



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 21, 2012

Two Aurora Shootings: One Widely Known; the Other Ignored

On April 22 of this year a convicted felon, just out of jail, went to an Aurora, Colorado, church and [shot and killed](#) a member of the congregation before being killed himself by a congregant carrying a gun.

On July 20, following the horrific shooting at a movie theater in Aurora, President Obama offered his condolences to the victims of the more recent tragedy. "Our time here [on Earth] is limited and it is precious," the president said. "And what matters at the end of the day is not the small things, it's not the trivial things which so often consume us and our daily lives. It's about how we choose to treat one another and how we love one another."



Obama then led his supporters at a rally in Fort Myers, Florida, in a moment of silent prayer "for all the victims of less publicized acts of violence that plague our communities every single day."

No doubt the president was unaware of the other, less-publicized lethal shooting that took place earlier in the year in Aurora, when there was only one victim, thanks to the quick thinking and action of a responsibly armed individual. Aurora police spokesman Frank Fania [asked rhetorically](#): "Who knows what would've happened if the [church member, an off-duty police officer] had not been there? It certainly could have been a lot worse."

How much worse? Could the killing spree have been as bad as the shooting at the movie theater, where a dozen victims lost their lives? Thankfully, we'll never know.

The killer in the April shooting was 29-year-old Kiarron Parker, who had just been released from prison. He had been convicted for assaulting two police officers, drug abuse, and breaking and entering. The details are [here](#) and [here](#). But the point is clear: Because the perpetrator was able to claim only one life before being killed himself by someone carrying a gun and acting in self-defense, it garnered relatively little publicity.

In contrast, by now there may hardly be a single sentient soul in the country who doesn't yet know what happened on Friday, July 20 at about 12:38 a.m., when James Egan Holmes [opened fire](#) on a theater full of people attending the premier of the latest Batman movie, killing 12 individuals and wounding at least another 50.

If we've paid attention to the mega publicity the horrific July 20 tragedy has garnered, we know that Holmes entered the theater, bought a ticket, and sat in the front row. We know that about 10 minutes into the movie, he left the theater through the emergency door at the front of the theater, returning a few minutes later. We know that he was dressed up in SWAT gear, including chest protector, leg



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protectors, a black helmet, and black tactical gloves. We also know that he was wearing a gas mask and carrying two handguns, a shotgun — and what the media inaccurately, and relentlessly, referred to as an “assault rifle.” (The latter weapon was a semi-automatic rifle.)

We know that upon re-entering the theater through the same emergency door, Holmes threw two canisters of tear gas, striking one patron in the head. When both exploded, many patrons sat still, thinking that it was part of the Batman movie, with special effects.

We know that when he first fired his shotgun into the air, only then did the moviegoers realize that something was terribly wrong and start running for the exits. We know that the perp then turned his weapons on the hapless patrons and fired, round after round, pausing to reload when he ran out of ammunition, until 12 of moviegoers were dead or dying, and another 50 were wounded, some severely.

We know that Holmes’ car was parked outside the emergency exit. We know that he was arrested next to his vehicle without incident. We know that Holmes has no criminal record, save for a single speeding ticket.

But how many Americans know about the earlier shooting at an Aurora church? How many people in Colorado — or in Aurora for that matter — even know? I live in eastern Colorado, only about 70 miles from Aurora, yet I did not find out about the church shooting until I started doing research on the movie-theater shooting.

The little-known Aurora-church shooting illustrates how a tragedy (in this instance, the loss of one innocent life) can be prevented from becoming a much worse tragedy because one of the would-be victims was armed. The widely known movie-theater shooting illustrates the horrendous loss of life that can occur when the intended victims are not only defenseless but known by the perpetrator to be defenseless. Because movie theater was a “gun free” zone, it was an easy target for any madman wanting to prey on victims lacking the ability to fight back.

Anti-gun zealots, however, ignore how the absence of guns in the hands of the law-abiding encourages more crime, and in the Aurora movie-theater shooting they’ve found an opportunity to promote their agenda and have already seized it. For example, Dan Gross, president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, was quick to opine:

This tragedy is another grim reminder that guns are the enablers of mass killers and that our nation pays an unacceptable price for our failure to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people....

We are outraged....

We don’t want sympathy. We want action!

And New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, virtually parroting Gross, claimed, “This is yet another horrific reminder that guns enable mass killings.” He went on to say:

Maybe it’s time that the two people who want to be president of the United States stand up and tell us what they are going to do about it, because this is obviously a problem across the country.

This was just too much for Dudley Brown, executive director of [Rocky Mountain Gun Owners](#), who countered:

The blatant attempt by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg to use the blood of these innocents to advance his radical political agenda is disgusting. Mayor Bloomberg’s campaign succeeded in



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disarming not just these movie-goers [in Aurora], but has created millions of gun-free “criminal-safe zones” across the country.

The victims of this heinous act will not be comforted by being exploited for political gain by elected officials, especially [by] the mayor of one of the most violent cities in the country.

In an interview with *The New American*, [Larry Pratt](#), executive director of Gun Owners of America, called such claims by the anti-gun zealots “not just hypocrisy but duplicity.” The victims in the movie theater were like “fish in a barrel” to the perpetrator because they were disarmed, thanks to the anti-gun agenda.

The contrast between the two Aurora shootings couldn’t be more striking. In the first, a potential holocaust was prevented by an armed citizen taking action. In the second, the perpetrator was free to act out his evil intent on unarmed innocents, knowing that none could return fire. The world knows about the Aurora movie-theater shooting; the world also needs to know about the Aurora church shooting.

Related article: [The Aurora Massacre: Government Could Have Done Worse](#)

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