

Elementary School Killer Identified

By Jim Bennett

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Police, faculty and parents have been surprised to learn that a killer has been hiding in their elementary school. To date, the killer has kept a conspicuously low profile, and has eluded detection by continuously moving from state to state, school district to school district. However the consequences are always the same, and eventually an innocent child is dead or severely injured. The killer has claimed the lives of over a dozen children including Jarod Bennett (OH), Antonio Leece (MA), Jonathan Cozzolino (PA), Matthew Rever (IL), and James Javor (IL); and has severely injured Taryn Andrew (AK) and Kristen Gippner (MO). In all cases, the cold blooded killer knew its victims, having lunch with them and often their teachers. Unfortunately many teachers, students and parents are unaware of this killer's past, thus leaving the victims completely defenseless.

The killer's identity? The mobile folding cafeteria tables used in our school systems, churches, and meeting places across this country.

These table dangers have gotten the attention of the Federal Government, and in April of 2004, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CSPC) issued warnings which claim these tables can "*seriously injure or kill children*".

When folded, these tables are unstable and present a tipping danger. They attack with a swift motion, falling like a tree, with the force of a full body sledge hammer against their young victim's body. The lucky ones usually escape with fractured teeth, broken bones, and hemorrhaging; the less fortunate, death.

The CSPC describes these tables as: "*about 6 feet tall and may weigh up to 350 pounds. Some of the tables have benches or seats attached. The tables are on wheels so they can be moved and then unfolded when in the desired location*".

The CSPC has issued these safety guidelines:

- Do not allow children to move the folded tables. Only adults should move them.
- Do not allow the children to play with the folded tables.
- Keep children away from the tables while they are being moved. Once the tables start to fall, it is difficult to stop them.

In response to the CSPC's claims, table manufacturers have made warning stickers available to school districts, but children are still dying. Even when affixed to the tables, young victims do not have the education skills to read or comprehend the dangers.

Underwriters Laboratories (UL) also recognizes the dangers and has developed stability testing standards (UL2040), failed by many older table designs still in use by school districts across the country.

Unfortunately these tables still have the opportunity to kill again, due to bureaucracy, costs, and lack of awareness. Therefore, more innocent children will continue to die, unless you take action.

Most parents assume school is a safe haven for their children, and they don't expect their child to go to school healthy, and to never come home again. But this is not always the case; this tragedy happened to me and my family. My 6 year old son, Jarod Bennett, was killed December 19th, 2003 by a cafeteria folding table.



Jarod Bennett Age 6

What can a parent do to prevent this tragedy from happening to their child?

It's simple, take action right now, right here, and don't wait.

1. Photocopy or email this article to your friends, co-workers, your child's teacher, principal, PTO chair, and school superintendent.
2. Ask about the policy for use and storing of folding tables at your school.
3. Have the school define policies which prohibit tables from being moved while children are present; or when stored, tables are strapped together or to the wall.
4. Have cafeteria access near the tables restricted during after hour activities such as scouting, sports, and general meetings.

You can make a difference. **Please take action today by creating awareness and demanding safety changes.** The death or injury of another child is too many.

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