



Noblesville School Shooter Sentenced

By Shawnta S. Barnes – November 15, 2018

On Friday, May 25, 2018, Indiana became yet another state to suffer the trauma of a school shooting. On that day, a 13-year-old male student shot his classmate Ella Whistler and science teacher Jason Seaman at Noblesville West Middle School. Seaman was hailed a hero because he was able to get the weapon away from the assailant preventing other students from being

harmed. The 13-year-old shooter received his sentence yesterday, and some people, including Seaman, are not satisfied.

The judge decided the shooter will stay in a juvenile detention center until he turns 18. If the Department of Correction believes he has been rehabilitated before his 18th birthday, he could be released sooner. Shortly after the sentence was rendered, Seaman released the following statement:

First I must thank Mr. Buckingham and his team at the Hamilton County Prosecutor's office. They left no stone unturned throughout the duration of this case. I hope that the decision made this morning will allow some members of the Noblesville community and others impacted by the shooting some closure and further healing.

Ultimately, I believe the Indiana Department of Corrections is where the perpetrator belongs given the two options but I am dissatisfied with the fact that current Indiana law legally prevented prosecutors from trying the perpetrator as an adult. The teenager in this case attempted to murder two people with a motive that is unknown and he will be able to rejoin society in roughly five years if not sooner. I cannot speak for others, but in my mind, this is not justice. It is not justice for me and my family nor the other victim and her family.

An article released by Fox 59 explains why this student was not charged as an adult.

His case cannot be heard in adult court because under current Indiana law a child who is 13 can only be waived to adult court if his attempt to commit murder "is actually successful," according to Hamilton County Prosecutor D. Lee Buckingham.

From Seaman's statement to comments on social media, many seemed disappointed the shooter was not charged as an adult. As a teacher, I want to believe all children can be helped. I want to believe there is some type of intervention or rehabilitation available to help wayward or deeply disturbed youth, but maybe I'm naive.

Twice during my career, a student has threatened to kill me. Both students were suspended, and both returned to my class as my students. (Yes, I could write another article to address the problems with this.) It does not matter if students are verbally threatening violence against teachers and students or actually carrying out these acts; both actions are wrong. Both of these

situations point to a larger ill in our society. Where did we go wrong and how do we turn back? I do not want any other students following this student's path.

Even if the law allowed him to be charged as an adult, it would not change the trauma he caused to his classmates, teachers, and community. It would not change the fact the Ella needs help doing simple tasks like buttoning her clothes. Was justice served? That's up for debate. Can the Department of Corrections rehabilitate the school shooter? Time will tell.