

# STUDY GUIDE

## THE BORDERLINE BAR AND GRILL: A TALE OF MEN AND MASCULINITY

**KEY TERMS:** masculinity  
moral

protect  
evil

duty  
men

<b>NOTE-TAKING COLUMN:</b> Complete this section <u>during</u> the video. Include definitions and key terms.	<b>CUE COLUMN:</b> Complete this section <u>after</u> the video.
How old was Matt Wennerstrom when the massacre at the Borderline Bar and Grill happened?	What happens when masculinity is developed and praised?
How many people did Matt Wennerstrom and his buddies pull to safety as the shooter was reloading?	What would the negative consequences to society be if masculinity and the male impulse to act heroically were mocked, belittled, and devalued?
What was the last thing that Sgt. Ron Helus said to his wife before he went in to stop the shooter and save the victims?	

## DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- At the beginning of the video, Ms. Shrier contends that, “The mass shooting at the Borderline Bar and Grill in Southern California on November 7, 2018 is a tale of men and masculinity. Lost in the carnage is a lesson we would all be advised to heed. That lesson has little to do with the monster who took lives and everything to do with the men who saved lives.” What, specifically, do you think that Ms. Shrier means when she characterizes the Borderline shooting as a ‘tale of men and masculinity?’ Explain. What do you think the ‘lesson’ is that Ms. Shrier is referring to?
- When describing the horrific developments of the shooting, Ms. Shrier shares with us that, “One woman, who was celebrating her 21st birthday, told Good Morning America: ‘There were multiple men who got on their knees and pretty much blocked all of us with their back toward the shooter, ready to take a bullet for every single one of us.’ When the shooter paused to reload, Wennerstrom grabbed a bar stool and tossed it through a window. He and his buddies pulled 30 to 35 people to safety. After getting each group safely to the parking lot, Wennerstrom and his buddies went back for more.” Why do you think that Matt and his friends shielded the women? After they rescued the first groups through the broken window, what do you think compelled Matt and his friends to actually go back towards the danger and help more people? Explain.
- Later in the video, Ms. Shrier points out that, “There will always be young men like the Thousand Oaks shooter, full of rage, mentally unstable, failing to launch. We can work to eliminate the threat they pose, or treat whatever mental disease hobbles them. But we will never stop every evil-doer from obtaining weapons. The extended magazine that enabled the shooter to fire so many rounds is already illegal in California. As many laws as we pass, we will never eradicate evil.” Why do you think that there will always be young men like the Thousand Oaks shooter? Explain. Why do you think that Leftists often blame the methods and tools of mass shooters rather than on the shooters themselves? Do you agree with Ms. Shrier that evil can never be eradicated, no matter how many laws are passed? Why or why not?
- Later in the video, Ms. Shrier explains that, “Masculinity is a style of behavior –not a code of conduct. It can be used for great good and it can be perverted into evil. One of the most important tasks of a moral society must be to make boys into good men.” What are the important and significant differences between masculinity being a style of behavior versus being a code of conduct? Explain. Do you agree with Ms. Shrier that a moral society is obligated to shape boys into good men? Why or why not?
- Towards the end of the video, Ms. Shrier concludes that, “If we continue to disparage the male impulse to act heroically — if we mock those who want to protect women — we will fail in our task. Yet many seem bent on doing just that, especially in our institutions of higher education.” What ‘task’ do you think Ms. Shrier is referring to here? Why do you think that some people disparage the male impulse to act heroically? Explain.

## EXTEND THE LEARNING:

### CASE STUDY: Sergeant Ron Helus

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Who was Ron Helus, the ‘hero’ sergeant killed in the California mass shooting,” then answer the questions that follow.

- Who was Ron Helus, and what did he do? How long had he been serving as a deputy sheriff? How many people were at the Borderline grill when the shooting started, and how many were killed? What happened when Sgt. Helus and the CHP officer entered the bar? Who is Geoff Dean, and how did he describe Sgt. Helus? What family did Sgt. Helus leave behind? What hobbies did Sgt. Helus enjoy? What subject did Sgt. Helus earn a master’s degree in?
- Why do you think that Sgt. Helus answered the call and engaged the shooter when he arrived? Do you consider Sgt. Helus to be a ‘hero,’ even though it was his job to protect people? Why or why not? Would you consider the CHP trooper and the civilians who pulled Sgt. Helus out of the building after he had been shot to be heroes as well- i.e. do you think that they demonstrated heroic masculinity? Why or why not?
- Do you think that Sgt. Helus fits into Ms. Shrier’s vision of masculine men that society should be valuing rather than disparaging? Explain.



# QUIZ

## THE BORDERLINE BAR AND GRILL: A TALE OF MEN AND MASCULINITY

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1. How old was Matt Wennerstrom when the massacre at the Borderline Bar and Grill happened?
  - a. 16 years old
  - b. 20 years old
  - c. 24 years old
  - d. 28 years old
  
2. When Matt Wennerstrom and his friends first heard the shots, they \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. ran out of the front door while the shooter reloaded
  - b. cowered behind a booth in the back and waited for the whole thing to be over
  - c. pushed as many people as possible behind the pool table and shielded the girls
  - d. ran into the kitchen and called 911, hoping the police would save them
  
3. After breaking a window and pulling multiple groups of people safely though to the parking lot, Wennerstrom and his buddies went back to help more people.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
4. When questioned by a reporter, Matt Wennerstrom said he was there to protect whom?
  - a. His friends.
  - b. His family.
  - c. His fellow humans.
  - d. All of the above.
  
5. What did Sgt. Ron Helus of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office die from?
  - a. A heart attack triggered by the stress of the shooting.
  - b. A car accident on the way to the shooting.
  - c. Suffocation from the crowd pushing their way out of the restaurant in a panic.
  - d. The wounds he suffered as he tried to stop the rampaging gunman.



# QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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2. When Matt Wennerstrom and his friends first heard the shots, they \_\_\_\_\_.
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  - b. covered behind a booth in the back and waited for the whole thing to be over
  - c. pushed as many people as possible behind the pool table and shielded the girls
  - d. ran into the kitchen and called 911, hoping the police would save them
  
3. After breaking a window and pulling multiple groups of people safely though to the parking lot, Wennerstrom and his buddies went back to help more people.
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<https://www.sacbee.com/news/california/article221341110.html>

## **Who was Ron Helus, the ‘hero’ sergeant killed in the California mass shooting?**

By Matthew Martinez

November 08, 2018 05:00 AM, Updated November 08, 2018 01:03 PM

Sgt. Ron Helus charged into the Borderline Bar & Grill after the shooting started at about 11:20 Wednesday night.

He was a 29-year-veteran of the Ventura County Sheriff’s Office, according to his end of watch bio on the department’s website.

But on Wednesday, Helus and a California State Highway Patrol trooper were the first responders to the shooting at the bar in Thousand Oaks filled with nearly 200 college students, according to the Sheriff’s Office.

At least 13 people were killed in the mass shooting, and 10-15 more were injured.

The suspect, who was also found dead in the bar and whose identity has not been released by authorities, fired at them as they entered, hitting Helus several times, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Ventura County Sheriff Geoff Dean told the newspaper that Helus died “a hero,” and that Helus was hoping to retire from law enforcement next year. Helus and the trooper got inside the bar within 2-3 minutes of the gunshots being reported, CNN reported.

“He gave his all. He went in to save lives — to save other people,” Dean told the Thousand Oaks Acorn, also calling Helus a “hard-working, dedicated Sheriff’s Sergeant.”

Civilians helped the trooper and the deputies behind Helus pull him from the bar, critically wounded, according to the Sheriff’s Office. Helus passed away from his wounds hours later at an area hospital.

“A true cop’s cop. This was in his blood,” Ventura County Sheriff’s Sgt. Eric Buschow told CNN. “He just had this natural instinct for going after crooks. He did it with enthusiasm. My heart goes out to his family. I can’t imagine what they’re going through right now.”

A veteran of 29 years. Sheriff SGT. Ron Helus ran in when everyone else was running out. RIP  
[pic.twitter.com/66zwqbHhAt](https://pic.twitter.com/66zwqbHhAt)

— Blue Alert (@BlueAlertUs) November 8, 2018

Helus leaves behind a wife and a son. The Times reports that Helus called his family before going inside Borderline Bar & Grill.

He claimed the neighborhood of West Hills, California, just 18 miles from Borderline Bar & Grill in Thousand Oaks, as his hometown, according to his Facebook profile, which has been refashioned into a “Remembering Ron Helus” page. He lived in nearby Moorpark.

According to photos on the page, Helus loved fishing and the outdoors. He got his master's degree in administrative leadership from the University of Oklahoma, according to his LinkedIn profile, and he did firearms training work on the side.

"When he heard the gunfire, he ran in. He ran in and no doubt saved others... And that's what cops do. That's what he did.": Sgt. Ron Helus had been set to retire in the next year. He is among at least 12 killed in the Thousand Oaks shooting. <https://t.co/WDmZrgvadjpic.twitter.com/s3p2JDKTdr>

— CNN (@CNN) November 8, 2018



Ron Helus, a 29-year veteran of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, rushed into Borderline Bar & Grill in Thousand Oaks, Calif., Wednesday night, and was shot and killed. Ventura County Sheriff's Office/Facebook