

# Grieving father criticizes 'coward'

Family, friends pay tribute to victim who died shielding his girlfriend

By MARY SLOSSON  
in Centennial, Colorado  
Reuters

When the accused gunman in the Colorado shooting rampage appeared in court on Monday, Tom Teves, father of a young man who died shielding his girlfriend, felt he had a duty to be in court.

"Somebody had to be in the courtroom to say, you know what, you went in with ballistic protection and guns. You shot a 6-year-old! I mean, give me a break," Teves said after the court hearing.

"And then when the cops came you gave up? You've got the ballistic protection on — take on some guys who know how to use guns," he said.

Teves' son Alex was killed in the hail of gunfire unleashed during what began as a festive midnight premiere on Friday

for the new Batman film in the Denver suburb of Aurora.

Alex Teves, 24, died as he shielded his girlfriend, Amanda Lindgren, from harm in the chaos of the dark theater.

James Holmes, who was arrested outside the theater shortly after the massacre, said nothing during his first court appearance and may not have noticed Tom Teves.

Lindgren, also 24, had tears pouring down her face as she talked about her love for Alex, who she said was her best friend before they started dating.

"He protected me. My baby didn't hesitate. I was very confused, and he didn't hesitate," Lindgren said.

Ryan Cooper, who knew Teves from their time at Desert Vista High School in Phoenix and then together at the University of Arizona, said his

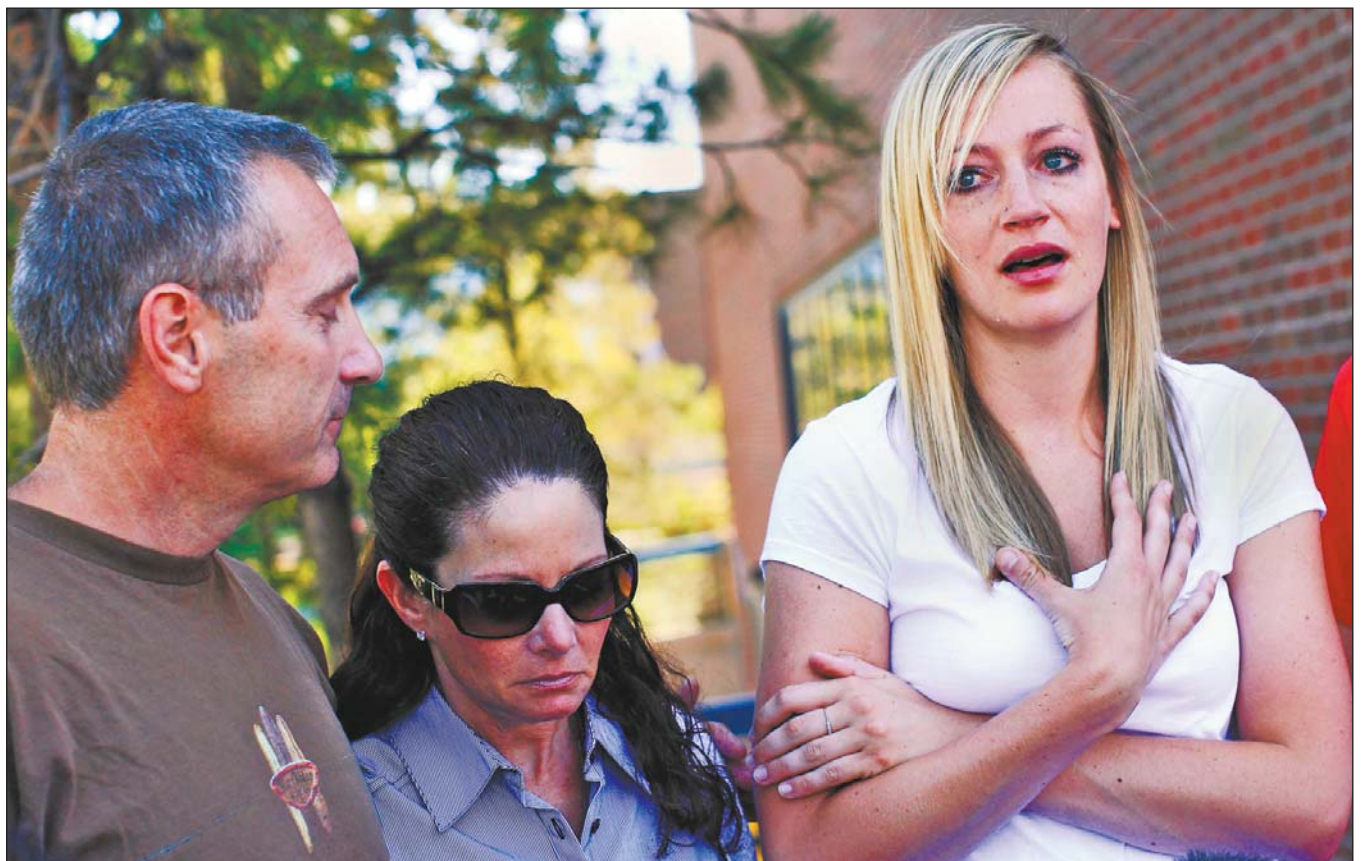


Suspect James Holmes appears in court at the Arapahoe County Justice Center in Centennial, Colorado, on Monday.

friend was "absolutely hilarious" and transcended social borders.

"Every single day of high school, he would wear jeans and a plain white T-shirt, every single day. There was not a single day he didn't," Cooper said.

"One day a bunch of his friends said, 'We're going to have an Alex Tuesday.' And the entire school wore jeans and a



SHANNON STAPLETON / REUTERS

Amanda Lindgren (right), girlfriend of Alex Teves, speaks as Alex's parents, Tom Teves and his wife Caren, listen during an interview after the preliminary hearing for shooting suspect James Holmes in Centennial, Colorado, on Monday. Alex Teves was killed while protecting Lindgren during the mass shooting in the Aurora, Colorado, movie theater at the midnight screening of the new Batman movie on July 20.

plain white T-shirt. There were hundreds of people. That was just a testament to who he was."

On Monday, Tom Teves wavered between sadness and anger, tears welling up in his eyes as he criticized the man

accused of killing his son of cowardice.

"My kid is dead and he's never coming back, and he was one of the best people on Earth. And I gotta look at that coward walking into court," he said.

"And I saw the coward in court today. Alex could have wiped the floor with him without even breaking a sweat."

The family is planning memorial services in Arizona and New Jersey.

"We're gonna miss him terribly and we love him, but we know he's in heaven and he's gonna be OK," Teves said. "We're the ones who are going to suffer."

# Advocate seeks 'freedom from fear of being shot'

By KELLY CHUNG DAWSON  
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When Tom Mauser heard about the Aurora, Colorado, shootings that killed 12 people, he was saddened but not surprised. As a gun control advocate and father of Columbine victim Daniel Mauser, he knows that the high incidence of gun violence in the United States has long been a reality.

"This was like most other shootings. I just said, 'Oh no, not again,'" Mauser said, in an interview with China Daily.

"These shootings are always shocking and terrible, but as someone who follows this issue, I hear a lot of stories like this. We lose more than 30 people a day in America, but people only focus on the killings that involve large body counts."

On April 20, 1999, Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, came under attack from two of its own when two student gunmen killed 13 people and wounded 23 others before turning their guns on themselves.

Daniel Mauser was one of those shot and killed in the massacre that rocked the US but ultimately did little to change gun control laws.

In the weeks before Daniel died, he had expressed interest in the subject of gun control, and in particular the existence of a loophole in the Brady handgun control bill. The law requires background checks on gun purchasers, but does not affect unlicensed dealers at gun shows.

The Columbine killers shot Daniel with guns purchased through that very loophole. Tom has since become a major



Tom Mauser with his son Daniel, a Columbine victim in 1999.

advocate for gun control, pushing for tighter restrictions.

"That's what inspired me to do this work," he said. "I realized it was a sign. How could I not act on that? I do my work to honor my son."

In 2000 he and his wife adopted a little girl from China, not as a replacement for Daniel but to help them heal, he said.

That same year he also succeeded in collecting more than 110,000 signatures to have closing the Brady bill loophole put to a state vote. The measure passed by a 70 percent majority, and the loophole has since been closed in Colorado. He is still working to pass legislation at a national level.

He has also previously spoken about Congress's "shameful" decision to allow the Assault Weapons ban to expire in 2004, an issue that is particularly relevant in the wake of the Aurora shootings. James Holmes, the alleged killer, used a 100-round drum magazine in a semi-automatic rifle. He was supposedly in possession of 6,000 rounds of ammunition.

"Why do we allow someone

to amass that much and then have magazines that can fire 100 bullets without having to reload? I knew that these guns existed, but I don't think most Americans do," Mauser said.

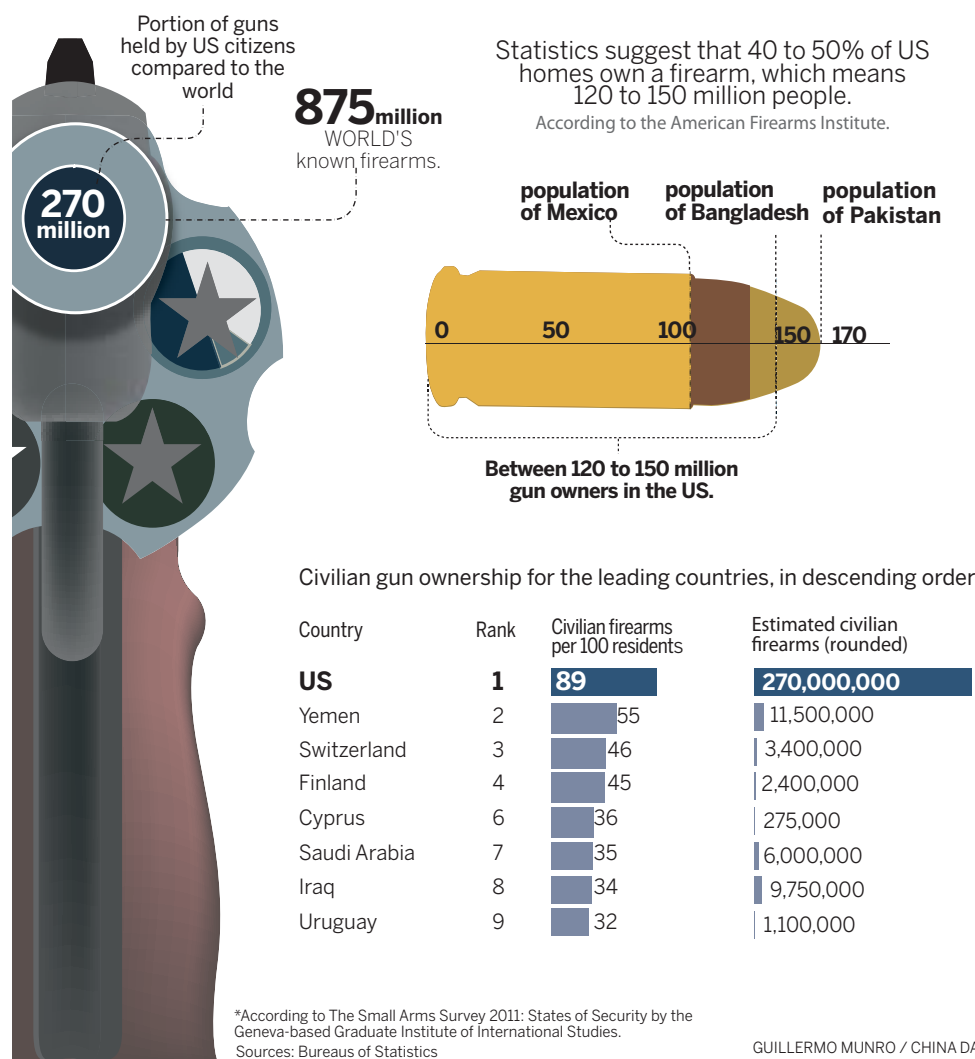
David Burnett, director of public relations for gun rights advocacy group Students for Concealed Carry, said that he believes tighter restrictions would have done little to help prevent these shootings.

"Considering the shooter had no criminal history, and considering how many laws he broke to carry out his attack, it's not believable to say creating more laws would have prevented it," Burnett said. "The movie theater he chose did not allow firearms, and I'm told the city of Aurora also had harsh policies against civilian firearm carry."

Mauser, who sits on the board of gun control advocacy group Colorado Ceasefire, joins Mayor Michael Bloomberg in being one of the few voices to speak up about gun control in the wake of the shootings. Bloomberg said on Friday that US President Barack Obama and Republican challenger Mitt Romney

## US CITIZENS AND GUNS

According to the Small Arms Survey 2007 by the Geneva-based Graduate Institute of International Studies.



should both be more transparent about their stances on gun control. Neither candidate has addressed the issue.

"In this country, we have a strong, powerful and well-funded gun lobby that creates fear among elected officials," Mauser said. "We're seeing it now with President Obama. We need to look at other countries and realize that those are free countries

as well. Having gun restrictions does not make a country any less free. We emphasize freedom and liberty in the US, but in these other countries, they have freedom from the fear of being shot. One of the overriding factors in the US is that we are a nation with a lot of fear. Having fearful people serves the gun lobby well and serves the gun industry — and when these people are told

that the gun control people are trying to take their only means of self-defense, that creates even more fear."

Mauser said he hopes people will ask Obama and Romney the "tough questions." "They'll both be uncomfortable with the questions, but we have to make our political leaders uncomfortable. Otherwise, we'll get nowhere."

On the other side of the issue is Suzanna Hupp, who declined to be interviewed. Hupp's parents were killed in a 1991 mass killing in Killeen, Texas, that left 21 people dead. She had left her gun in her car to comply with Texas state law. The experience left her firmly in the camp that believe gun control laws prevent self-defense in times of danger.

Mauser, who has debated Hupp on the issue, believes that no one in the theater last week could feasibly have prevented the killings. Holmes wore full-body armor and set off smoke bombs that would have made it almost impossible to shoot him, Mauser said.

"You might stop an occasional shooting from happening, but you can't rely on that," he said. "We have to do more than to count on armed citizenry. You can't arm everyone."

Burnett believes that tragic events like these can provide an opportunity to discuss serious issues, he said.

"When calamity strikes, a door is opened for considering changes and solutions," Burnett said. "Competing ideologies who have been promoting their version of a solution immediately want to seize on that opportunity."

Although Mauser will continue his advocacy, he is not optimistic about policy change.

"That's coming from someone who is normally an optimist," he said. "The pattern in this country is that things don't change. I think that once the Olympics arrive, most people will have forgotten this issue. It's tough to see that happen, but I think Americans have come to accept this epidemic. That doesn't mean we'll give up. I know I won't give up."

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# Penn State hit with \$60m penalty over sex abuse case

By EDITH HONAN  
Reuters

The governing body of US college sports on Monday fined Penn State University \$60 million and voided its football victories for the past 14 seasons in an unprecedented rebuke for the school's failure to stop coach Jerry Sandusky's sexual abuse of children.

NCAA President Mark Emmert said the school had put "hero worship and winning at all costs" ahead of integrity, honesty and responsibility.

Penn State was not given the so-called death penalty that could have suspended its foot-

ball program, but it was banned from lucrative post-season games for four years and had the number of scholarships available to players reduced from 25 to 15.

Penn State officials were accused of not taking action after being alerted that Sandusky, a former assistant football coach, was sexually abusing children. The scandal tainted one of college football's leading coaches, the late Joe Paterno, and led to his firing last year along with other top school officials.

The punishment, announced by the National College Athletic Association at a news conference in Indianapolis, was

unprecedented for its swiftness and breadth. It was the latest blow to an institution still reeling from Sandusky's conviction last month on child molestation charges.

The case was another blotch on the diminishing legacy of Paterno, who until Monday's action had held the record for victories among big-time US college football coaches in a career that spanned more than 40 seasons. Paterno lost that status since the NCAA's punishment includes voiding the Nittany Lions' victories between 1998 and 2011 — the time from the first allegations made against Sandusky to his arrest.

The Paterno family said on Monday the NCAA's actions "defame the legacy and contributions of a great coach and educator without any input from our family or those who knew him best."

Later on Monday, the Big Ten Conference of college sports announced Penn State would forfeit its share of revenues for post-season bowl games organized by the league, and the estimated \$13 million would instead be donated to charities devoted to the protection of children. The \$60 million will also go to programs to combat child abuse.

"No price . . . will repair the

grievous damage inflicted by Jerry Sandusky on his victims," said Emmert. "However, we can make clear that the culture, actions and inactions that allowed them to be victimized will not be tolerated in collegiate athletics."

In June, Sandusky, 68, was convicted of sexually abusing 10 boys over a period of 15 years. He awaits sentencing and could be given as many as 373 years.

This month, former FBI director Louis Freeh released a report that criticized Paterno for his role in protecting Sandusky and the school's image at the expense of young victims.