the data sources used for this study. Variables were clustered into the categories of Incident Demographics, Mitigation/Prevention, and Response.

Incident Demographics

The 19 barricaded hostage incidents occurred in 13 states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, and Washington). Four incidents occurred in California, three were in Washington, and two took place in Texas. Communities ranged in population from 806 to 1.2 million (2000 U.S. Census Data), with a mean of 109,221 and a median of 14,523. These populations are somewhat skewed because data were not available for two very small towns, so the population of either the county or a neighboring town/township was used. The incidents occurred at all three levels of schools, with the majority ($n=12$) in high schools, four in middle or junior high schools, and one in an elementary school. One additional incident occurred in an alternative high school, and one incident occurred in a one-room schoolhouse. School size was determined by examination of 2006 enrollments. High schools had from 72 to 2,571 students, with a mean of 1,353. Enrollments in the middle/junior high schools ranged from 537 to 1,696 ($M=1,038$), and the elementary school had 728 students. The one-room schoolhouse had an enrollment of 27 students.

The incidents occurred predominantly in the morning hours ($n=8$) and during lunch time ($n=7$). Three incidents occurred late in the afternoon or during the evening, and the time was not specified for one event. All incidents took place within the walls of the schools. The majority ($n=15$) occurred in classrooms, while one incident each took place in the cafeteria, the principal’s office, a hallway, and a location within the school that was not specified.

All subjects were male, and ranged in age from 12 to 53 ($M=18.2$, median=16). In all cases, the subject was acting alone during the incident. Information about the captives was not always detailed in the news reports. Captives were taken in 18 of the 19 events, and one constituted a lone-barricaded crisis situation, wherein the student locked himself in a classroom with a gun. Across the 18 incidents involving captives approximately 260 people were held. In the majority of the events, the captives were students (16 of the 19 incidents). In most cases, it was an entire class that was held captive ($n=11$, involving approximately 247 students). In four situations, only female students were held (involving 21 students), and in three events only males were held (four students). In 13 events, teachers were included as captives, with the majority being women (six women, three men, and four gender unspecified). Finally, administrators were held in two situations.

Mitigation/Prevention

Four variables were examined that related to mitigation/prevention: The presence of school resource officers, student screening procedures, observed behavioral changes of the subject prior to the event, and the subject's expected outcome. This latter variable was included in this section because knowledge of the subjects' expectations of the outcomes of the events may aid in the prevention or mitigation of future crises.

School Resource Officers The majority of news reports ($n=11$) did not indicate whether or not the school employed School Resource Officers (SROs). Of the remaining eight schools, seven had an SRO and one did not. One SRO was not at the school on the day of the event, and articles indicated that only three SROs were armed.

Student Screening Reports of 11 incidents failed to indicate whether or not the school had metal detectors for student screening purposes. Five schools did not have metal detectors and three had screening equipment. Of these three schools, one held random screenings about once per month, and two employed hand-held wands for large activities such as athletic or performing arts events.

Observed Behavioral Changes Behavioral changes included any differences in the subject's appearance, behavior, or life circumstances prior to the event. This variable also included any indicators of mental illness noted for the subject. Behavioral changes were noted for 13 of the 19 subjects. In four cases, the subject had a history of mental illness, including depression, schizophrenia, and an unspecified psychiatric condition. Two subjects were recent transfers to the school at which the crises took place. Other behavioral markers included recent suspension and expulsion, leakage (e.g., informing others there was going to be a "party" in the cafeteria), problems at home, and a recent breakup with a girlfriend. One subject had recently dropped out of school, one came to school dressed in black, and one subject's mother had recently died. Finally, in the case of an adult external intruder, it was determined that he had cased the school the day before his attack.

Expected Outcomes Information was available about the subjects' expected outcomes of the crises for nine of the 19 cases. In two situations, the subjects intended to kill one of the captives—one planned to rape and then kill one captive, and the other planned to kill a teacher-captive before committing suicide. Two additional subjects intended to commit suicide, one by cop. One additional subject simply planned "to die." Two subjects planned to use their captives to flee to different states—one to his home state from which

he had recently moved, and the other to escape abuse at home. One subject planned to use his captives as a shield for his escape, and a final subject apparently wished to gain attention.

Response

We examined seven variables related to responses to the crises studied. These include: injuries/fatalities, demands and deadlines, captive escapes and releases, weapons, incident resolution, tactical team responses, and negotiations.

Injuries/Fatalities The majority (13) of the incidents resulted in no injuries or fatalities. In one incident, seven female captives were sexually assaulted by the subject, and during a tactical entry of this same incident one captive and the subject were killed. In two crises, there were no injuries to captives, but the subjects committed suicide. In two other incidents, the subjects were fatally shot during tactical operations. In the sixth incident, multiple captives were shot by the subject: Five were injured and five were killed before the subject was killed.

Demands and Deadlines An event is classified as a barricaded hostage situation only if the captives are used as leverage to attain a desired outcome. In barricaded crisis events, the captives are held for emotional or expressive reasons. In the 19 events that constitute the data for the present study, specific demands were made in only six. Most of these demands were not instrumental demands. For example, one subject demanded that the teacher lock the classroom door, another demanded to speak to the principal, and a third demanded that the police "back off." The three instrumental demands all related to transportation (two asked for vehicles to be delivered, and another demanded that a teacher give him his car keys).

Deadlines were given in only two events. Interestingly, of the 19 situations in this study, subjects in two were adult external intruders. It was these intruders who gave deadlines. At approximately 3:20 p.m. one subject stated that the event would end by 4:00. This deadline resulted in a tactical response. In the other event, the subject gave a two second deadline for the police to "back off", after which he began shooting captives.

Captive Escapes and Releases At least some captives escaped from eight events. All captives in a classroom escaped once the deputy arrived and confronted the subject. In another incident, one of the captives was able to escape during a tactical entry into the room. In another classroom event, the teacher escaped in order to call for help. One event took place in the cafeteria during lunch. The news

report indicated that “about 130 students” were able to flee when the subject fired his gun into the ceiling. In the remaining three situations, one female student, two captives, and “a few students” were able to escape. In contrast to the small number of escapes, the majority of subjects released some or all of their captives ($n=16$ events). Releases were the result of negotiations as well as undisclosed factors.

Weapons Weapons included guns, knives, and other incendiary materials. The most frequently employed weapon was a single gun (11 incidents). Guns ranged from an air rifle to .22 caliber handguns, shotguns, rifles, and automatic handguns. Two subjects used both a gun and a knife, and two brought one or more guns and incendiary materials (i.e., gun powder, lighter fluid). One individual brought a gun and a stun gun; one subject brought two knives, and one claimed he had a bomb, although it was later determined that he did not. Finally, one subject used a toy gun.

Incident Resolution There were various means by which incidents were resolved. The most common resolution was that the subject was talked into surrendering by school personnel, police, or trained law enforcement negotiators ($n=7$). Five incidents were resolved through actions of tactical teams: in three incidents, the subject was apprehended and in two the subject was killed by gunfire. Three crises were successfully resolved through confrontations (e.g., police ordering the offender to drop his weapons, or in one case, other students tackling the subject). Two incidents ended when the subject committed suicide. Two incidents were resolved when the subject left the scene, and one incident ended in a murder/suicide.

Tactical Team Response Tactical teams were brought in for nine of the 19 incidents. These teams included Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), the State Police Emergency Response Team, local and state police, and sheriff departments. A tactical solution was implemented for four of the nine crises. In three of these events, the subjects were shot by SWAT marksmen, and in one incident police used a “flash-bang” grenade to disorient and subdue the subject.

Negotiations Negotiations took place in 12 incidents. In one of these situations, it was the captives who negotiated for their release, and in another the teacher negotiated the release of the students. Of the 12 negotiated events, seven were successful, four were not successful (i.e., the offender or others were shot), and one resulted in the release of some, but not all captives. In this incident, the offender was eventually shot while killing a remaining captive.

Discussion

Barricaded captive situations in schools do not commonly occur; yet, there are approximately two each year in the United States. Despite their relative infrequency, these events cause considerable disruption to the schools and the individuals within them. Whether the situation ends peacefully or in losses due to injuries or fatalities, multiple victims are traumatized by the unpredictability and loss of control that characterize these events. Previous research has examined the psychological effects of barricaded captive events in schools (Scrimin et al. 2006; Vila et al. 1999) and the responses of school personnel to the crises (Daniels et al. 2007a, b). The purpose of this study was to examine multiple school-based barricaded hostage and crises situations and discern mitigation/prevention and response patterns across the events. Although a total of 20 events were found through news outlets, one was discarded because it failed to meet the criteria for a barricaded captive situation.

The majority of school barricaded captive events occur at high schools, are perpetrated by males who attend the school, and occur in the morning or mid-day. Although the norm in the present data set, there were numerous exceptions. We did, for example, find that some incidents occurred at middle/junior high schools and one in an elementary school. Unlike targeted school shootings in which over half of the shooters were not acting alone (Fein et al. 2002), there was no evidence that any of the subjects in this study were acting with others. This may be one distinguishing characteristic between rampage school shootings and school-based barricaded hostage events; however, given the low incidence and base rate of these events, this finding needs to be further validated before more definitive statements can be made.

There were important mitigating variables that we attempted to ascertain in the present study. Two of these variables were insufficiently reported in the present data to draw reliable conclusions: The existence and effectiveness of SROs and student screening procedures. The presence of SROs has been shown to be an important adjunct to school climate and school safety (e.g., Johnson 1999). Johnson showed that the number of felonies in a school district dropped significantly in the year following placement of SROs in the schools. In the present study, it is unfortunate that the majority of news reports failed to indicate whether or not a SRO was on campus the day of the event. Of the seven incidents that occurred in which a SRO was present on the day of the crisis, news reports explicitly stated that two were resolved through direct actions of the SRO. We do not know, in the remaining five events, the extent to which SROs were acting in concert with responding law enforcement agencies, although presumably this occurred.

Future research needs to more clearly address the roles of SROs as mitigating agents in school barricaded captive events.

In addition to SROs, student screening has been presented as a mitigating factor for school violence (Green 2004). Screening procedures include use of technology such as video surveillance and metal detectors, and entry control approaches (e.g., one unlocked entry point, visitor sign-in). Metal detectors in schools have been criticized as being too costly to purchase and maintain. Researchers suggest they send a message that the school has a safety problem; however, others have argued that metal detectors can reduce the presence of weapons in schools, thereby reducing the lethality of confrontations (Green 2004). Again, due to limitations of the present data, we were unable to determine the effectiveness of metal detectors as a mitigating factor in barricaded captive events in schools.

Two variables that related to subject characteristics were examined as potential mitigating factors: behavioral changes or life circumstances of the subjects and their expected outcomes of the events. With respect to behavioral markers, few definitive patterns emerged. The most frequently mentioned variables were treatment for various forms of mental illness, recent suspension/expulsion/drop out and problems at home. However, given that the most commonly mentioned factor (mental illness) was reported for only four individuals (representing 21% of the sample), we cannot use these markers as predictors of students who will engage in barricaded captive events at schools. The subjects' expected outcomes were noted for nine of the 19 incidents. Four expected to die, either through suicide or other undisclosed means, and two intended to harm and/or kill one of their captives. The knowledge that some suspects' expected outcome was to die can aid responders to these incidents. Due to the effectiveness of negotiations (Regini 2002), it is therefore critical that negotiators consider this as a possibility in school-based events.

Information related to response was the most plentiful of that reported in the present data set. In approximately 68% of the incidents examined, there were no injuries or fatalities. Captives were injured in only two events, both of which were perpetrated by adult external intruders into the schools. These same adult intruders were the only subjects to injure captives, and in both situations the captors were killed. In three situations, student-captors committed suicide and one was shot by a SWAT shooter. Demands were made in six incidents, although these tended to lack the sophistication often seen in barricaded captive events that are perpetrated by adults (McMains and Mullins 2006). Demands tended to relate to the subject's safety needs (e.g., a demand that the teacher lock the door) or means of escape (i.e., demands for vehicles). Specific deadlines are occasionally given in barricaded captive events (McMains &

Mullins); however, only two deadlines were reported in the present data. In both situations it was the adult intruders as subjects who gave deadlines to police. As previously noted, one deadline was merely two seconds, after which the subject began shooting captives.

One of the primary goals of law enforcement negotiations is the release of captives (McMains and Mullins 2006). In just over 84% of the incidents studied, some or all of the captives were released. These releases were generally the result of verbal strategies engaged in by law enforcement, trained negotiators, school personnel, or even the captives themselves. This percentage is very similar to national data from the FBI's Hostage Barricade Database System (HOBAS). McMains and Mullins (2006) analyzed data on adult, non-school events collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and found that captives were released in 82.9% of the incidents. School, mental health, and law enforcement personnel need to be aware that captives are released in the majority of school-based barricaded captive events, and be prepared for receiving them. McMains and Mullins (2006) described numerous recovery issues for released captives, including having medical and psychological treatment mechanisms in place (Daniels et al. 2007d). Therefore, it is critical for responders to obtain valid intelligence regarding the individuals involved in order to determine if any of the releases are in actuality the captive-taker attempting to escape.

In addition to releases, captives escaped in eight of the 19 incidents (42.1%). Some of these escapes occurred during the initial chaotic moments of the sieges, and in one event all captives were able to escape once the police arrived and confronted the subject. One other captive was able to escape during a tactical entry into the barricaded classroom. Unfortunately, during this entry, another captive was killed by the subject. In the remaining four incidents, news accounts did not specify details about how or when the captives escaped. McMains and Mullins (2006) indicated that captives are more likely to find opportunities to escape as the event is prolonged. Captive takers become more relaxed, fatigued, and/or careless as the events become drawn out, and it is at these moments that captives are likely to find opportunities to escape. In the present study, we found the opposite: More captives were able to escape in the initial moments when there was a general confusion, before the captive taker could assert control.

According to Hatcher et al. (1998), there are five ways in which a barricade captive event can be resolved: "(a) negotiated surrender, (b) SWAT team tactical assault and apprehension of perpetrator, (c) perpetrator killed, (d) perpetrator suicide, and (e) perpetrator escape" (p. 455). In the present study, incidents were resolved through all of these means. Seven incidents ended in a negotiated surrender, ten were resolved through a tactical response

and apprehension of the subjects, subjects were killed in two incidents, subjects committed suicide in two events, and subjects escaped or left the scene before authorities were alerted in two incidents. Note that some of these incidents were resolved in more than one way (e.g., one subject was killed during the tactical assault).

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this study is the first to examine multiple school-based barricaded captive situations, there are limitations that need to be addressed. First, the data were compiled from news reports of the incidents. Consequently, there is some question about the scientific objectivity and exhaustiveness of the data. News reports are written to convey information and sell product (newspapers, air time, etc.). Therefore, some news articles may sensationalize the events that are being reported to attain this latter purpose. It is probable that objectivity is lost as a result of this journalistic style (Daniels et al. 2007c).

In addition to objectivity is the problem of sampling. The present data do not constitute a random sample of events, nor can it be concluded that the data represent an exhaustive sample (Daniels et al. 2007c). There is some evidence that schools are hesitant to report crimes for fear of creating a perception of lack of safety in their school (Daniels, et al. 2010). Therefore, it cannot be concluded that the present study represents the entire population of barricaded captive events in schools in the time frame included in this study.

Finally, because of the aforementioned limitations of the data, we were unable to examine information pertaining to preparation and recovery. Therefore, future research is needed that examines these important components of the NIMS.

Future research into barricaded captive situations at schools must go beyond news reports. The authors are in the process of conducting a large-scale investigation of captive-taking events, under the umbrella of a comprehensive study of global captive-taking, entitled the Global Hostage-Taking Research and Analysis Project (GHosT-RAP), which is being led by the FBI Behavioral Science Unit. GHosT-RAP will make use of a perpetrator-motive research design to better understand motivations, meanings, values, needs and desires of the perpetrators of school and other barricaded captive events. The school portion of GHosT-RAP will be accomplished through collection and analysis of interview data, police reports, psychological evaluations, and school records (where available) of juvenile school captive-takers. Through this research, the above limitations will be addressed and a more thorough understanding of these events will emerge.

In addition to studying the perpetrators of school barricaded captive events, the authors will examine these events from the perspectives of the captives in a future

study. This aspect will be a part of the larger study of juvenile school captive takings. Data will include interviews with students, teachers, and others who were held captive. Specific information will be solicited about captive demographics, length of captivity, and captive post-incident disposition. Moreover, we will attempt to ascertain if the captives were targeted and if they were physically, psychologically, or sexually victimized. Finally, we will examine what the captives did during the event, including the possible development of the Stockholm syndrome.

Conclusions

School personnel and law enforcement must be prepared for a multitude of potential violent scenarios at America's schools. One possible scenario is a barricaded captive event, wherein students, teachers, staff, and/or administrators are taken captive. The present study examined 19 such incidents and highlighted several key preparation/mitigating and response commonalities. Although more extensive research is needed on these events, the authors offer several recommendations to prepare for, and mitigate the impact of such crises. First, having a well-trained SRO in the school can be an important preventive/mitigating asset. SROs need to achieve a balance between being seen as authorities and also developing trusting relationships with all students (Daniels et al. 2007b). Because many school barricaded captive events are resolved before the police arrive, it is often the SRO who is the first responder. The SRO is also the lead liaison between the school and the local police once they arrive. Thus, their role in such events cannot be understated.

Second, previous research (Daniels et al. 2007b) has underscored the importance of school personnel being aware of the climate of the school and taking rumors seriously. Breaking the code of silence is best accomplished through the development of trusting, respectful relationships with all students and may alert authorities that a student may be troubled. Appropriate intervention can then occur.

A second set of recommendations pertains to responses to barricaded captive events in schools. A common reaction to school personnel who were held captive in an earlier study (Daniels et al. 2007b) was to remain calm in an effort to de-escalate the emotions of the captive taker. This response is in line with best practices of law enforcement negotiations (McMains and Mullins 2006), which includes approaching captive takers in a calm, non-threatening manner. Once the subject's emotionality is replaced with rationality, negotiations can begin to focus on problem solving. School personnel can learn about the role of emotion in crises and practice effective communication skills to accomplish this goal of de-escalation. Second, we

recommend that law enforcement officers, SROs, and other school personnel learn the basics of negotiation strategies so they can work toward the safe release of captives. Although we are not advocating that everyone in the schools be trained as negotiators, we have found that basic active listening skills can lead to captive releases (Daniels et al. 2007b).

This study has examined one form of school violence and begins to illuminate mitigation and response to such events. Through education and cooperation between law enforcement and the schools, much headway has been made in making schools safer places for our children. Continued research will further enhance this progress, with the goal of increasing school safety.

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