

7:25 P.M.

FACILITATOR (TO P1): So do you believe that the problem is intentionally caused by a hidden government agenda? Please clarify what you mean here.

P1: Do I think that this is intended? Well, I believe that since the 1960s that the generation that grew up smoking pot and dropping acid have waited for their time in power. Once in power, they started legitimizing all of the stuff that happened in the 1960s.

P5: Wow, a conspiracy. Pretty soon we are going to be talking about the grassy knoll and the Kennedy assassination. Let's call in one of the CSI teams. Way to get the attention off the NRA.

P8: Whatever happened to individual responsibility in this country? A kid goes nuts and shoots some fellow students and suddenly it is somebody else's fault. Give me a break! I say it is the families' and the kids' fault.

7:28 P.M.

FACILITATOR: Okay, I think we need to get back on subject here. What is the cause of these school shootings?

P7: What we haven't talked about is the economy today. Many years ago my parents only needed to work 40 hours a week. That is, my dad worked and my mom stayed at home and took care of the kids. Dad had all but the 40 hours to spend with us. Today, I work, my husband works, and it is not just 40 hours for each of us. I get home and there are phone calls to make, texts to respond to, emails to answer, etc. In addition, I am tired of single moms getting blamed. I remember reading about Columbine all those years ago and those two kids in Littleton both grew up in two-parent households and with stay-at-home mothers.

P1: That is what you feminists wanted. Maybe the intention of feminism was to give women freedom but the consequences have been family decay and violence.

P7: I work out of economic necessity. We live from paycheck to paycheck. It doesn't have a lot to do with feminism.

P4: What does this have to do with school shootings?

P7: This is where I think the shootings are important to understand. Maybe we need to look at who these kids are. Do their parents work all the time or does the stress of work lead to divorce?

P8: Yeah, but what can the government do?

P7: How about mandated governmental child care on the work site? How about raising the minimum wage to a living wage so we can make ends meet?

P6: How about not raising my taxes to pay for all of these social programs? This issue only affects people who have children go to school where there is violence. I feel bad for them but why should my tax dollars be used to help a few? I don't buy all of this talk about larger interests and meanings being at play. It doesn't affect me.

P2: As American citizens, we all have an interest in this. Something must be done; the shootings are not just isolated events. They are events that are happening in our schools and are important to all of us. We are all paying the price of this violence.

P5: I think the cause is really complex and that maybe all of us are somewhat right. It is like this huge complex system of values, laws, politics, culture, media, and it all interacts and in some ways are outside of our control. But easy access to guns and the glorification of guns is what I am concerned about. Government outlaws dope. Why not outlaw guns? Some guns might be okay but let's get real here. I know it is true that in the states with more gun restrictions the death rate from guns goes down, not up (that includes suicides) and I think it worked well in Australia too.

P1: Once you start banning some guns, all will be banned—and this is America, my friend. If you want to go down under, go ahead.

P6: I do think that people should be more responsible with their guns. Keep them locked up and stuff.

(continued)