The Importance of Reporting Suspicious Activity

Over the past few days, there have been a number of news articles and media reports informing the public about a thwarted Minnesota teen's plans to kill as many people as possible in a commemoration of the Columbine massacre.

Due to Chelsie Shellhas's suspicious instincts, John David LaDue, 17, could have carried out a catastrophic and life altering event. Shellhas witnessed LaDue, walking through the backyards, holding a bag of fast food, wearing a backpack, enter a storage locker and close the door behind him. Behind that door were materials for pressure cooker bombs, gunpowder, ball bearings, pyrotechnic chemicals, Molotov cocktails and multiple firearms (.22 caliber rifle and a Baretta handgun), including an SAS assault rifle he planned to use to kill his parents.

When police arrived and approached LaDue, he told them "if you can guess what I’m doing, I’ll tell you everything.” He then admitted to wanting to shoot the police officer but only had a knife in his possession. LaDue admitted to setting off bombs around the small town 'to perfect them'. A person working at the storage facility did state that the unit was not rented by him, but was in good standing through May.

**Analyst Comment:** This situation is the perfect example of why it is so important to report suspicious activity. *She did what she was supposed to do. She was vigilant, paid attention and notified the authorities.* “Intuition worked in this case,” says Steve Albrecht, a threat assessment expert, “the idea that you can’t do much as just one person is wrong; you can do a lot. Something you say might become part of the momentum that gets cops or schools to investigate. Oftentimes we get stuck on motive [for school shootings]; what we’ve got to focus on is how to interrupt the opportunity."

In conjunction with the [Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative](#), by reporting suspicious activity, you allow law enforcement personnel to properly document an observed behavior that may be indicative of intelligence gathering or pre-operational planning related to an illicit or criminal event.

Resources such as the Southeast Florida Fusion Center (SEFFC) exist to turn suspicious activity information into actionable intelligence. The initiative is a standardized process – including stakeholder outreach, privacy protections, training, and facilitation of technology.

Partners are encouraged to stay informed of new trends and threats within our community, as well as being aware of your surroundings and the individuals you encounter. Report suspicious activity to your local law enforcement agency or visit [www.iwatchsouthflorida.com](http://www.iwatchsouthflorida.com).

For additional information regarding the content of this informational bulletin, please contact the SEFFC at (954) 888-5317 or [Jennie_Sullivan@bsosid.org](mailto:Jennie_Sullivan@bsosid.org).

Sources: CNN, Fox News, csmonitor.com, dailymail.co.uk, local12.com

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