

**Cameron Rust**

January 16

ARAPAHOE HIGH SCHOOL SHOOTING DECEMBER 13, 2013.

WHY THIS DID NOT HAVE TO HAPPEN, LKNOW, I WAS THERE.

My name is Cameron Rust, I am currently the Defensive Coordinator for the Varsity Football Team, the head Sophomore Baseball Coach and one of the three security guards at Arapahoe High School.

I played football and baseball my entire life and was fortunate enough to receive several accolades in the process. I also realized the power of coaches giving back to me and developed a passion for leadership, and giving back the values, time and effort to others. In other words I learned to care about other people. I attended Colorado State University for two years and Chadron State College for one year before returning home to finish my undergraduate degree in Human Performance and Sport, with a minor in Management from Metropolitan State College of Denver. I then made the decision to get my Master's in Business Administration (MBA), in addition to volunteering as a position coach at Arapahoe High School.

I have always been very passionate about kids, about helping them to fulfill their maximum potential and fulfilling their dreams in any endeavor. Since I also have a strong passion for sports, I needed to find a career that allowed me to use all my skill sets, be passionate day in and day out with my work. The positions I hold at Arapahoe High School allowed me to do just that. I rolled up my sleeves and started working, one person at a time, to help create positive changes in their lives, not just on the football or baseball field, but in other aspects of their lives. I can still hear coaches talking to me and remember the lessons they taught me. Their teachings pulled me through tough times and made me want to do the same for other kids, whether it is in sports or helping to fulfill any other dreams they may have.

In the spring of 2013, I was approached about the open security position at the school. I applied for the position as I believed it was a good opportunity to make a difference in more kid's lives on a daily basis. I had a coach in high school that demonstrated the same beliefs to me. Unfortunately his life ended early, but I will reflect his heart, passion and other beliefs as I remember. Like with any job I have held, I am very passionate and want to ensure the job I do will make a positive difference. Abraham Lincoln said, "Whatever you are, be a good one."

I also try to hold others accountable for the jobs they do, just as I was held accountable growing up. I always recognize those individuals for a job well done and hold individuals accountable for those that are not. Abraham Lincoln also said, "I am a firm believer in the people, if given the truth they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis, the great point is to bring them the true facts."

The shooting that occurred on December 13, 2013 has created a ton of turmoil within me. The school had been warned, they did not do enough. The school had been warned about a lot of things, things that did not have anything to do with December 13th and did not do enough. In my opinion, they will continue to not do enough unless we force them to, of which we know we can.

While there are many more warnings and facts that can be documented leading up to Claire Davis's death, I just have highlighted some below. By doing so, I am looking for parents, students, staff members and security personal to stand behind me. We need to demand changes to our schools, and districts of those schools, to implement change! We can no longer just be shocked by another news story on TV about yet another senseless shooting at another school. We must do something about it now.

The shooting on December 13, 2013, and some other shooting incidents undoubtedly had warnings prior to the event. We need school administrators to do their jobs and understand the right things to do when it relates to life and death decisions. If they have policies and procedures in place, follow them! If they need to be revised, revise and follow them! When school administrators do not follow them, you might as well not have them. If people do not follow policies and procedures, fire them as they do not have the knowledge, skills, abilities or ethics, to be in a leadership position with children or adults.

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When a student or any individual is on the "radar screens" of school administrators, they need to act upon it, no matter how small they view the threat, or what's currently going on. It should be obvious to any reasonable and prudent person that the kid or person needs help. Individuals such as Karl Pierson, was a known threat for a long time, he should have gotten the necessary help and appropriate resources should have been involved. I guarantee if they were, and if the proper investigation took place, Karl would have been unable to purchase a gun and ammunition more than a week prior to the shooting. Had he gotten the necessary help, I doubt his feelings of anger would have consumed him.

A kid threatening a teacher, caught looking at guns - on the Internet -in the school cafeteria, calling individuals "Comrade", drawing questionable symbols on his school work and having un-controllable anger outbursts, should have been investigated and given a plan to help. What more of a threat does the School Administration think they need?

Claire Davis should not have died on December 13, 2013. Karl Pierson should not have died on December 13, 2013. Claire did not have a choice, Karl did. Is Arapahoe High School Administration responsible for Karl's choices? No! Are they responsible for their lack of action? Yes!.

Below are some of the chronological order of events - it will be apparent that the Administration needs to be held accountable. We need to demand change, and we need to be part of the solution to help protect our children going forward, and make sure the people in charge or in a leadership position are truly focused on doing good for others.

Prior to December 13, 2013.....

The security team, the eyes and ears of the school on the front line, expressed concerns to the School Administration of:

- Approximately 15 different illegal drugs that are active within the school.
- The risks of an open campus.
- The mental and emotional state of the school.
- The "party school" reputation among the community.
- Concerns about the Administration violating their own code of conduct by allowing certain individuals back into the school, who openly admitted to selling weapons.
- Concerns of a hostile environment.
- Concerns of the effort level (or lack thereof) of truly assisting students with their needs at any level.
- Statements being made by Administration, such as: "I don't care if a kid lights up and does drugs right here, I am not dealing with it, I have too much work." or "We will read about that kid (Karl Pierson) in the news someday it just won't be at Arapahoe." or "He or she will drop out when they are 17 don't worry about it." or regarding security guards "If you feel threatened, just stand with your back against the wall".
- The abundance of students that have and continue to threaten to commit suicide.
- Security team was adamant something bad was going to happen at the school since Administration ignored, reprimanded and brushed off events brought to their attention. Why have security guards at all if the Administration continues to demean their opinions and ignore the facts?

When the security team documented certain activity and issued to school Administration, we were reprimanded and told not to put things in writing. We were told not to bring so many problems or issues to the Assistant Principals as they are too busy. Which makes you wonder how Arapahoe High School got ranked 7th safest school. Is it because things like drugs, and threats are missed, avoided, ignored and in many cases simply not written up and put in student's files? I have to wonder if there is a monetary value for this ranking?

Prior warnings - specific to December 13, 2013:

- Security team and teachers bring up concerns from the previous year regarding Karl Pierson.
- Death threat from Karl Pierson directly to Tracy Murphy was made.
- The security team reported to Administration that Karl was looking up guns, on his computer, in the school cafeteria. Administration came back and told the security team it was Karl's personal computer and he can do what he wants.
- Administration makes comments such as "We will read about that kid (Karl) in the news some-day, it just won't be at Arapahoe."
- Karl began drawing symbols on his math tests.

- Karl began using the word "Comrade."
- Many teachers can refer to many other incidents that were reported to Administration regarding Karl.
- The majority of things reported on Karl were never recorded in his school file.
- Day before the incident Karl was sent home due to anger outburst to another teacher.
- Security team was in the process of going outside the school Administration to bring the above and other issues to the public's attention, unfortunately that was unable to happen prior to De-cember 13th..

Day of shooting - December 13, 2013 - Chronological order of events.

- School's head janitor radios security to check a suspicious suspect going into the building when he hears first gunshot and calls 911.
- I and Christina hear 1st gunshot and immediately exit the security office. School Administration (Excluding Principal Pramenko who was not in town on this day), Rod, the other security guard, and Security Resource Officer (SRO) James Englert were eating lunch in staff lounge with the door shut not allowing them to hear the gun shots.
- 2nd, 3rd and 4th shots go off as I and Christina approach the North Hall with Christina slightly ahead of me as I am yelling into the radio "James (SRO), James, Lock Down, Lock Down!!!!!"
- Christina and I stop at the library doors to reassess where the threat was.
- As smoke appeared thickest in the library, Christina and I approached to enter the library when we encountered the shooter. The shooter pointed his gun at us and paused for us to approach. If we would have been armed we could have stopped him at this point. Administration and the SRO were still scrambling to make sense of the radio talk. They had not gotten to the PA sys-tem to make the lockdown announcement. They still could not hear the gunshots as they were still in the staff lounge.
- Christina and I retreated from the library, knowing we had no way to protect ourselves, we ran up the North Hall yelling "Run, Run, Lock Down, Lock Down!!!!"
- 5th shot goes off as we take our first right down the Cross Hall. As we were running and yelling warnings, we are making sure as many class room doors were locked as possible - teachers were still teaching and unaware of the danger.
- Christina and I hear 6th and final shot as we approach South Hall. We radio the shooter was in the library. (We now know based on the timing, the entire shooting and threat was over before the Administration and SRO got out of the staff lounge and before the official lockdown an-nouncement had even been made. Had I and Christina been an armed security guards we could have stopped the shooter, the sheriff mentioned the psychology behind a shooter is when they are found out, they end their own lives and abandon their plans. By the shooter seeing Christina and I, he paused, abandoned his plan which gave time for Tracy Murphy to get out of the building.)
- Not knowing the threat is over, we finally hear the "Lock Down" announcement over the inter-com as Christina and I run in to the South Hall encountering the PACE staff and students.
- We got the PACE students in a locked room and stayed with the PACE staff and students from possible unknown threats.
- I called 911 and described what the shooter was wearing and that he was in the library.
- We were evacuated by the Police.
- Security team finds out that prior bomb threats had been made from other students, in other situations, but no one was notified. This insinuates that things are pushed under the rug for fear of damaging the school's reputation and safety rating.
- We went to the police station and provided a written statement.

Post December 13, 2013.....

- The first time the security team was contacted by any Administration member was on Monday December 16, 2013 at a staff meeting at Ames Elementary School. Upon entering the staff meeting, with Christina, Administration approached us. When the Principal Pramenko ap-proached to give me a hug, I turned and walked away because of prior knowledge and concerns of being ignored and "dismissing" the security team concerns as being meaningless. I along with an entire school just went through a traumatic event. I was emotionally unable to support her concerns now after a tragedy happened that could have been prevented. At the staff meeting, the entire staff (including security) of Arapahoe High School was told to return on Wednesday December 18, 2013 to Arapahoe High School to collect our personal belongings.
- On Tuesday December 17th Rod, Christina and I got a phone call from Ken Moritz , the Human Resources Director and Littleton Public Schools (LPS) Security asking us to work at the district office on Wednesday December 18, 2013. They indicated we could pick our own hours and they would have someone else collect our

personal belongings from Arapahoe High School. The entire security team declined as we just had been through a traumatic event and we were not comfortable working at the district office. There was no direct communication from our direct supervisor, or anyone else for that matter, of what was going on.

- On Wednesday, December 18, 2013, Christina, Rod and I met at Arapahoe High School. We walked to Starbucks to get coffee and were going to go into the school together, get our stuff and leave. We were stopped by LPS Security and told that we cannot go into the building and we had to talk to Ken Moritz the HR Director. LPS Security walked us to a classroom right through the doors we had come out on December 13, 2013 without any regard for any of our emotions due to the horrible tragedy. Very similar to how they treat the students. Ken Moritz told us "We need your cooperation and we want to relocate you three." No other "first responders" were getting relocated or put through "phantom" policies and procedures. We were never allowed to go into the school to obtain our personal belongings but rather had to have another staff member obtain them for us. Upon asking "Why can't we go get our personal belongings?", Ken Moritz said "Administration does not want you here because of the prior concerns you had raised and their belief that we would create a hostile work environment." It was only later that we found out investigators were in the building that day. Every other staff member was allowed to go into the building, speak with investigators with the exception of Christina, Rod or myself.

- During our "detention" on December 18th, a group of teachers happened to see what was happening to Christina, Rod and myself. Kirk Bast, the Head Councilor got involved. We were able to meet with Kirk, in his office, where we discussed what was going on. In this meeting, we requested to meet with a member of the school board but LPS Security would not let them into the room. We finally got some information of who we could contact to help with the emotional trauma. After speaking with Kirk, we were then escorted off the premises with our belongings.

- Per our request, we received an email from Ken Moritz that an appointment with the Psychologist has been set. He also informed us the appointment was mandatory due to the policy for first responders. However, other first responders, who saw things did not have to go through any special process.

- We were told that we could not be cleared to come back to Arapahoe High School until we were cleared by the Psychologist and went through the same debriefing as a police officer would go through. Supposedly this is part of their policy/protocol that was in place. However, I requested a copy of the policy on 3 separate occasions and still do not have a copy of it. All other employees or first responders did not have to follow this "policy".

- We were told that we had the same rights as every other employee - this simply is not true.

- I met with the Nicoletti-Flatter Group (Psychologist) as did Christina and Rod, both individually. We were told that we had to meet with HR and get cleared for work. Rod and Christina got cleared to go back to Arapahoe High School after they met with just HR Ken Moritz, and were able to walk through the school to re-walk the steps of Dec 13th - their meetings took approximately 30 minutes. I was still waiting for my meeting with Ken Moritz to be set up.

- I sent an email to Superintendent Scott Murphy requesting a meeting. This meeting was going to be in regards to being told, that at Scott's sole discretion, he made the decision to allow a weapon's dealer back into the school violating the code of conduct. I obviously had concerns about this prior to December 13th and definitely after. I never received a response from Scott and the meeting was never set up.

- I sent an email to request a private meeting to speak with the School Board regarding the Superintendent's recent decisions, as I never got a response from Scott Murphy. The School Board responded "speak with the Superintendent Scott Murphy and he would handle it." Emails to Scott Murphy, that were previously sent, were never responded to. I did not want to meet with Scott, I wanted to meet with the School Board. They would not meet with me.

- Saturday, January 4, 2014 - in what was supposed to be the final meeting of the process to clear me to go back to Arapahoe, what should have been 30 minutes, took 3 hours. In the meeting with Ken Moritz and Clay Abla (Director of secondary education) I was told I would continue to be on paid leave but was banned from the Arapahoe High School Campus. I was told the reason I was being treated differently was because I would not hug and walked away from Principal Pramenko during the Monday, December 16th staff meeting, and at Claire Davis's Memorial Service. Both Clay Abla and Ken Moritz told me that the Administration was "scared of me" even though I just stared down the barrel of a shotgun to protect others. I was also told by Clay Abla that the District follows its code of conduct in every situation. This statement is just simply untrue. At the conclusion of this meeting, they wanted to set up another meeting for Monday January 6, 2014 so Principal Pramenko, Darrel Meredith, Clay Abla, and Ken Moritz could attend. I did not feel comfortable or safe meeting with the Administration again based on how they were treating me in this meeting. I have not met with the Administration since. There appears to be some ulterior motive. I was not pleased with what I heard in the meeting and I was being put through some random process and I needed to seek legal representation.

- The psychologist let us know that the security team's healing process is being disrupted and stopped due to the

actions of the Administration. HR knows this and continues to isolate the security team and not allow the healing process to take place. My question is why?

- The school Administration never contacted the security team other than the meetings described above with the exception to let us know of Claire's passing. It is my opinion, based on their actions, they were told not to contact us and were being coached on how to respond to us. They have not responded to our many questions or concerns. They have just now started to begin communications since I felt hopeless and sought after legal advice.

- Since Christina and I were the first responders to the incident, why did the Investigators not contact us to do a step by step walk through, in the school. In addition, they did not speak to us about our written statements given on Dec 13th even though we disclosed the prior warnings. Due to this, after Claire's public Memorial Service, I along with others prepared and sent an email to the Pastor of the service and a copy to Claire's parents voicing our concerns. The only intent of this email was to get the facts out, Claire's death not be in vain and to protect others going forward. The Pastor sent the information to the Investigators and only then were we contacted by the Police Department after Dec. 13th. We met with an Investigator and a Detective, and provided much of the same information that is contained within this document.

- In my opinion, Christina and I have been isolated and singled out based on warnings, documentation, and voicing our opinions, to Arapahoe High School Administration prior to December 13, 2013. What other reason would the school have to exclude us or not include us, from every healing event that has taken place since Claire's death?

I do hope this is a way to "spread the light" or "begging to remove the wool from everyone's eyes". There obviously is a lot more detail. As the Warrior motto is, "Warriors always take care of one another." is taken to heart and practiced by students, parents, teachers and clerical staff - I have to wonder if Administration is practicing what they are preaching? In my opinion, you do not treat people this way. I know exactly how the students feel when they are mistreated, lied to, "brushed under the rug" and purposefully degraded. One of the sayings posted around Arapahoe says, "Know what you stand for or you will fall for anything." I stand for doing what is right, honesty, integrity, hard work and going the extra mile, and treating people as humans. Not because of their level of affluence or the color of their skin..... It is appalling to hear the closed door conversations versus the projected public image. Again these facts presented can be verified by other staff members who probably know even more than I do. The fact of the matter, people are dead. The decisions that were made did not help to prevent the shooting. The well being of the school is bad and no one, not the students, teachers, or any staff member is operating at an optimal level. They constantly have to worry if something is going to get done, or are their concerns being taken seriously?

While I have pointed out what the problems are, as always, I need to be part of the solution. What can be done to help change our schools to make them safer? While we know not all violence can be stopped - IN many instances there are no warnings, at least not as apparent as the warnings that were here. However we need to make sure we do everything humanly possible to stop the violence such as occurred on December 13, 2013.

My first solution was bringing out the facts, regardless of the consequences We need to get as many parents, students, staff members and anyone else in the communities, to join and come together. We need to demand change now!

Please help in creating change for Claire's sake, Karl's sake, every person in the world's sake. It is very obvious that something is wrong. Parents should not have to wonder if their child is going to come home from school.