

# Letter: Names of mass murderers should not be published

*Publisher's note: The following letter is reprinted with permission. A clarification, though, the government does not dictate what names are published. That is up to individual media outlets. There are rules that govern what information law enforcement gives to the media.*

Mr. President, Senators, and Congressman;

In the light of last Friday's tragedy I am writing with a suggestion that might stop at least a fraction of these future events from occurring.

It seems to me that at least some of these heinous acts committed by misguided individuals are motivated by the fact that their names will outlive them in terms of the notoriety accorded them in the media and history.

I am a firm believer in the rights of a free press and would never condone its suppression, but could not the reporting and recording of these tragic events be equally well covered without the inclusion of the perpetrators name(s). Using the name(s) of the responsible party creates an example or martyr for other misguided individuals whose own lives are so miserable and worthless to themselves, that the thought of being remembered for their deeds provides, value and motivation over the worth of their own life and the lives of others. Engendering a twisted desire among these individuals to exceed previous acts thus ensuring their place in the annuals of depravity.

The courts and lawgivers of our nation prevent the publishing of the names of innocent individuals to protect them. Would

not the prevention of publishing the names of the heinous individuals who commit these acts be a protection of the innocents also?

I believe that in the time of these ever-increasing events and the great National sadness they cause, the public would be served best by the coverage of the event, without the direct identification and unintentional promotion of the responsible individual(s).

Thank you for your time and consideration of these ideas.

**John W. Runnels, South Lake Tahoe**