

Death Penalty Alternatives

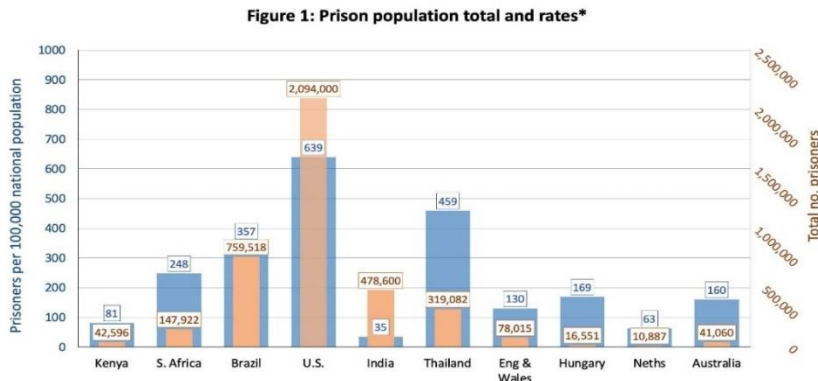
Introducing the Apologetic Life Sentence
Demonstrate [The Power of Love](#) and a Path Towards [Restorative Justice](#)
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Prologue

Is asking a person convicted of horrific bloodshed, to apologize before being served each meal every day behind bars for the rest of his or her life, too much or too little to ask? What if a loved one or family member was mercilessly killed, someone you really need? What if the culprit refuses to apologize? Can we allow this person to succumb to malnutrition? Can this be done in a practical and constitutionally correct manner in a penal institution? Can the apology dialogs be visually recorded and widely shared with social media every day? Can this be an option for states that continue to enforce the death penalty, even those with firing squads? Last year in 2023 alone, in the land of the free, we executed 24 inmates in 5 states, averaging two a month. See names, dates and places of real people on [Wikipedia](#). In addition, should all inmates serving lengthy sentences be granted the opportunity to [voluntarily apologize](#) for their offenses before other inmates and public media, if they so desire?

World Progress

Through the leadership of the United Nations and multiple NGOs over several decades, the majority of nations in the world have evolved to officially denounce the death penalty. As reported by [ECPM \(Together against the death penalty\)](#): *Just over 40 years ago, in 1981, when France abolished capital punishment, two thirds of the world's states practiced the death penalty on a regular basis. Today, this trend has been reversed: with 60% of states now abolitionist, universal abolition is becoming a reality, year by year.* Although the death penalty is gradually disappearing in the United States as well, most Americans continue to favor the death penalty, as reported by the [Pew Research Center](#). If you live in one of the [27 states currently with death penalties](#), you may already be involved in this debate, one way or another. Keep in mind that the U.S. stands out for having the highest rate of incarcerating its population in the world, according to [Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research \(ICPR\)](#), as illustrated in Figure 1. [Mississippi and Luisiana](#) have the highest incarceration rates in the country, while [Texas and California](#) incarcerate the greatest numbers.



*Most recent figures available on World Prison Brief database as of March 2021. Figures vary by jurisdiction as to the specific dates to which they refer.

To better understand the principal issues, we shall take a quick look at the general purposes of incarceration and other types of penalties for crimes, especially serious hate crimes of violence, mayhem and murder.

Purposes of Incarceration and Capital Punishment

- Public Safety is accomplished by physically restraining dangerous criminals and securely preventing them from harming other people ([except for other inmates](#)) at least while restrained behind walls and fences for the duration of their incarceration. After their release, many reoffend.
- Deterrence from forbidden behavior for the general public is promoted by an awareness of laws that promise incarceration or death in prisons. Many facilities may also be known to be uncomfortable and dangerous in many ways. For some of those sociopaths who simply live and kill with overwhelming hate or xenophobia, or those who kill for thrills, death penalties and lengthy sentences may have little deterrent value. Dark minds.
- Retribution and justice for victims may be provided when victims and survivors see that those responsible are sufficiently punished for the harm and losses they endured. For some people, justice may be perceived as an eye for an eye. A life or lengthy sentence also has substantial financial and social impacts for the inmate and his or her family, relative to the duration of the incarceration. And these losses continue subsequently for those released, often for life. Many ex-convicts [experience homelessness chronically](#) for the duration of their lives.
- Rehabilitation and penitence may occur with the time to evaluate his or her conscience while behind bars and possibly repent the crime committed. Thoughtful insight may be promoted to some extent by chaplains commonly employed by institutions as well as inspirational volunteer speakers and other therapeutic programs that may be offered.
- Aging with some amount of maturation may occur naturally simply over time, with or without programmed treatment or purposeful intent. If nothing else, perhaps a library of helpful books may be of some value for this outcome. Obviously, no way to stop [endocrine aging](#), which may by itself be an influence of value.

Death Penalty Offenses

Here we focus on murder and mayhem and crimes that typically call for capital punishment in many states. Various types of murder warrant the death penalty in different states. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled against the death penalty where the life of the victim was not taken in 2008, referenced by [CRIMES PUNISHABLE BY DEATH](#):

The death penalty in the United States is used almost exclusively for the crime of murder. Although state and federal statutes contain various capital crimes other than those involving the death of the victim, only two people were on death row for a non-murder offense (Patrick Kennedy and Richard Davis in Louisiana) when the U.S. Supreme Court addressed this issue in 2008. No one has been executed for such a crime since the death penalty was re-instated in 1976.

Prosecution Penalty Options

In the Federal criminal process, the death penalty can only be imposed on defendants convicted of capital offenses – such as murder, treason, genocide, or the killing or kidnapping of a Congressman, the President, or a Supreme Court justice. Unlike other punishments, a jury must decide whether to impose the death penalty. Many states have stopped using the death penalty, though the federal government may still use it. The Supreme Court has found that imposing the death penalty on those under age 18 at the time of the crime or the intellectually disabled to be “cruel and unusual punishment” under the United States Constitution ([Justice.gov](#)).

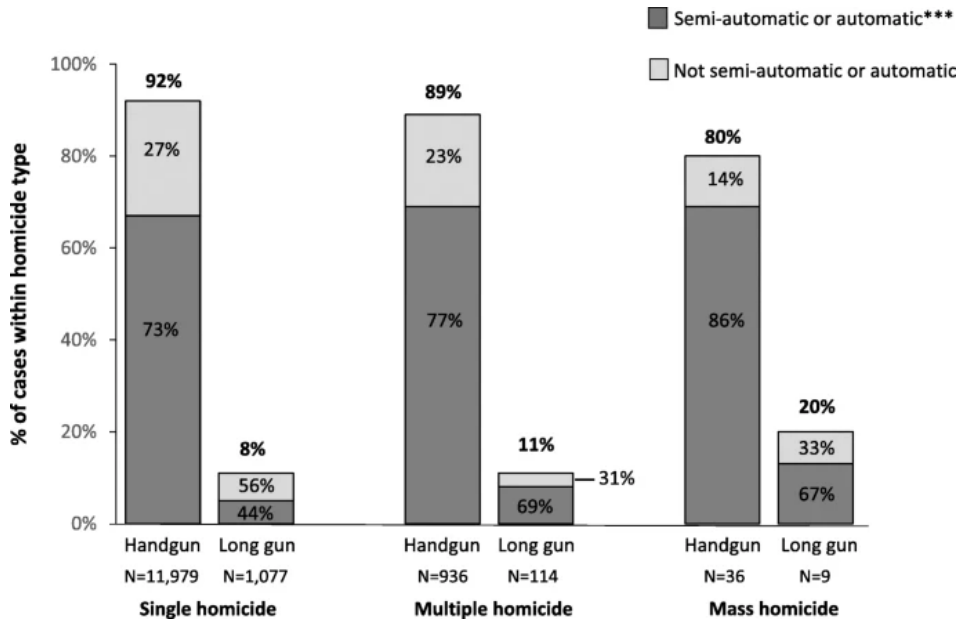
At the state level, a death sentence may only be imposed by a jury in unanimous agreement. But in two recent cases, defendants faced the possibility of a death sentence despite the objections of jurors. More details about these exceptions in Missouri and Florida are described in [Death Penalty Information Center News](#).

Victim Counts per Gun Types

As horrific as mass murders are, more victims are killed each year by guns with small numbers of victims, or only one. This chart, Figure 2, displays the data including the type of gun used. As stated by the [authors](#): *The purpose of this analysis is to examine the characteristics of mass, multiple, and single homicides to help identify prevention points that may lead to a reduction in different types of homicides.*

Examining differences between mass, multiple, and single-victim homicides to inform prevention: findings from the National Violent Death Reporting System

Figure 2: Victims Per Gun Type Comparison



Clearly we can see that handguns greatly outnumber long guns, however over 70% of the handguns are semi-automatic or automatic.

According to [Statistica](#), 100 (68%) of the mass shootings in the United States between 1982 and October 2023 involved weapons which were obtained legally; a clear majority. Only 16 (11%) incidents involved guns that were obtained illegally. Another 32 (22%) were of unknown legality, bringing the total to 148.

Killer Weapon Types

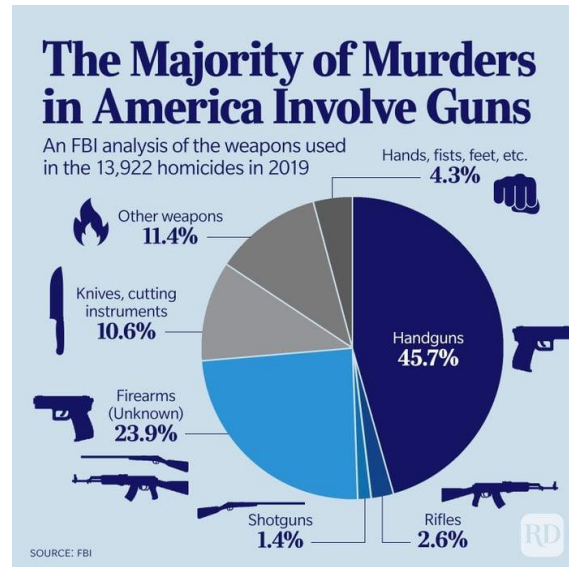
According to [Reason.com](#): The largest and most comprehensive survey of American gun owners ever conducted suggests that they use firearms in self-defense about 1.7 million times a year. It also confirms that AR-15-style rifles and magazines that hold more than 10 rounds, frequent targets of gun control legislation, are in common use for lawful purposes, which the Supreme Court has said is the test for arms covered by the Second Amendment.

The online survey, which was conducted by Centiment in February and March of 2021, was based on a representative sample of about 54,000 adults, 16,708 of whom were gun owners. Georgetown University political economist William English, who commissioned the survey as part of a book project, presents its major findings in a recent paper available on the Social Science Research Network.

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Now, to be fair to gun advocates, let's also take a look at other types of weapons used for murder in 2019. As stated by [Reader's Digest](#): *Though handguns remain the most common type of weapon used in non-mass shootings, accounting for 62% of homicides in 2019, AR-15 and similar semi-automatic weapons cause more deaths more quickly than other types of firearms and were used in the deadliest of America's mass shootings, including in Las Vegas (58 people killed), Orlando (49 people killed), Newtown, Connecticut (27 people killed, mostly children) and Uvalde, Texas (21 people, including 19 children, ages 10 and 11).*

All told, firearms are used in about three-fourths of all homicides, while stabbings cause about one in 10 murders, beatings without weapons cause under 5% and other murders using blunt force weapons, poisonings, fires and explosions make up just over 10%, as shown below.



In one [NIH funded study](#): We observed a robust correlation between higher levels of gun ownership and higher firearm homicide rates. Although we could not determine causation, we found that states with higher rates of gun ownership had disproportionately large numbers of deaths from firearm-related homicides

Alternatives to Capital Punishment

Common alternatives to the death penalty are described by Death Penalty Information Center ([DPIC](#)) to include a sentence of life without parole (LWOP). *Some victims' families prefer LWOP to the uncertainty of securing a death sentence and the likelihood of many years of appeals before an execution would occur.* [The Sentencing Project](#) points out that: *Before America's era of mass incarceration took hold in the early 1970s, the number of individuals in prison was less than 200,000. Today, it's 1.4 million; and more than 200,000 people are serving life sentences – one out of every seven in prison. More people are sentenced to life in prison in America than there were people in prison serving any sentence in 1970.*

According to [Penal Reform](#), *The death penalty represents an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity. It cannot be reversed, and as criminal justice systems are open to error and discrimination, there is always a risk of innocent people being killed. The death penalty has never been reliably shown to deter criminal behavior more effectively than other punishments.* Here, we also offer some ideas for an innovative variation of the life sentence - LWOP that

promises to possibly be more effective in specific ways. These ideas include the utilization of social media tools for greater impact.

Your Opinion

What you think, what you say, how you vote and your involvement in related projects can be a powerful force. Perhaps you are a victim or a survivor of a serious crime. Your faith or ethical beliefs may push and pull you in different directions. Maybe there is room for new alternatives to consider? Here we present a novel alternative that may be important for two reasons. One may be a way to avoid inhumane extremes while also adding serious measures of retribution and likely deterrence. Another may be to simply open up the discussion in more creative ways. Your ideas may outperform those ever considered before. Let's open the discussion.

Keep in mind that laws and constitutions are made, changed and enforced by people like you and me. We also posit that a democratic process for legislating criminal laws can also lead to subsequent re-evaluations of consequences that were not originally anticipated. Change happens. The best we can do is try to understand what works, what doesn't work, and why. New resources, tools, social media and advances can create both opportunities and problems in different ways. What do you think of these ideas below? Do you have a better idea?

Apologetic Life Sentence (ALS)

As an alternative to death sentences, a life sentence with severe ALS enhancements may be considered for hate crimes, mayhem, mass murders and other capital crimes, for example. The intent is to avoid brutal, inhumane violence to punish and kill the convicted. ALS, as proposed herein, will execute public humiliation and behavioral requirements, possible punishment by nutrition denial, and harsh consequences that may lead to death by starvation, if the person persists in refusing to apologize. A key goal is deterrence with daily public awareness and likely discussion for each subject so sentenced. A sense of retribution will be felt by the survivors and families of victims who likely miss their loved ones on a daily basis, as well. Of course, the inmate's family may also feel the pain or comfort as the inmate fares in these conditions. More details, reasoning, analysis and precautions, to follow.

Public Humiliation

As a measure of humiliation, an apology for hating or disrespecting and killing others will be required of the perpetrator before being served each meal every day. For example, the person may be asked "Do you wish to eat?". If the person replies in the affirmative, he or she will then be asked "Do you apologize for hating or disrespecting and Killing others?" The required reply may simply be "Yes, I apologize for hating or disrespecting and killing others". Of course, the exact wording and procedures for the adopted law should be carefully composed by thoughtful legislators and comply with state and federal laws and constitutions. Specific apology wording may also be determined by the judge and jury in each case. Prosecutors may also propose specific apology wording along with other enhancements.

Each meal dialog between custodian and subject will be monitored on camera and recorded in perpetuity. This recording only needs to include the dialog for the apology, not any subsequent talk, or the food service. *Each dialog video log episode will be readily published to the public and social media within the hour.* Justice to be publicly seen and virtually experienced by all. No mysteries. If necessary, any vulgarities or obscenities will need to be obscured for the public view. Responsible parties and lawyers will have full access to raw, unedited tapes day by day. This will be of critical importance especially if the subject repeatedly refuses to apologize or simply turns down the offer for each meal in a frequent or consistent pattern.

Hidden message coding by the inmate should also be watched for in adlib wording, facial expressions, such as winking an eye, or other bodily movements or gestures. It may be safer to ask the subject to be seated before the dialog and focus the camera tight to his face. No adlib wording should be allowed other than the exact wording defined in the sentencing. This may be more critical if the subject is allowed to mix with other inmates. A voice three times a day may

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be of great value to the subject or other inmates. If hidden messaging is discovered, solitary confinement and other restrictions may be imposed. The type of messaging discovered may inform more secure dialog procedures. Keep an eye on multi-session and multi-day patterns, as well. *Winking an eye may also invalidate the apology and require a new apology with no winking, if the person is to be fed this meal. Sighing and eye-rolling may also be of concern.*

Fasting - Forced Feeding

Only with the correct answer will the meal be served. However, any mistake in wording can easily be corrected within the dialog with no consequence. This is the “Apologetic Life Sentence” (ALS). If the person simply refuses to apologize, he-she will be denied the meal for that time of day. If the refusal becomes a pattern, the inmate will ultimately be allowed to suffer and succumb to malnutrition. *Forced feeding will not be an option as proposed and may itself be an inhumane punishment. Each ALS subject should be carefully watched as would any inmate with a high risk of suicide.*

Disrespectful Dialog

It may also be necessary to add conditional terms for cases where the inmate speaks of disrespectful hate or insults for others during the meal dialog, causing the apology to be invalidated, and the meal to be denied for this part of the day. Lesson: *If you wish to eat, you have to behave yourself and cooperate. Learn to be civil at least for the moment. You can hate with vocal growls and howls later and off camera, if you must. **Although we don't necessarily expect heartfelt sincerity, we absolutely demand respect! Respect for the victims. Respect for the survivors.***

Some subjects may wish to chatter or argue about this requirement of apologizing. If in isolation, some may just wish to chat with just another human being. That's to be expected. The best way to handle this may be for the custodian to say: *I don't have time to chat. Just answer briefly “Yes or No” for whether you wish to eat and, if yes, the correct wording of the apology. Else, I'm gone for now.*

On Appeal

Some convicts may be currently in the process of appealing their convictions. Others may actually be innocent or possibly not ready to admit guilt even after conviction. For such cases, the inmate may be permitted to add a disclaimer after the apology, such as “*My apology does not establish prejudice or an admission of guilt for any alleged crime.*” He or she still needs to apologize before the disclaimer statement, however, in order to be served.

Restorative Justice

The apology and admission of responsibility for murder, if sincere, may be seen as a step towards [Restorative Justice](#). Both survivors and the community may receive a message of respect even though they know the apology is a requirement for a meal behind bars for life, as proposed herein. This is not to preclude the possibility of more holistic involvement for all parties involved, if so disposed, including [families of the offender](#). According to [Harvard Magazine](#), *To date, 45 states have passed laws permitting the use of restorative justice in at least some criminal cases. Programs typically function in one of three ways: as a form of diversion from the criminal process, allowing offenders—especially young or first-time offenders—to avoid charges and a conviction; as a form of alternative sentencing; or, in more serious cases, as a way to reduce a criminal sentence.* The latter may optimistically help some convicted of murder and the survivors find a better path, such as in the case described in the Harvard Magazine linked above.

Solitary Confinement & LWOP Enhancements

An enhancement of regular or periodic solitary confinement will also be allowed as an option for further punitive value. No possibility of parole, LWOP, may also be standard for some of these horrific crimes. The jury or judge may be responsible for evaluating the sentencing of these enhancements. They may also be responsible for the apology wording in each case.

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People in solitary are typically allowed to leave their cells only to shower and for one hour of recreation and are separated during both from the general prison population (Andreea Matei, 2022). Some type of partial isolation may be needed to prevent the subject from acquiring any nutrients from sources with contraband food. A subject may wish to eat, but may be stubborn about the apology. There may be some ways to allow an ALS subject to mix with others in small groups with tight supervision. However, the apology dialog and food service for this subject should be conducted in a private and secure location. If the subject also has been sentenced to solitary confinement as an enhancement, the cell has to be adequate for the dialog, camera surveillance and food service.

It is not expected that a routine of apologizing before each meal will be fraught with tension every day for everyone with ALS enhancements. Most commonly, the inmate and correctional staff will smile and exercise this ritual with a little humor. Concierge room service three times a day is actually quite a privilege.

Penitence & Counseling

Rehabilitation and redemption are not necessarily anticipated with these alternative harsh sentences, but we can always hope for a modicum of penitence over time, and offer counseling if appropriate, especially for those who go on a hunger strike. For cases on appeal, the inmate is likely to cooperate, trying to keep healthy. Those in isolation may be free from having to admit to other inmates that they chose to apologize. Some of their [prison gang buddies](#) may be critical. If allowed to mix, the message to the greater prison network may sway in different directions. Perhaps some fellow inmates will empathize and agree with the apology, without questioning their gang preferences. Of course if the murder victim or victims were gang members, there could be greater issues. Is apologizing for hating and killing others, just for a meal, a sign of redemption? No. Is it humiliating especially on social media? Yes. Think of it as a type of moderate *ego lesson or admonishment*. Three times a day. Day by day. A serious lesson. But it also gives the subject the opportunity to more sincerely apologize from his or her heart. Some day. Shared with the world.

Losers & Suicide by Cop

Possibly the most dangerous people out there are those who see themselves as born to be losers. Some may be technically sociopathic or hallucinating schizophrenics. Others may possibly be bipolar or autistic. The greater number may have originally been normal kids who were seriously abused or neglected by family and others in their early years. In my work as a probation officer at Juvenile Hall in Los Angeles, just out of college, I observed some kids with burn scars from their parents' cigarettes, and other abuses. Helpless in a correctional institution. Some parents would also report their children as runaways for detention. One boy I saw was admitted to Juvenile Hall even at the age of 6. Very sad. I heard him crying in the shower room. Said he never took a shower before. I had to hold back my tears.

Opposed to apologizing, some of these demonic souls may want to see themselves publicly boasting their hate with pride and refusing to apologize in front of all media. Tactically, in planning their bloodshed, a few may try to refrain from such confrontations that are likely to bring them down before their day in court. Others may also be eager to announce their sadistic missions with dark words in sympathetic social media, possibly tipping off an alert, if anyone is watching.

Hateful Words Aim Guns

Amidst stress, fear and chronic hate identity in various communities, assault weapons are sitting at the ready, awaiting satisfactory targets. From the mouths of political and religious leaders, mobsters in the streets, demeaning names for enemies and rivals exchanged with hostility. Suggestions beget well-defined targets. Whose finger on the trigger? Why so many assault weapons? Too many targets? Hate crimes aplenty. Many motives for mass and small number murders.

[Crisis politics](#): Is this our chosen way of democratic politics? No one responsible? Just disseminate the guns and vitriol as seeds of violence. Guns on one side, immigrants or political opponents on the other. Pandemics become endemic. Climate change. Mass migrations. January 6 riots. The [Big Lie](#).

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Government budget deadlines. Does the gun lobby own our legislators? A glossy charm to barter for any other worthwhile project? If not really a crisis, create a delusion, foster more support, suggest more targets. Sound familiar?

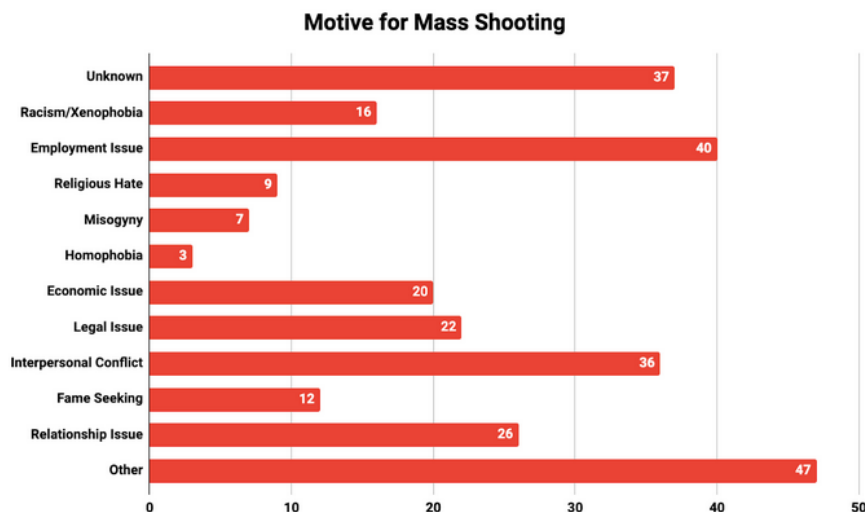
Something has to give, either by restraining spiteful tongues (and their conveyance in the media) or managing the careless ease of buying guns, or both. No court on earth can resurrect the dead. Make the dirty tongues responsible, if nothing else!! Fewer targets. *Are we creating a target-happy society?* Death and lengthy or life sentences are left to compete against unending images of Armageddon carelessly flashed in social media by politicians to promote their cynical agendas. A very costly, short-sighted ploy, even for the wealthy (except for the gun-weapons industries?). *What will some people do for political power as an end in itself?*

Motive For Mass Shooting

But, we know that deliberate racial or xenophobic hate are not the only motives for mass killings. In fact most mass killings have many different motives, as shown below, from [The Violence Project 2021](#). Adding the motive counts of Racism/Xenophobia (16), Religious Hate (9), Misogyny (7) and Homophobia (3) together gives us a subtotal of 35 for hating out of a total for all motives we count on the chart of 275, about 13%, with 37 unknown. Fame seeking (12) may loosely fit into a hateful motive, as well.

Various motive types may inform other possible programs of deterrence, as well as the proposed ALS sentencing with variations in the apology wording. Relationship Issues (26), especially within the family, may require wording more specific to the crime, for example. For cases where hate is not apparent, the word ‘disrespecting’ or some other term may replace the word ‘hating’, in the apology, depending on the case specifics. For example: *I apologize for disrespecting and killing others (or specific names).*

To understand a motive for *killing without hate*, let’s remind ourselves that military and police are trained to kill for other purposes. More than 80 of the defendants charged in relation to the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol have ties to the U.S. military — most of those with a military background were veterans, according to [CBS News](#). Many active-duty U.S. military members and veterans (MIL/VETs) are members of outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs), which have



Data from The Violence Project's Mass Shooter Database
<https://www.theviolenceproject.org/mass-shooter-database/>

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documented histories of violence and criminal activity, as reported by [Homeland Security Affairs](#). [Street gangs kill over territorial claims](#) and illicit drug marketing.

Hunters calmly kill animals for sport, sometimes to eat, sometimes to brag about the kill with a trophy. Moving targets are more fun than shooting ranges. [Digital killing games](#). Just targets. Target happy! *Is it even sporty to hunt? Fowl play to kill?* Our poultry processing is clearly more efficient and humane than messy shotgun pellets. Maybe some of these hunter-snipers would enjoy a more competitive shooting sport such as paintball tournaments, in order to demonstrate their accuracy and valor? If we institutionally train people to kill, is there any way to untrain them when their service ends? Quell their urge for more targets? Help them with anxiety from PTSD?

With so many different motives apparent, no single solution is sufficient. Our government institutions and policies are currently [increasing resources for mental health services availability](#). Our systems of law enforcement and justice may help in various ways. Some have already begun to enhance programs and resources for [inmate rehabilitation](#).

More optimistically, can we hope that at least some social media discussion will focus on hate language, trolls, demeaning names and such that by themselves become a factor of culpability within families and political jargon. Public debate. *Words kill.*

The Power of Love

You cannot treat people like dirt and expect them to behave like royalty, even if they are. A uniform stains the office you represent. Can our leaders try to clean their mouths from hate and demeaning names? They may be surprised to see that their followers can also learn to become civil, with thoughtful leadership. Is it too much to ask for a predominantly Christian government, such as ours, to look and talk like Christian teaching? *And not like the [terroristic medieval Crusaders](#)?* Or [witch hunters](#) of times past? [Autocracies blessed by God](#)? My God or your God? My Book or your Book? Even Pope Francis recently had the moral courage to apologize for the [Doctrine of Discovery](#) which contributed to colonization in the Americas and Africa, and the decimation of millions of indigenous peoples. This tragedy includes the [hunting of indigenous people](#) in California for bounties. Separation of church and state helps to temper hate and keep undemocratic agendas in check. Respect all faiths and those who prefer independent ethical reasoning and values. The golden rule (*Do unto others...*) Sounds reasonable to me. For both genders, et al. We don't worship with the constitution, nor does any holy book dictate our laws.

Be real. It's better to present a good example of people respecting people with their best intentions. Respect other faiths as you wish yours to be respected. Simple. Already inscribed in our original constitution. For good reasons. It's a small, small world. Getting smaller every year. Instant contact everywhere, with words, images and sounds.

Some races, cultures or nations may have superior resources, weaponry, scholars or wealth from time to time. But that edge of superiority does not allow one group to stomp on the inherent rights and interests of any less accomplished. Colonialism is a sin of the past. Sorry if that offends you. In the past, many religions were also largely political, some theocratic. Many berated the talents and rights of women, and some still do.

Let's not go backwards to medieval times. Especially with assault rifles and nuclear weapons at the ready. Let's argue important values intelligently and respectfully without quoting the authority of some words in some book, other than the constitution, our governing book, democratically adopted, **of the people – for the people**. Lower the temperature.

If you truly believe your culture is superior in some way, demonstrate your magnanimity by neutralizing any threats or competition with overwhelming love. [The power of love](#). That's a true sign of grace for any chosen people. Often [miscredited](#): ***I destroy my enemies when I make them my friends.*** Hate and violence are simply stupid and unsustainable. This type of mindlessness has for centuries been shared by many countries including ours, way too

many. Echoes of colonialism can still be heard in Palestine and [many other parts](#). No white gloves. But peace and mindful, democratic order remain our goals. No hunting season for humans of any class. Never. Nowhere. ***No guns, no gallows, nor any lethal weapons, devices or substances of any type can execute justice! Let's not make America gruesome again!***

Your Community

If you are already involved in a related advocacy group, your community may help lead us to a better direction than directly killing killers. We don't want to be just one gang member killing another gang member. Let them kill themselves by suicidal choices, if they so desire. We hope that this direction will help to teach that too much justice must be tempered. We need to mitigate the darkness of increasing hate and disrespect in popular culture today. All life must be respected, even amongst the worst offenders and least among us. Civility begins at home, or so it should. Social networks can also learn by witnessing apologies by some of the most violent criminals in the media. We all may need to learn how to apologize with respect. No one is perfect.

Modern societies did not invent wars, murder, rape, robbery or slavery. These antisocial behaviors have been among us for thousands if not millions of years. Individuals and tribes with sometimes competitive situations. Only our weapons and gods have changed. Tribal gangs. The legacy we inherit, an unsolved balance of love, hate and justice. Stories of remarkable love and forgiveness are also in our books. Today the legal right to kill rests mostly with governmental military and institutions of justice and corrections. However, a few religions also still claim a right to wage holy wars. Nowadays, our digital communications tools can magnify both respect and hate. Insults hurt. Apologies matter.

Our proposed prisoner apology practice will possibly give us public stories of both the dark side of humanity and possibly some redemptions from hate. Mutual respect is the essential base for a civil society. Love is beautiful but not essential in all relations. Hate, disrespect and violence are antisocial and unsustainable. Maybe some murderers will be motivated to write their own life stories of mistakes and repent. Maybe others will learn how to accept an apology, for what it's worth? Can we learn to dislike respectfully? Can we show some grace in our debates? In those states that are not yet ready to abolish the death penalty, this may serve as an acceptable alternative for sensitive survivors and prosecutors. Maybe save a few lives, as well as the costs of endless appeals. *Some states still have [firing squads](#) for executions!* Imagine your role as a juror in a case where the prosecution advocates for the death sentence. Would you prefer to have other choices?

The human heart can be an overwhelming magnet, strong enough to bring down gallows and crucifixes of hate and othering, echoes of lynching. Let us end mindless executions with an implosion of love and empathy. ***Do we need an America Death Penalty Implosion Day? Enough already!*** Each state has its own priorities and politics. There are also 40 prisoners on [death row in federal prisons](#). Adopting the ALS alternative for our federal justice system would not only save lives, but may also provide a functional model of use for the states, and other countries, as well.

Voluntary Public Apologies

Voluntary apologies have long been an important factor for parole boards in rating the risk of reoffending. Hearings are held to evaluate the contrition of each inmate brought before the board, and other related factors. Controversies exist regarding the [fairness of parole hearings](#), especially for those who deny their guilt. One thing we can do now is to give any inmate who in good conscience is ready to apologize a public platform before other inmates, community members and news reporters including social media.

Let the public evaluate and determine the sincerity of each apology for themselves. Let the involved victims and survivors also witness through the media and make their own judgements. Parole board members may also view these public events and the commentary on social media. Inmates with no possibility of parole in their sentence may possibly benefit by simply relieving their feelings of guilt to some degree with a sincere apology. Prisons with chapels and

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chaplains may find a weekly religious service a good time and place to encourage participants to share their stories with other inmates, and to apologize if appropriate. Prisoners behind walls should be seen as real people who may or may not deserve another chance for freedom. Those with death sentences for capital crimes may plead for protection from inhumane executions.

There are also a number of choral hymns for [repentance](#) that may be inspirational and motivate a gathering of inmates to express their sorrow. Here the [Calvin Prison Initiative Choir](#) sings Amazing Grace. Choral singing in prisons can help incarcerated individuals identify as returning citizens instead of felons, as documented by [Mary L. Cohen](#). Cohen, M. L. (2019). Choral Singing in Prisons: Evidence-Based Activities to Support Returning Citizens. *The Prison Journal*, 99(4_suppl), 106S-117S. To promote abolishing the death penalty and save their lives, one choir on death row in [Uganda](#) sings ***“Please, please, please We are sorry...”***. Advocates for death penalty alternatives in your state may look into this model as another dramatic tool. Chaplains may also get involved. Save souls **and lives**.

*On any given day, roughly 7 million people – about one in every 31 people – are under the supervision of the corrections system, either locked up or probation or parole, according to the [Macarthur Justice Center](#). More transparency in our practice of parole hearings will go a long way towards better accountability and justice. This may also help to break the ice for using social media and other innovative moral rehabilitation programs. Public media may help to enlighten the conscience of those concerned about improving justice and penitence for all communities. As reported by [Uncommon Law](#), *Prior research has shown that between 62% and 87% of incarcerated adult males have experienced traumatic events at some point in their lifetime, and the rate is even higher for women and those who identify as transgender. As stated by the [ACLU](#), Parole boards rarely release people, even when a person has support from prison staff, the community, and the judge who sentenced them. And when parole is denied, a person may wait more than a decade for another chance at freedom.**

Your Move?

A lot of important research and analysis on related topics have been documented and presented in very accessible ways. *Some of these resources also reach out for your involvement and support.* It’s amazing to see the vast number of people and devoted efforts that have already been deployed around the world to understand the complex problems and potential solutions to reducing serious crimes and also improving our institutions of justice and law enforcement in a more effective and humane manner. Many states have special advocacy groups. We list only a few of them below, as well as a few national and international resources.

These references are not directly affiliated with this [author or publisher](#) and are presented only for your information. We are all learning and challenging these questions together. If you like some of these ideas, please share them with others. *What’s your move? Know any survivors who may benefit from this information? If your governor or other elected representatives [already support death penalty alternatives](#) or [restorative justice](#), show your support and share these ideas. Show and share!*

HELPFUL RESOURCES



Death Penalty Alternatives



