Chapter III.
REVISED TIMELINE OF EVENTS

The modifications to this chapter resulted primarily from additional information identified and made available since the original Report was published.

In constructing both the original and the revised timelines, care was taken to confirm the dates and times through multiple sources where possible. However, even with the newly available information, some of the times provided are approximate, because not every message, phone call and event was time-stamped. In a few cases where no documentation existed it was necessary to rely on individuals’ best recollections of times. Many of the interviews for the original timeline were conducted in the weeks immediately after the shootings. Some individuals reported dates and times as they knew them to be true at that time; however, in a few cases they were misinformed. The revised timeline corrects those errors and adds more details.

The original wording of the timeline generally was preserved except where new information required a change or addition.

The following timeline provides highlights of the events leading up to the tragedy on April 16, 2007 the actions taken on April 16, and some subsequent actions. The time scale switches from years to months to days and even to minutes as appropriate. The timeline is an overview and composite of major events, with additional facts and details discussed in the respective chapters. Therefore, the timeline does not include all the details covered later in the chapters, but, rather, is intended to serve as a framework for the reader. The timeline and the Report begin with Seung Hui Cho’s childhood and end with Governor Kaine’s declaration of a day of mourning, April 20, 2007.

The information here was drawn from numerous interviews, written sources, and briefings. The Cho family and Seung Hui Cho’s school administrators, counselors, teachers, and medical and school records are the prime sources for his history prior to attending Virginia Tech.

Information obtained about his Virginia Tech years before the shootings came from interviews with faculty, counselors, administrators, police, courts, psychological evaluators, suitemates, and others. The panel also had access to many Virginia Tech, medical, and court records and to e-mails and other written materials involving Cho.

The timeline for the events of April 16 relied primarily on Virginia Tech Police Department (VTPD) and Virginia State Police (VSP) reports and interviews, supplemented by interviews with survivors, Virginia Tech officials, emergency medical responders, hospitals, state officials and others.

The information on the aftermath drew on medical examiner records, interviews with families and other sources.

Each aspect of the timeline is discussed further in the following chapters, with an evaluation as well as narration of events.

PRE-INCIDENTS: CHO’S HISTORY

1986–2000

1984 Seung Hui Cho is born to a family living in a small two-room apartment in Seoul, South Korea. He is an inordinately shy, quiet child, but no problem to his family. He has serious health problems from 9 months to 3 years old, is frail, and after unpleasant medical procedures does not want to be touched.

1992 Cho’s family emigrates to Maryland when he is 8 years old.
CHAPTER III. REVISED TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1993
The Cho family moves to Fairfax County, Virginia, when he is 9 years old. They work long hours in a dry-cleaning business.

1997
Seung Hui in the 6th grade continues to be very withdrawn. Teachers meet with his parents about this behavior. In the summer before he enters 7th grade, he begins receiving counseling at the Center for Multicultural Human Services to address his shy, introverted nature, which is diagnosed as “selective mutism.” Parents try to socialize him more by encouraging extracurricular activities and friends, but he remains withdrawn.

1999
During the 8th grade, one of Cho’s writings for a teacher depicts suicidal and homicidal ideations. The paper references and celebrates the Columbine shootings in April of this year. The school requests that his parents ask a counselor to intervene, which leads to a psychiatric evaluation at the Multicultural Center for Human Services. He is prescribed antidepressant medication. He responds well and is taken off the medication approximately one year later.

2000–2003 (High School)

Fall 2000
Cho starts Westfield High School in Fairfax County as a sophomore, after attending another high school in Centreville for a year. After review by the “local screening committee,” he is diagnosed as having an emotional disability and is enrolled in an Individual Educational Program (IEP) to deal with his shyness and lack of responsiveness in a classroom setting. Art therapy (his selective mutism rules out talk therapy as an effective treatment mode) continues with the Multicultural Center for Human Services through his junior year. He has no behavior problems, keeps his appointments, and makes no threats. He gets good grades and adjusts reasonably to the school environment. The guidance office in the school believes he has been academically successful and the therapist notes he has made limited progress in communicating.

June 2003
Cho graduates from Westfield High School with a 3.5 GPA in the Honors Program. He decides to attend Virginia Tech against the advice of his parents and counselors, who think that it is too large a school for him and that he will not receive adequate individual attention. He is given the name of a contact at the high school if he needs help in college, but never avails himself of it.

2003–2004 (Virginia Tech)

August 2003
Cho enters Virginia Tech as a business information systems major. Little attention is drawn to him during his freshman year. He has a difficult time with his roommate over neatness issues and changes rooms. His parents make weekly trips to visit him. His grades are good. He does not see a counselor at school or home. He is excited about college.

Fall 2004
Cho begins his sophomore year. Cho moves off campus to room with a senior who is rarely at home. Cho complains of mites in the apartment, but doctors tell him it is acne and prescribe minocycline. He becomes interested in writing. His grades begin to slip so he decides he will switch his major to English beginning his junior year. His sister notes a growing passion for writing over the winter break, though he is secretive about its content. Cho submits a book idea to a publishing house.

2005 (Virginia Tech)

Spring 2005
Cho requests a change of major to English. The idea for a book sent to a New York publishing house is rejected. This seems to depress him, according to his family. He still sees no counselor at school or
home, and exhibits no behavioral problems other than his quietness.

Fall 2005  Cho starts his junior year and moves back into the dorms. Serious problems begin to surface. His sister notes that he is writing less at home, is less enthusiastic, and wonders if the publisher’s rejection letter curbed his enthusiasm for writing. At school, Cho is taken to some parties by his suitemates at the start of the semester. On one such occasion he stabs at the carpet in student Margaret Bowman’s room with a knife, in the presence of his suitemates.

October 15  English Professor Nikki Giovanni writes a letter to Cho expressing her concern about his behavior in her class and about violence in his writing. She offers to help get him into another class.

Professor Giovanni asks department chair Dr. Lucinda Roy to remove Cho from her class.

October 18  Dr. Roy informs Mary Ann Lewis, Associate Dean of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, and others that Cho read a violent and upsetting “poem” in Professor Giovanni’s class that day, and that her students said Cho had been surreptitiously taking photos of them. Dr. Roy also says she has contacted Tom Brown (Dean of Student Affairs), Zenobia Hikes (Vice President of Student Affairs), Detective George Jackson at Virginia Tech Police Department (VTPD), and Dr. Robert Miller at the Cook Counseling Center (CCC), to report the incident and seek advice. Tom Brown advises Dr. Roy she can remove Cho from Professor Giovanni’s class as long as a viable alternative is offered.

CCC advises that though the “poem” is disturbing, there is no specific threat. They suggest that Cho be referred to the CCC. Frances Keene (Director of Judicial Affairs) and Tom Brown both write to Dr. Roy indicating their concurrence with this plan. Brown tells Dr. Roy to advise Cho that any future similar behavior will be referred [to Judicial Affairs].

October 19  Dr. Roy and Cheryl Ruggiero meet with Cho regarding his situation in Professor Giovanni’s class, discuss the impact of his writing on the class, and warn that unauthorized picture-taking is inappropriate, and is taken seriously by Virginia Tech. Cho says his writing was intended as satire and agrees not to take any more photos of classmates or professors. Cho is advised of the study alternative available. He is advised to seek counseling. This is reiterated in an e-mail to Cho following the meeting.

Following the above, Dr. Roy removes Cho from Professor Giovanni’s class and tutors him one-on-one with assistance from Professor Frederick D’Aguiar. Cho refuses to go to counseling, and Dr. Roy tells this to the Division of Student Affairs, the CCC, the Schiffert Health Center, the Virginia Tech police, and the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. Cho’s problems are discussed at a meeting of Virginia Tech’s Care Team that reviews students with problems. Care Team members discuss the arrangement worked out to remove Cho from Professor Giovanni’s class and tutor him and that Dr. Roy had met with Cho and documented the results. The Care Team considers the problem solved.

November 2  Cho’s roommates and dorm residents think Cho set fires in a dorm lounge and say in emails that they reported it to police. However, no written police report exists.

November 27  Jennifer Nelson, a resident of West Ambler Johnston (WAJ) resident hall in room 4021, files a report with VTPD indicating that Cho has made “annoying” contact with her on the Internet, by phone, and in person. VTPD interviews Cho, but Nelson declines to press charges, though she says she would testify at a disciplinary hearing. The investigating officer refers the incident
to the school’s disciplinary system, the Office of Judicial Affairs. The Office of Judicial Affairs later contacts Nelson, telling her they can only proceed if she files a written complaint. She declines and no hearing is held.

**November 30**  
Cho calls CCC and is triaged (i.e., given a preliminary screening) by phone following his interaction with VTPD.

**December 6**  
E-mails among resident advisors (RAs) reflect complaints by another female student, Christina Lillizu, who lives on the 3rd floor of Cochrane resident hall, regarding derogatory instant messages (IMs) with foul language sent from Cho under various strange aliases. The RAs also report the incidents of IMs Cho to Jennifer Nelson, and his visit in disguise to her dorm room.

Lisa Virga, a resident advisor, sends an e-mail to Rohsaan Settle, a member of the Residence Life staff, detailing a list of complaints about Cho, including a report that he has knives in his room. Virga is concerned that no one in the dorms has confronted Cho directly and she thinks someone should talk to him. Settle responds with an e-mail to Virga saying they should “chat” about the knives.

**December 9**  
Cho sends unwanted IM to a third female student, Margaret Bowman (306 Campbell Hall). Later, he leaves messages on her marker board outside her room.

**December 11**  
Cho leaves a new message, a quote from Shakespeare, on Bowman’s marker board.

**December 12**  
Bowman returns from an exam and finds more text added to the message from 12/11. She then files a report with the VTPD complaining of the multiple “disturbing” contacts from Cho. She requests that Cho have no further contact with her. When questioned by students about the notes to Bowman, Cho tells them “Shakespeare did it.”

VTPD goes to Cho’s room, but he is not there. They leave a message for him with his roommates.

Cho calls and cancels a 2:00 p.m. appointment at CCC but then calls back in the afternoon and is triaged for the second time by phone.

**December 13**  
VTPD notifies Cho that he is to have no further contact with Margaret Bowman. After campus police leave, Cho’s suitemate receives an IM from Cho stating, “I might as well kill myself now.” The suitemate alerts VTPD. The police take Cho to the VTPD where a prescreener from the New River Valley Community Services Board (CSB) evaluates him as “an imminent danger to self or others.” A magistrate issues a temporary detaining order, and Cho is transported to Carilion St. Albans Psychiatric Hospital for an overnight stay and mental evaluation. No one contacts Cho’s parents.

**December 14**

7 a.m.  
The person assigned as an independent evaluator, psychologist Roy Crouse, evaluates Cho and concludes that he does not present an imminent danger to himself.

Before 11 a.m.  
A staff psychiatrist at St. Alban’s evaluates Cho, concludes he is not a danger to himself or others, and recommends outpatient counseling. He gathers no collateral information.

11–11:30 a.m.  
Special Justice Paul M. Barnett conducts Cho’s commitment hearing and rules in accordance with the independent evaluator, but orders follow-up treatment as an outpatient. Cho then makes an appointment with the CCC and is released.

Noon  
The St. Alban’s staff psychiatrist dictates in his evaluation summary that “there is no indication of psychosis, delu-
visions, suicidal or homicidal ideation.” The psychiatrist finds that “his insight and judgment are normal...Follow-up and aftercare to be arranged with the counseling center at Virginia Tech; medications, none.”

2:25 p.m.  CCC receives a fax from Carilion Health System with copies of the St. Alban’s discharge summary and the Pre-admission Screening Form completed by the CSB evaluator the previous day at police headquarters.

3:00 p.m.  Cho appears for his appointment and is triaged at the CCC for the third time in 15 days.

Dr. Miller, the CCC director, receives an email notifying him that Cho had been taken to St. Alban’s the previous night. Dr. Miller e-mails CCC staff to alert them “in case this student is seen” at the CCC. A CCC staff member e-mails back that Cho already has been seen that afternoon.

2006

January  The CCC receives a psychiatric summary from St. Albans. No action is taken by CCC or the Care Team to follow up on Cho.

February  Dr. Miller is removed from his position following a management study of the CCC. In his hurry to vacate the office, he packs Cho’s file and files of several other students in a box and takes them home. (This is only discovered in July, 2009.)

April 17  Cho’s technical writing professor, Carl Bean, suggests that Cho drop his class after repeated efforts to address shortcomings in class and inappropriate choice of writing assignments. Cho follows the professor to his office, raises his voice angrily, and is asked to leave. Professor Bean does not report this incident to Virginia Tech officials.

Spring  Cho takes Professor Bob Hicok’s creative writing class. Professor Hicok later characterizes Cho’s writing as not particularly unique as far as subject matter is concerned, but remarkable for violence.

Fall  Cho enrolls in a playwriting workshop taught by Professor Ed Falco. Cho writes a play concerning a young man who hates the students at his school and plans to kill them and himself. The writing contains parallels to the subsequent events of April 16, 2007, as well as the recorded messages sent to NBC that same day.

Professor Falco confers with Professors Roy and Norris, who tell him that in Fall 2005 and in 2006, Dr. Roy and Dr. Norris, respectively, had alerted Associate Dean Mary Ann Lewis about Cho.

September 6–12  Professor Lisa Norris, another of Cho’s writing professors, alerts Associate Dean Mary Ann Lewis about him, but the dean finds “no mention of mental health issues or police reports” on Cho. Professor Norris encourages Cho to go to counseling with her, but he declines.

September 26–November 4  Cho writes three more violent stories for an English class.

2007

February 2  Cho orders a .22 caliber Walther P22 handgun online from TGSCOM, Inc.

February 9  Cho picks up the handgun from J-N-D Pawnbrokers in Blacksburg, across the street from Virginia Tech.

March 12  Cho rents a van from Enterprise Rent-A-Car at the Roanoke Regional Airport, which he keeps for almost a month. (Cho videotapes some of his subsequently released diatribe in the van.)

March 13  Cho purchases a 9mm Glock 19 handgun and a box of 50 9mm full metal jacket practice rounds at Roanoke Firearms.
Cho waited the 30 days between gun purchases as required by Virginia law. The store initiates the required background check by police, who find no record of mental health issues.

**March 22**  
Cho goes to PSS Range and Training, an indoor pistol range, and spends an hour practicing.

**March 22**  
Cho purchases two 10-round magazines for the Walther P22 on eBay.

**March 23**  
Cho purchases three additional 10-round magazines from another eBay seller.

**March 31**  
Cho purchases additional ammunition magazines, ammunition, and a hunting knife from Wal-Mart and Dick’s Sporting Goods. He buys chains from Home Depot.

Cho gets a speeding ticket, his first police contact since December 2005.

**April 7**  
Cho purchases more ammunition.

**April 8**  
Cho spends the night at the Hampton Inn in Christiansburg, Virginia, videotaping segments for his manifesto-like diatribe. He also buys more ammunition.

**April 13**  
Bomb threats are made to Torgersen, Durham, and Whittemore halls in the form of an anonymous note. The threats are assessed by the VTPD, and the buildings evacuated. There is no lockdown or cancellation of classes elsewhere on campus. Later, during the investigation of the April 16 murders, no evidence is found linking these threats to Cho’s bomb threat note in Norris Hall, based in part on handwriting analysis.

**April 14**  
An Asian male wearing a hooded garment is seen by a faculty member in Norris Hall. The faculty member later (after April 16) tells police that one of her students had told her the doors were chained. This may have been Cho practicing. Cho buys yet more ammunition.

**April 15**  
Cho places his weekly Sunday night call to his family in Fairfax County. They report the conversation as normal and that Cho said nothing that caused them concern.

**THE INCIDENTS**

### April 16, 2007

**5:00 a.m.**  
In Cho’s suite in Harper Hall (2121), one of Cho’s suitmates notices Cho is awake and at his computer.

**About 5:30 a.m.**  
One of Cho’s other suitmates notices Cho clad in boxer shorts and a shirt brushing his teeth and applying acne cream. Cho returns from the bathroom, gets dressed, and leaves.

**About 6:45 a.m.**  
Cho is spotted by a student loitering in the foyer area of WAJ resident hall, between the exterior door and the locked interior door. He has access to the mailbox foyer, but not to the interior of the building.

**7:02 a.m.**  
Emily Hilscher enters WAJ, her dorm, after being dropped off by her boyfriend, Karl Thornhill. (The time is based on her swipe card record.)

**About 7:15 a.m.**  
Cho shoots Hilscher in her room (4040) where he also shoots Ryan Christopher Clark, an RA. Clark, it is thought, most likely came to investigate noises in Hilscher’s room, which is next door to his. Both of the victims’ wounds ultimately prove to be fatal. Cho exits the scene, leaving behind bloody footprints and shell casings.

**7:17 a.m.**  
Cho’s access card is swiped at Harper Hall (his nearby residence hall). He goes to his room to change out of his bloody clothes, cancel his computer account, and make other preparations for what is to come.
7:20 a.m. The VTPD receives a call on their administrative telephone line advising that a female student in room 4040 of WAJ had possibly fallen from her loft bed. The caller was given this information by another WAJ resident near room 4040 who heard the noise.

7:21 a.m. The VTPD dispatcher notifies the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad that a female student had possibly fallen from her loft bed in WAJ.

7:22 a.m. A VTPD officer is dispatched to room 4040 at WAJ to accompany the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad, which is also dispatched per standard protocol.

7:24 a.m. The VTPD officer arrives at WAJ room 4040, finds two people shot inside the room, and immediately requests additional VTPD resources.

7:25 a.m. Cho accesses his university e-mail account (based on computer records). He erases his files and the account.

7:26 a.m. Virginia Tech Rescue Squad 3 arrives on-scene outside WAJ.

7:27 a.m. Police dispatcher is advised of two victims. Officer on scene requests supervisor.

7:29 a.m. Virginia Tech Rescue Squad 3 arrives at room 4040.

7:30 a.m. Additional VTPD officers begin arriving at room 4040. They secure the crime scene and in effect lock down the dormitory, with police inside and outside. Police start preliminary investigation. Interviews with residents fail to produce a suspect description. No one on Hilscher’s floor in WAJ saw anyone leave room 4040 after the initial noise was heard.

A housekeeper in Burruss Hall tells Dr. Ed Spencer, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and member of the Policy Group, that an RA in WAJ was murdered. (The housekeeper had received a phone call from another housekeeper in WAJ.)

7:35 a.m. Police on the scene at WAJ say they need a detective.

7:40 a.m. VTPD Chief Flinchum is notified by phone of the WAJ shootings. Chief Flinchum tries repeatedly to reach the Office of the Executive Vice President.

7:51 a.m. Chief Flinchum contacts the Blacksburg Police Department (BPD) and requests a BPD evidence technician and BPD detective to assist with the investigation.

7:55 a.m. Dr. Spencer arrives at WAJ after walking from Burruss Hall. He calls Dr. Zenobia Hikes.

7:57 a.m. Chief Flinchum finally gets through to the Virginia Tech Office of the Executive Vice President and notifies them of the shootings.

8:00 a.m. Classes begin. Chief Flinchum arrives at WAJ and finds VTPD and BPD detectives on the scene. A local special agent of the Virginia State Police (VSP) has been contacted and is responding to the scene. The VTPD, BPD, and soon the VSP start to process the crime scene in Hilscher’s room (4040) and gather evidence. They then canvass the dorm for possible witnesses, search interior and exterior waste containers and surrounding areas near WAJ for evidence, and canvass rescue squad personnel for additional evidence or information.

About 8:00 a.m. The Virginia Tech Center for Professional and Continuing Education locks down on its own.

8:05 a.m. At least two Policy Group members notify their families of the shootings.

8:10 a.m. President Steger is notified by a secretary that there has been a shooting. He
tells her to get Chief Flinchum on the phone.

8:11 a.m. Chief Flinchum talks to President Steger via phone and reports one student is critical, one is fatally wounded, and the incident seems to be domestic in nature. He reports no weapon found and there are bloody footprints. President Steger tells Chief Flinchum to keep him informed. A staff member of the Policy Group and President Steger discuss the event, and Steger decides to convene the Policy Group no later than 8:30 a.m.

8:11 a.m. BPD Chief Kim Crannis arrives on scene.

8:13 a.m. Chief Flinchum requests additional VTPD and BPD officers to assist with securing WAJ entrances and with the investigation. He also orders recall of all off-shift personnel.

8:14 a.m. Hilscher’s roommate, Heather Hough, arrives at WAJ to go with Hilscher to chemistry class. (Time recorded from swipe card.)

8:15 a.m. Chief Flinchum requests the VTPD Emergency Response Team (ERT) to respond to the scene and then to stage in Blacksburg in the event an arrest is needed or a search warrant is to be executed.

8:16–8:40 a.m. Hilscher’s roommate, Heather Haugh, is interviewed inside WAJ by detectives. She explains that on Monday mornings Hilscher’s boyfriend, Karl Thornhill, usually drops her off at WAJ and returns to Radford University where he is a student. She says he owns guns and practices shooting. Police then seek Thornhill as a “person of interest.” His vehicle is not found in campus parking lots and officers believe he has left campus. VTPD and BPD officers are sent to his home, but he is not there. The Thornhill home is then put under surveillance until Thornhill is found.

Shortly after 8:16 a.m. Chief Flinchum informs the Policy Group that there is a person of interest who is probably now off campus.

8:16–9:24 a.m. Police continue canvassing WAJ for possible witnesses. VTPD, BPD, and the VSP continue processing Hilscher’s room (4040) crime scene and gathering evidence. Investigators secure identification of the victims. Police allow students in WAJ to leave; some go to 9:00 a.m. classes in Norris Hall.

8:19 a.m. Chief Crannis requests BPD ERT to respond for the same reason as the VTPD ERT.

8:20 a.m. A person fitting Cho’s description is seen near the Duck Pond on campus.

8:25 a.m. The Policy Group convenes to plan how to notify students of the double shooting.

Police cancel bank deposit pickups.

8:40 a.m. Chief Flinchum tells President Steger in a phone update that Hilscher’s boyfriend is a person of interest and probably off campus. A Policy Group member notifies the Governor’s office of the double shooting.

8:40–8:45 a.m. Phone calls are made from BPD to its units and to Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office and Radford University police to be on the lookout for Thornhill’s vehicle.

8:45 a.m. A Policy Group member e-mails a Richmond colleague saying one student is dead and another critically wounded. “Gunman on the loose,” he says, adding “This is not releasable yet.”

8:49 a.m. The same Policy Group member reminds his Richmond colleague, “just try to make sure it doesn’t get out.”

8:50 a.m. First period classes end. The Policy Group begins composing a notice to the university about the shootings in WAJ. The Associate Vice President for University Re-
lations, Larry Hinkler, is unable to send the message at first due to technical difficulties with the alert system.

8:52 a.m. Blacksburg public schools lock down until more information is available about the incident at Virginia Tech. School superintendent notifies school board of this by e-mail.

The Virginia Tech Government Affairs Director orders the university president’s office to be locked.

9:00-9:15 a.m. Virginia Tech veterinary college locks down.

9:01 a.m. Cho mails a package from the Blacksburg post office to NBC News in New York that contains pictures of himself holding weapons, an 1,800-word rambling diatribe, and video clips in which he expresses rage, resentment, and a desire to get even with oppressors. He alludes to a coming massacre. Cho prepared this material in the previous weeks. The videos are a performance of the enclosed writings. Cho also mails a letter to the English Department attacking Professor Carl Bean, with whom he previously argued.

9:05 a.m. Classes begin for the second period in Norris Hall.

Virginia Tech trash pickup is cancelled.

9:15 a.m. Both police ERTs are staged at the BPD in anticipation of executing search warrants or making an arrest.

9:15–9:30 a.m. Cho is seen outside and then inside Norris Hall, an engineering building, by several students. He is familiar with the building because one of his classes meets there. He chains the doors shut on the three public entrances, from the inside. No one reports seeing him do this. A faculty member finds a bomb threat note attached to an inner door near one of the chained exterior doors. She gives it to a janitor to carry to the Engineering School dean’s office on the third floor.

9:24 a.m. A Montgomery County deputy sheriff initiates a traffic stop of Hilscher’s boyfriend in his pickup truck off campus. He had heard there had been a shooting and was driving back to the campus to search for Hilscher after she did not answer his calls. Detectives are sent to assist with the questioning.

A VTPD police captain joins the Policy Group as police liaison and provides updates as information becomes available. He reports one gunman at large, possibly on foot.

9:26 a.m. Virginia Tech administration sends e-mail to campus staff, faculty, and students informing them of the dormitory shooting.

About 9:30 a.m. Radford University Police had received a request from BPD to look up Thornhill’s class schedule and find him in class. Before they can do this they get a second call that he has been found and stopped on the road.

9:30 a.m. Police pass information to the Policy Group that it is unlikely that Hilscher’s boyfriend, Thornhill, is the shooter (though he remains a person of interest).

9:31–9:48 a.m. A VSP trooper arrives at the traffic stop of Thornhill and helps question him. A gunpowder residue test is performed and packaged for lab analysis. (There is no immediate result from this type of test in the field.)

About 9:40 a.m–9:51 a.m. Cho begins shooting in room 206 in Norris Hall, where a graduate engineering class in Advanced Hydrology is underway. Cho kills Professor G. V. Logana-

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The Review Panel estimates that the shooting began at about this time, allowing for about a minute for the students and faculty in the room next door to recognize that the sounds being heard were gunshots, and then make the first call to 9-1-1.
than and other students in the class, killing 9 and wounding 3 of the 13 students.

Cho goes across the hall from room 206 and enters room 207, an Elementary German class. He shoots teacher Christopher James Bishop, then students near the front of the classroom and starts down the aisle shooting others. Cho leaves the classroom to go back into the hall.

Students in room 205, attending Haiyan Cheng’s class on Issues in Scientific Computing, hear Cho’s gunshots. (Cheng was a graduate assistant substituting for the professor that day.) The students barricade the door and prevent Cho’s entry despite his firing at them through the door.

Meanwhile, in room 211 Madame Jocelyne Couture-Nowak is teaching French. She and her class hear the shots, and she asks student Colin Goddard to call 9-1-1. A student tells the teacher to put the desk in front of the door, which is done, but it is nudged open by Cho. Cho walks down the rows of desks shooting people. Goddard is shot in the leg. Student Emily Haas picks up the cell phone Goddard dropped. She begs the police to hurry. Cho hears Haas and shoots her, grazing her twice in the head. She falls and plays dead, though keeping the phone cradled under her head and the line open. Cho says nothing on entering the room or during the shooting. (Three students who pretend to be dead survive.)

9:41 a.m. A BPD dispatcher receives a call regarding the shooting in Norris Hall. The dispatcher initially has difficulty understanding the location of the shooting. Once identified as being on campus, the call is transferred to VTPD.

9:42 a.m. The first 9-1-1 call reporting shots fired reaches the VTPD. A message is sent to all county EMS units to staff and respond.

9:45 a.m. The first police officers arrive at Norris Hall, a three-minute response time from their receipt of the call. Hearing shots, they pause briefly to check whether they are being fired upon, then rush to one entrance, and then another but find the doors chained shut. An attempt to shoot open the chain or lock on one door fails.

About 9:45 a.m. The police inform the administration that there has been another shooting. Virginia Tech President Steger hears sounds like gunshots, and sees police running toward Norris Hall.

Back in room 207, the German class, two uninjured students and two injured students go to the door and hold it shut with their feet and hands, keeping their bodies away. Within 2 minutes, Cho returns. He beats on the door and opens it an inch and fires shots around the door handle, then gives up trying to get in.

Cho returns to room 211, the French class, and goes up one aisle and down another, shooting people again. Cho shoots Goddard two more times.

A janitor sees Cho in the hall on the second floor loading his gun; the janitor flees downstairs.

Cho tries to enter room 204 where engineering professor Liviu Librescu is teaching Mechanics. Professor Librescu braces his body against the door yelling for students to head for the window. He is shot through the door. Students push out screens and jump or drop to grass or bushes below the window. Ten students escape this way. The next two students trying to escape are shot. Cho returns again to room 206 and shoots more students.

9:50 a.m. Using a shotgun, police shoot open the ordinary key lock of a Norris Hall entrance that goes to a machine shop and that could not be chained. These officers hear gunshots as they enter the building.
They immediately follow the sounds to the second floor.

Triage and rescue of victims begin.

A second e-mail is sent by the administration to all Virginia Tech e-mail addresses announcing that “A gunman is loose on campus. Stay in buildings until further notice. Stay away from all windows.” Four outside loudspeakers on poles broadcast a similar message.

Virginia Tech and Blacksburg police ERTs arrive at Norris Hall, including one paramedic with each team.

9:51 a.m. Cho shoots himself in the head just as police reach the second floor. Investigators believe that the police shotgun blast alerted Cho to police (starting entry into the building). Cho’s shooting spree in Norris Hall lasted about 11 minutes. He fired 174 rounds, and killed 30 people in Norris Hall plus himself, and wounded 17.

The first team of officers begins securing the second floor and aiding survivors from multiple classrooms. They also get a preliminary description of the suspected gunman, and try to determine if there are additional gunmen.

9:52 a.m. The police clear the second floor of Norris Hall. Two tactical medics attached to the ERTs, one medic from Virginia Tech Rescue and one from Blacksburg Rescue, are allowed to enter to start their initial triage.

9:53 a.m. The 9:42 a.m. request for all EMS units is repeated.

10:08 a.m. A deceased male student is discovered by police team and suspected to be the gunman:

- No identification is found on the body.
- He appears to have a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.

- He is found among his victims in classroom 211, the French class.
- Two weapons are found near the body.

10:17 a.m. A third e-mail from Virginia Tech administration cancels classes and advises people to stay where they are.

10:51 a.m. All patients from Norris Hall have been transported to a hospital or moved to a minor treatment unit.

10:52 a.m. A fourth e-mail from Virginia Tech administration warns of “a multiple shooting with multiple victims in Norris Hall,” saying “the shooter is in custody” and that as routine procedure police are searching for a second shooter.

10:57 a.m. A report of shots fired at the tennis courts near Cassell Coliseum proves false.

12:42 p.m. Virginia Tech President Charles Steger announces that police are releasing people from buildings and that counseling centers are being established.

1:35 p.m. A report of a possible gunshot near Duck Pond proves to be another false alarm.

4:01 p.m. President George W. Bush speaks to the Nation from the White House regarding the shooting.

5:00 p.m. The first deceased victim is transported to the medical examiner’s office.

8:45 p.m. The last deceased victim is transported to the medical examiner’s office.

Evening Police continue investigating whether Karl Thornhill, Emily Hilscher’s boyfriend, is linked to her murder and that of Ryan Clark because the ballistics analysis that later ties together the WAJ and the Norris Hall murders (confirming that Cho’s guns were used at both incidents) is not yet completed. The Blacksburg ERT, including Virginia Tech and Montgomery County Po-
lice, enters Thornhill’s home and searches it. The ERT searches his residence. Using standard procedures, ERT members handcuff Thornhill and his family who have come to console him. They are put on the floor while the search is made, because Thornhill is known to own firearms. The search is highly upsetting to Thornhill and his family.

### POST-INCIDENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>April 17, 2007</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:15 a.m.</td>
<td>VTPD releases the name of the shooter as Seung Hui Cho and confirms 33 fatalities between the two incidents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Virginia Tech announces classes will be cancelled “for the remainder of the week to allow students the time they need to grieve and seek assistance as needed.”</td>
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<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>A family assistance center is established at The Inn at Virginia Tech.</td>
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<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>A convocation ceremony is held for the university community at the Cassell Coliseum. Speakers include President George W. Bush, Virginia Governor Tim Kaine (who had returned from Japan), Virginia Tech President Charles Steger, Virginia Tech Vice President for Student Affairs Zenobia L. Hikes, local religious leaders (representing the Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, and Christian communities), Provost Dr. Mark G. McNamee, Dean of Students Tom Brown, Counselor Dr. Christopher Flynn, and poet Professor Nikki Giovanni.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>A candlelight vigil is held on the Virginia Tech drill field.</td>
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<td>11:30 p.m.</td>
<td>The first autopsy is completed.</td>
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<td><strong>April 18, 2007</strong></td>
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<td>8:25 a.m.</td>
<td>A SWAT team enters Burruss Hall, a campus building next to Norris Hall, responding to a “suspicious event”; this proves to be a false alarm.</td>
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<td>4:37 p.m.</td>
<td>Local police announce that NBC News in New York just received by mail a package containing images of Cho holding weapons, his writings, and his video recordings. NBC immediately submitted this information to the FBI. A fragment of the video and pictures are widely broadcast.</td>
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<td><strong>April 19, 2007</strong></td>
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<td>Virginia Tech announces that all students who were killed will be granted posthumous degrees in the fields in which they were studying. The degrees are subsequently awarded to the families at the regular commencement exercises, or privately, or in one case, at a Corps of Cadets event in Fall 2007.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governors</td>
<td>Kaine appoints an independent Virginia Tech Review Panel to review the shootings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autopsies</td>
<td>on all victims are completed by the medical examiner. The autopsy of Cho found no gross brain function abnormalities and no toxic substances, drugs, or alcohol that could explain the rampage.</td>
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<td><strong>April 20, 2007</strong></td>
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<td>Governor Kaine declares a statewide day of mourning.</td>
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