

## A New Day in America

It is 8am on a Monday in Washington D.C., and the president of the United States is preparing his morning remarks for the American public.

“Whenever you are ready,” whispers one of the staff aides.

“It is with a heavy heart that I must appear before you today, as we find ourselves reeling from an unspeakable tragedy. We are heartbroken by the violence and loss experienced today, and we send our thoughts and prayers to the people of...”

“Alright, cut, Mr. President, we’ll send you the city details later,” the staff aide interrupts. The President boards Air Force One, which stands ready to depart for the annual G7 summit.

Meanwhile, as the president begins his commute, a young boy named Zaire is just arriving at school 5 minutes late, joining his class as they are in the midst of saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

“Alright, class, roll call,” the teacher informs afterward. “Kai M.”

A girl stands up, walks to her cubby, pulls out her gun for the teacher to clearly see, waiting until the teacher has nodded to replace the gun in the cubby and return to her seat. This pattern continues for several more students.

“Zaire W.”

Zaire has not brought his gun today. He realized he forgot as he was in the car, but at that point he was already late and there was no time to turn back. Presently, he walks over to his cubby and fiddles around, attempting to give the impression he has his gun but merely has misplaced it.

“Zaire, where is your gun?” the teacher asks, still looking down at her roll call sheet. “Home,” Zaire mumbles.

“Please speak clearly, Zaire,” the teacher says.

“I think I left my gun at home,” Zaire repeats.

The teacher looks up briefly, nods, then makes a quick call to the front office.

“Zaire, your mom will pick you up in 20 minutes. You can wait for her in the front office,” the teacher says.

When Zaire’s mom arrives, the school secretary smiles warmly and returns Zaire his demerit card newly stamped, along with a sticky note reminder to bring his gun to school tomorrow. The printed

heading on the sticky note includes the school's logo, along with the school motto, "Arming students to be citizen-leaders from day one!"

Meanwhile, the school secretary also prints out some new waivers for a prospective family to sign. The form reads, "I, {PARENT'S NAME HERE}, the undersigned agree that Prairie Public Schools is not liable if my child does not get to experience first-hand as part of their education an active shooter situation."

After the school day is over, the school secretary arranges her desk, shreds some papers, and then heads to the grocery store with her gun. At the grocery store, she probably would only need a basket to carry the couple items she is planning on buying, but she takes a shopping cart, since that makes it easier to carry around her gun. After grabbing some items, she heads home. Pretty soon after, her husband returns as well. He used to never keep a gun, but after his wife's school made all employees and students begin carrying around a gun, he did not feel safe without his own. He's also started to carry his gun at his architectural firm. As one of the leading architects of the city, he is credited for the exceptional design of the local public schools, including the school his wife works at, in which there are no longer any doors for entering into the building! Instead, he has designed the building to have plenty of windows which students and teachers alike must shoot holes in using their guns to enter or to leave the building.

As the architect and the school secretary sit down for dinner, there is a 5pm vigil taking place at the Serenity Church down the block, and tonight there is an American baptism for a child named Parker. Following the ritual cleansing of sin by water and induction into the Christian community, Parker is made to stand at the altar as her parents aim each take a shot toward her direction with their eyes closed. The ritual is meant to strengthen the inner fortitude of the child. For the most part, the child goes unharmed as the shots usually miss. But today, Parker is hit with a bullet. The ambulances do not arrive for an hour or so, as they are busy responding to a shooting that has just taken place at the local shopping mall.

At the G7 summit, the U.S. president has just wrapped up his public appearances for the day, and he returns to his hotel. In a meeting conference room, he convenes with his staffers as they prepare to record the names of all the cities where condolences must be shared for today's shootings. The list has become increasingly large in recent weeks, and the staffers have suggested employing a more generic condolence moving forward. But for today, the president efficiently works his way through a 2-hour long

session of reading and recording the names of each of the cities where mass shootings of more than 10 individuals have taken place. (Shootings of 10 or less people are far too many these days to deserve their own personalized condolence, the president even agrees.)