

The Lewiston mass shooting was one of the most significant and disastrous events in Maine history in many of our lifetimes. From the moment we learned the shooter was an Army reservist who had spent two weeks in a psychiatric hospital, we knew there would be a very important story to investigate.

We decided to partner with FRONTLINE (PBS), a national powerhouse, and Maine Public, our neighbors and friends, and together, we provided the most comprehensive, nuanced and analytical coverage in the country across multiple platforms. Where our coverage stands apart is the depth we go into the root causes of this violence, the failure to prevent it, and the personal faces we use to tell the stories.

Central to our work were these questions: Could the shooting have been prevented? Who knew what, when? And what steps were taken as a result?

The resulting stories generated widespread impact in and beyond Maine and were read by thousands of people.

John Terhune provided the first in-depth reporting on how [a rarely used mental health law](#) could have helped prevent the shooting. Steve Mistler [revealed the murky politics](#) behind Maine's unique gun laws and the powerful Second Amendment lobby and culture. Susan Sharon gained the trust of [the shooter's family](#) and [best friend](#). And the filmmakers were able to land the rare on-camera interview with Dr. Ann McKee, who raised important and provocative questions about the shooter and the military.

John's final story [on the Card family](#) offered an extremely rare, intimate view of what it means to be related to a mass shooter, and the complex brief that brings.

The documentary has received over 800 million [streaming views](#) — one of the most watched FRONTLINE documentaries of 2024.

Episodes of the podcast have been downloaded over 145,000 times, and has received more than 100 [five-star reviews on Apple Podcasts](#) — with [reviewers](#) calling the series “a vital listen” and “deeply impactful.”

There are ongoing policy impacts from the shooting and our coverage. Citizen groups have pushed forward a “red flag” referendum on state ballots this fall that would allow families to petition the courts directly to remove a person's firearms.

The Pentagon has new guidelines on blast exposure and baseline cognitive testing, and has indicated there will be additional changes to prevent and study brain injuries.

And federal legislation supported by Maine senators was [included in the National Defense Authorization Act](#) that passed Congress last year. It requires the DOD to improve its blast and TBI data collection efforts and consider overpressure safety when purchasing new weapons.

Many people have and will look at the events leading up to Lewiston as one of the most preventable mass shootings in American history. The police knew about the shooter's paranoia and access to more than a dozen guns. His family knew. His friends knew. Mental health care

professionals knew. Army leadership knew. None of it was enough. Through this [partnership](#), we exposed the failures and the tragic consequences.

Our reporting continues to have reverberations in our work spotlighting inequities in [mental health treatment](#) and [policing](#).

– Julia Arenstam, managing editor, Portland Press Herald