

Teacher overpowers 14-year-old after deadly shooting spree

■ **CRIME:** Junior High student fatally shot his teacher and two students, wounded a third

MOSES LAKE, Wash. (AP) — Math teacher Jon Lane rushed to the algebra classroom two doors down after hearing gunfire and the sound of students crying.

He dove behind the teacher's desk when he saw bloody bodies on the floor, students cowering under their desks and a 14-year-old boy standing in a corner in a trench-coat with a hunting rifle. The young gunman ordered him to stand.

"I told him I was too afraid," Lane recalled at a news conference Sunday.

Police and grateful parents hailed Lane as a hero for disarming the boy after his bloody rampage Friday left a Frontier Junior High teacher and two students dead and a third classmate seriously wounded.

The boy, Barry Loukaitas, was to be arraigned Monday on three charges of first-degree murder and one count of attempted murder. If convicted as an adult, he

could face life in prison.

Lane, a short, gray-haired former wrestling star who also teaches gym, said he crouched behind the desk trying to decide what to do.

He saw teacher Leona Cairns, bleeding and lifeless. Manuel Vela, 14, was also dead and Arnold Fritz, 14, was dying.

The rifle went off again, but Loukaitas said it was an accident.

The boy again told Lane to stand, and Lane refused. Then Loukaitas threatened to shoot more students.

"I told him to point the gun up and away and I would stand," Lane said, estimating he was about 15 feet away.

A phone in the classroom began ringing. Loukaitas smashed it to the floor.

Thirteen-year-old Natalie Hintz, whose arm was nearly severed by a gunshot, was in great pain and crying. Lane asked to take her out of the classroom. The boy agreed.

Lane then returned and twice won permission to remove other students, including the dying Fritz.

Police were outside the classroom now, and yelled for the boy to drop his rifle and two handguns and surrender.

Again Lane returned to the classroom. Loukaitas ordered the door closed and told classmates to go to the back of the room. He told Lane he was taking him hostage and ordered him to come closer.

"I told him to keep the gun pointed away," Lane said. "He had his finger on the trigger guard."

"He said to put the gun in [my] mouth," Lane said. "I told him I couldn't do that."

At that point, from about four feet away, "I stepped forward, grabbed his hands, and pinned him and the gun against the wall," Lane said. "He didn't struggle."

Authorities later said Lane's courage prevented the bloodbath from escalating. After his news conference, Lane was surrounded by parents who shook his hand and thanked him.

"It could have been a lot worse," Police Chief Fred Haynes said. "Jon Lane is the hero today. He placed his life in harm's

way to help protect our children."

The community of 11,500, located in a potato-farming region between Seattle and Spokane, struggled to make sense of the tragedy.

Some classmates said Loukaitas had often been picked on by other kids, but police offered no motive. Loukaitas was described as a quiet, good student who had had no previous trouble with the law.

The shootings, which came toward the end of the day, apparently were unrelated to drugs or gangs, said police Sgt. Dennis Duke. Loukaitas had skipped his previous classes Friday and showed up for algebra with the guns.

"People just want some kind of truth to grab onto," Duke said. "This was a random act of violence."

During a meeting in a church Sunday, school Superintendent David Rawls said classes would be held Monday, with Lane among those returning to school. Officials took groups of students into the school all weekend to help them overcome any fears.

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