

# Deadly Toronto School Shooting

THE VERDICT

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PAULA TODD: As we all know, this was just the latest in a series of recent school shootings. For more, we're joined now by John Muise, a former police officer who is now the public safety director for the Canadian Centre For Abuse Awareness and also by Stu Auty. I know you've both been following this very, very closely today. I want to ask you John Muise some technical questions. We all watched with dread the Virginia Tech massacre. How did the police today know that it was safe to release those kids who had been under lockdown, when they don't yet, even now, have a shooter.

JOHN MUISE (Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness): Well, good question, and they, they know because of what they did. They arrived on scene. Obviously, you heard from Austin, how they took the victim and did an emergency run down to the hospital, but once they got on scene realized it was a shooting, the officers, based on the kind of training that we do now, and I can tell you just before I left the police service in 2006, I had fairly extensive use of force tactical training, front line officer training where you actually, you get into the school, make sure that, that anybody that is, is potentially at risk, that you do whatever you can to preserve their life, and if necessary, engage in, in, in tactical activity to locate and take down any offender that might be on scene. So what happened was, they cordoned off. They made a large perimeter, because it's easier to make it large rather than small, and then try to make it big again, because you can always reduce the perimeter, went inside and over time, located students in every classroom. Put officers in every classroom and then waited for the Emergency Task Force to arrive own scene, and, in effect, what they did was, they went, you know, room to room, floor to floor, and swept the building and basically cleared the building, you know, one area at a time, one room at a time, and it, and it, and it, it, it took place over the course of several hours. And it wasn't until literally three or four hours later that the students slowly started to come out of the building, and I remember some of the commentary earlier on CTV and it was about, well, when are they going to get out and it was about ensuring their safety, is why it took so long.

TODD: Stu, you're the president of the **Canadian Safe School Network**, your observations today?

STU AUTY (**Canadian Safe School Network**): Well, you know, my, my heart just goes out to the family. There's nothing more horrific than losing a child. I can't imagine anything worse than that. That family today's experiencing all of it, and so, you know, there's an anxiety level that skyrocketed in that school and that community, if not across the city and across the country, because if anything, you know, that we've learned about a situation like this today, is that communication is instant, you know, whether it's in Dawson College or whether the incidents in, in, in Virginia, Virginia Tech, it feels like it's at home, and so there's a perception out there that when something like this happens, it's happening in your neighbourhood.

TODD: And yet we heard parents today incredibly upset, incredibly distressed that it was taking so long to get information about what was going on in the school, about whether their, their kids were safe.

AUTY: Well, think about it. Everybody, everybody's anxious. Everybody's impatient when, when their children are in there and they want immediate information, and we know that when something like this happens, part of the problem is communication, because cell phones will collapse because of the massive use, and the whole aspect of, you know, system response when something like this happens has to do with better communication and the cell phone issue is just one of the issues that police and school educators have to deal with.

TODD: John, we have to talk about the reality that, has it, has the possibility of suicide been ruled out in this case do you know?

MUISE: Paula, I don't know. I mean, I thought about it today. I know we've, we've been talking about homicide. We're working on that assumption. I suspect if the police had some evidence to believe that it might be a suicide that we would have heard that today. Having said that, you know, unless somebody from the police service has specifically ruled it out, it is a possibility.

TODD: So how big should that search be right now if this is a homicide for someone who snuck into the school and snuck out?

MUISE: Well, it's a good question. Once that school has been searched top to bottom and the police are satisfied, then the search is going to focus, I mean, there's going to be a number of things that happened, but first and foremost, I mean, you know, the good thing that came out of this was the police were there, and they were able to corral the students, safeguard them, but equally at the same time, identify potential witnesses and, and they're, the police are going to be working on that information to identify, hopefully identify, a suspect.

TODD: But I want to go back to Virginia Tech because everybody stood down too soon. I'm hearing right now that the students are being invited to go back to school tomorrow. Let's, until we know what happened here, we have a shooter who is loose, who chose a target in a school. Would you let your kids go back to that school tomorrow?

MUISE: Yes I would.

TODD: Why?

MUISE: Because, you know, it, it could happen tomorrow. It could happen the next day. It could happen a week from now. It could happen a month from now or it could never happen. I, I think, I think that would, I think they're doing the right thing opening the doors. I, I trust that there will also be the eyes and ears that need to be there in case...

TODD: Very well guarded. Stu, I've only got a few seconds, would you let your kids go back tomorrow to that school?

AUTY: You know, I think I would, but it's an individual call. It's a judgment call and depending upon the anxiety of my child, depending on the anxiety of my family. That's a call that I would make if it was personal, and it's, it's a tough one.

TODD: All right, and I'll say thank you to John Muise and Stuart Auty.