



**WICHITA STATE
UNIVERSITY**

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

**The massacre vs the peacekeepers: an analysis
of news coverage surrounding the 2016 Hesston,
Kansas shooting and subsequent community response**

Item Type	Abstract
Authors	Gardiepy, Kelsay E.
Citation	Gardiepy, Kelsay E. 2017. The massacre vs the peacekeepers: an analysis of news coverage surrounding the 2016 Hesston, Kansas shooting and subsequent community response--In Proceedings: 13th Annual Symposium on Graduate Research and Scholarly Projects. Wichita, KS: Wichita State University, p.38
Publisher	Wichita State University
Download date	2026-05-15 16:25:22
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/10057/13284

The Massacre vs. The Peacekeepers: An Analysis of News Coverage Surrounding the 2016 Hesston, Kansas Shooting and Subsequent Community Response

Kelsay E. Gardiepy*

Faculty: Deborah Ballard-Reisch

Elliott School of Communication, Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Intro: The sleepy Mennonite town of Hesston, Kansas was suddenly disrupted on February 25th, 2016 when an employee of Excel Industries entered the company plant with an AK-47 and a Glock 22 semi-automatic pistol and opened fire. Three employees were killed and fourteen injured before the assailant was killed by local law enforcement. The tragedy made local and national news by the early evening and coverage continued for weeks. **Method:** This two-part research 1) uses Bormann's fantasy-theme rhetorical analysis to examine media messages, extracting the dramatic elements that operate within the narratives, and 2) conducts semi-structured qualitative interviews with Hesston community professionals involved post-tragedy. **Results:** Hesston community professionals chose to address the event by creating and sustaining the campaign "We are Hesston Strong" with a heightened focus toward forgiving the perpetrator, providing for the victims, and promoting the town's unity. Best practices for community response to local tragedies are discussed.