



STUFF

Meet Fort McMurray's Two-Spirit Multi-Millionaire Pop Star



Mack Lamoureux

May 20 2015, 8:40pm

Massey Whiteknife is a 36-year-old aboriginal man who made millions serving the oil fields. Iceis Rain is an 18-year-old female singer with a critically acclaimed album. They share the same body.



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Massey Whiteknife applies makeup at his friend Skylar's house. All photos by the author

Massey Whiteknife is sitting at his friend Skylar's table. In front of him is an array of makeup and clothing in preparation for his transformation. Next to Whiteknife sits Darrin Hagen, Edmonton's most famous drag queen.

"Darling, you use so much more powder than I used too," Hagen said.

"That's because I'm not a drag queen," Whiteknife responds with a little bit of a bristle in his voice.

It would be several more hours until Whiteknife puts on his wig, dissociates, and becomes the other side of his spirit—recording artist Iceis Rain.

Massey Whiteknife is a **two-spirit** aboriginal man who resides in Fort McKay, a reservation just outside of McMurray. Like the majority of the people who live in Fort Mac and the surrounding area, he works in the oil patch. After working in the oil field for several years Whiteknife wanted to work for himself. So he started a company named **Iceis Safety** which focuses upon safety consulting and supply. It was named after the other side of his spirit, 18-year-old female singer Iceis Rain. The concept of two-spiritedness is derived from when an aboriginal person feels the spirit of both genders inside of them. In aboriginal culture it was a valued position, one that often was paired with shamanic duties.

With Iceis Safety, Whiteknife has built himself up into a multi-millionaire from the ground. When he first started the company, Whiteknife was told that an openly gay man could never make it in the usually burly oil industry, but he defied the odds, and then some—a feat that's owed, in no small way, to Iceis Rain.

I wanted to go up to Fort McMurray and meet Iceis and Massey myself so I could understand the nature of being two spirit and meet both spirits that reside in this one extremely successful man.

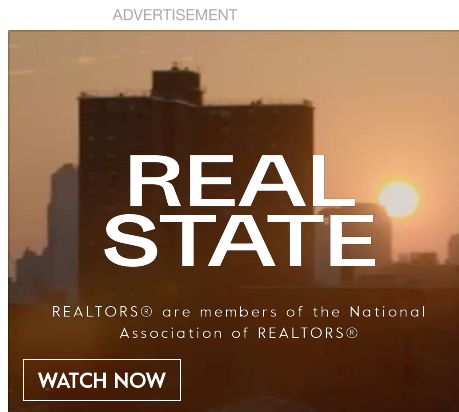


Whiteknife, with Darrin Hagen in the foreground

I got that opportunity when I was invited to travel up to Fort McMurray

and meet Whiteknife (and Iceis) by Darrin Hagen, a well-known Edmonton drag queen and author, and the crew of Open Sky Pictures who were on their way up to film an episode of their show *Queer Places*. So at six in the morning that Saturday we loaded up into the car of Frederick Kroetschs, the videographer on the project, and headed towards Highway 63, the highway of death.

With a Zoo York jacket and a well-groomed goatee, I had no idea this was the infamous drag queen I was meeting. The minute he started talking, however, I knew right away that this was the host of the show. I asked him what his drag name used to be.



"Gloria Hole, honey," he said laughing. "I earned it the old fashioned way." Even without his makeup, Hagen still delivered a brassy laugh befitting a drag queen.

When we arrived at Whiteknife's house, he was prepping his truck to deliver a load of toilet paper to a nearby camp site. When Whiteknife came out as openly gay, and people discovered Iceis, at her anti-bullying drag show, he had several people stop doing business with his company.





"It was a letdown, but it was also a risk that I had to take," explained Whiteknife in his office, the walls of which are punctuated with awards. "How are we ever going to move forward if someone doesn't step up and try to change the conversation."

After the positive press from the show, he gained ten new customers.

Once he'd made his delivery, Massey could tell that four of us wanted to meet Iceis. But for that to happen, Whiteknife had to get ready. So he got his makeup and clothes and we hopped in his truck and headed to his friend Skylar's condo.

Earlier, I had noticed a significant difference in the way that both Whiteknife and Hagen talked about their other personas. While Hagen talks about himself and Gloria in an inclusive way, using "we" or "I," Whiteknife talked about Iceis in the third person, using "she." Whiteknife said that this was because he was two spirit, and treated the two personas as separate but equal parties. When Whiteknife was younger he went to one of his elders with the problem that he felt like two people. They told

him that he was two spirit and I asked him about the concept. It was something I was having a hard time understanding up to this point.



"I think two spirited for me is that you have two spirits in you. I think everyone else does as well," Whiteknife explained. "Being accepting of your two spirits means that you are accepting both sides of yourself, your femininity and your masculinity.

"So, for me, I think that I am two spirited and that I was blessed by the creator and by my ancestors to have the gifts that I'm able to accept my two spirits."

Whiteknife told me about the extreme trauma he suffered through as a child, something I promised I wouldn't talk about in detail—but I can say it was abuse of both a sexual and emotional nature. Because of this, Whiteknife lives with **Dissociative Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**. Dissociative Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder can manifest itself in the sufferer being able to dissociate from reality—meaning that they can remove themselves from their body. It is a triggerable illness. For a long time, his trigger was the smell of grass—something extremely common in Alberta. Whiteknife has learned to control his trigger in order to become Iceis Rain.

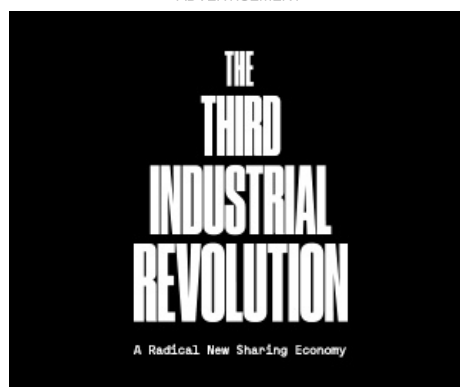
The relationship between Iceis and Whiteknife is mutually beneficial. The two personas made a promise to each other early on, in that Iceis will make Whiteknife strong and confident and in turn he will help her achieve her musical dreams. It was a deal they were both able to keep: Whiteknife gained success with Iceis Safety and, in the last few years, Iceis Rain's recording career started taking off.



She first gained prominence on the acclaimed Canadian documentary [Oil Sands Karaoke](#), and she has since released her [first album](#). The album was nominated for both Best New Artist and Best Rock CD at the 2014 Aboriginal People's Choice Music Awards where she also performed "The Queen," the title track of her album. Together, the two run a successful anti-bullying non-profit organization.

All is not perfect for the two, however. Whiteknife spoke of the extreme loneliness that comes with having two sides to one person, and how it can make holding a stable relationship extremely difficult.

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There seems to be an uneven balance when it comes to who bears the brunt of the loneliness. The soft-spoken and submissive Whiteknife seems to carry the weight and the confident Iceis is typically surrounded by friends. "A queen has to have a court to hold," Hagen told me.

"I am the one that gets the loneliest. Iceis Rain, she doesn't get lonely, she doesn't really get that emotional, she's very driven because she is very

young," Whiteknife said. "She only turned 18 recently, so she's in a stage right now of her life that she wants to get back that creativity that she had when she was a child, when she was not even created yet.

"When she was a part of my soul—my spirit—screaming to get out."

Our conversation ended when we arrived at the condo. But it wasn't yet time to meet Iceis. What I never realized about a man getting dressed up as a woman was the sheer amount of work that goes into it. It takes a long time, and for the next two to three hours, Whiteknife diligently put on makeup and got dressed.

Then the moment happened: Whiteknife, standing over seven feet in his boots and plaid skirt, grabbed the wig from Skylar. He saw how he was being watched with baited breath.

"It's not like I turn into a monster, you guys," he said and flipped his hair back.

And there was Iceis.



She was just as Massey had described. She was lovely and confident, and had an extremely quick wit. While she was picking out her outfit, Hagen asked her about the struggle between Iceis and Whiteknife.

"I'm scared that if I do want to transition and become Iceis full time, is it too late, because I will be an 18-year-old in a 36-year-old's body," she said. "Would that ruin Iceis Safety and the company that Massey built? On the

other side, it would be how would Iceis Rain survive if Massey didn't exist. Massey created me.

"How would I be able to live with myself if I defeated him?"



Everything seemed to stop at this moment. The subject of becoming one of the personalities full time was one that hadn't been broached, and the bluntness in which Iceis spoke of the notion had taken us all by shock. Finally, the silence was broken by Kroetschs, the videographer for Queer Places.

"Can I ask one question? Would that be like killing a person? Or is that a stupid question?"

There was a long silence in the room.

"No. That's my biggest question I have. I think it would be like I decided to do that. I can't even say it," she paused, "but yet I want it.

"I don't know. Would it be accepted by my friends? I don't think that Massey would exist anymore; he's just been through so much. When I turned 35 last year, that's when I really started to think about Iceis Rain taking over. So I have been talking to counsellors about it and wondering if Iceis did take over full time, maybe Massey would die at 35."

With that she did up her final bootstrap and told us it was time to go to Bailey's Pub for some karaoke. While there, we got to see Iceis in all of her glory. She was the queen and Bailey's was her court. The moment we

walked in she was approached by a woman originally from the Maritimes, who had seen Oil Sands Karaoke and hugged her. She was surrounded by friends all night. She even got up and was able to sing her own song at karaoke. She got easily the most applause of the evening.



When we got back from karaoke, Hagen and I went out for a nicotine nightcap. While we were lighting up, I asked him a question.

"Darrin, do you think that they will be OK?"

He lit his cigarette.

"Oh, darling," he said. "She's going to be just fine."

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VEGANS

Vegan Activists Still Very Pissed With Chef Who Butchered Deer, Ate Steak in Front of Them

Their demands include forcing the restaurant, Antler, to place an animal rights message in their window.



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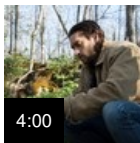
Allison Tierney

Apr 20 2018, 3:05pm

Screenshot via Facebook

A vegan activist group still hasn't let up on protesting outside of local Toronto restaurant Antler Kitchen & Bar.

The activists have now pledged to not halt protests until the restaurant posts the following oddly poetic message in its window, **BlogTO reports**: "Animals' lives are their right. In their desire to live and capacity to suffer, a dog is a pig is a chicken is a boy. Reject Speciesism."



Watch: Behind the Burgers: Antler (Toronto)

In late March, a video of Antler's chef Michael Hunter butchering a deer leg in front of a group of protestors standing outside of Antler's front window, surrounding the entrance of the restaurant.

"He's doing it deliberately to mock and taunt us because we're vegans," someone says behind-camera in the video. "As you can see, the owner has brought the leg of a recently murdered animal to the front of the restaurant to taunt the activists." Amidst the butchering, protesters hold a large black-and-pink banner that reads "MURDER" in front of the window, while more and more people look on.

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The chef disappeared in the back of the restaurant, came back with a cooked piece of meat, and chowed down in front of pissed off onlookers.

Police were even called to the protest to “keep the peace” and briefly talked to the chef. There were no arrests made.

Since then, media attention around the incident escalated, some vegans have decried that the activists hellbent on targeting Antler “don’t speak for all vegans,” and the protests outside of the restaurant have continued. Oh, and Hunter appeared on Joe Rogan’s podcast this Tuesday.

He told Rogan that the rift with vegans started in December after a vegan cyclist riding by took offence to a sign outside the restaurant proclaiming venison was “the new kale.”



“All of a sudden one day, these protesters showed up,” Hunter said. “Originally, I was kind of frustrated because they’re totally misguided... We take a lot of pride in where our food comes from; we have vegan and vegetarian dishes on the menu. I really respect that type of diet.”

Antler is a small restaurant located on Dundas Street West known for spotlighting regional ingredients. Hunter specializes in wild game. In a statement to the National Post, the chef said that Antler’s “identity as a restaurant is well-known throughout the city, as is our ethical farming and foraging initiatives.”

Hunter said on Rogan’s podcast that the protesters started showing up to the restaurant every week, growing in numbers and becoming increasingly agitated. He said they began shouting at customers and in their door in what he said was an effort to harm their business. “I just kind of got fed up,” Hunter explained to Rogan. “I just said screw it, I’m going to get these people out of here.”

The same group of vegan activists have protested fast food chains in the city, such as KFC and McDonald's. **In an April 12 Facebook event**, the group says Antler "is an important place to educate on speciesism." Speciesism is an animal rights term concerning discrimination between species—that is, favouring one over another.

The organizer of the event wrote on its description that Antler is a key place to "educate on speciesism" because "the public sees the chef as the victim, rather than the animals being killed and eaten."

So will Antler's chef agree to post the animal rights activists' message about speciesism in his window?

"We're not going to, there's no way," he said on Rogan's podcast, "but that's what they want."



TAGGED: [RESTAURANT](#), [JOE ROGAN](#), [TORONTO](#), [CHEF](#), [PROTEST](#), [VEGANISM](#), [CANADIAN NEWS](#), [ANTLER](#), [MICHAEL HUNTER](#), [SPECIESISM](#)

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I'm a Teen from Newtown Who's Fighting for Gun Control

Jenny Wadhwa was in sixth grade when a gunman attacked Sandy Hook Elementary and murdered 26 of her friends and neighbours.



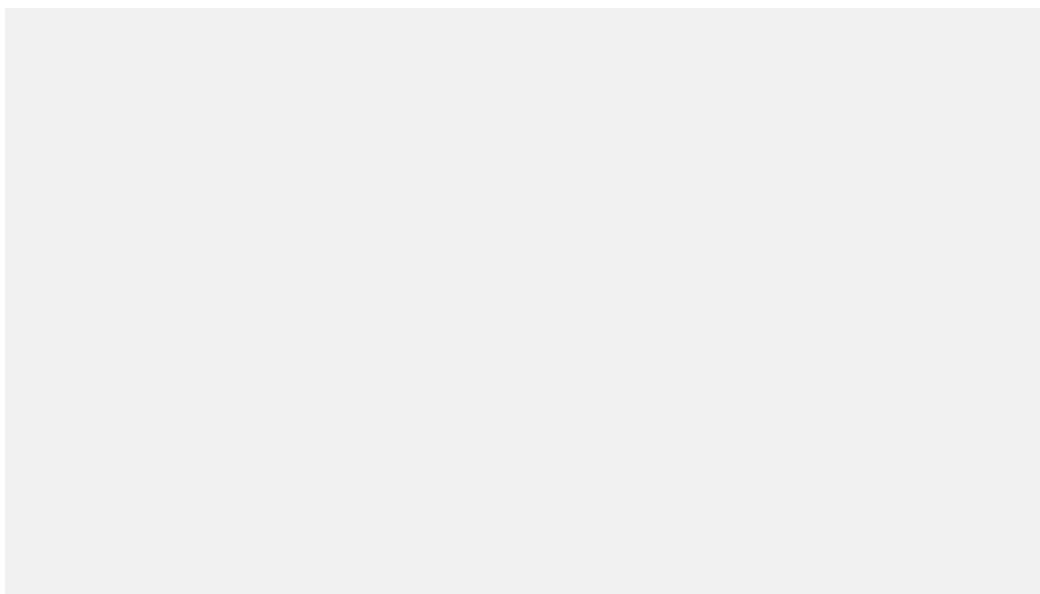
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Jenny Wadhwa

Apr 20 2018, 2:30pm

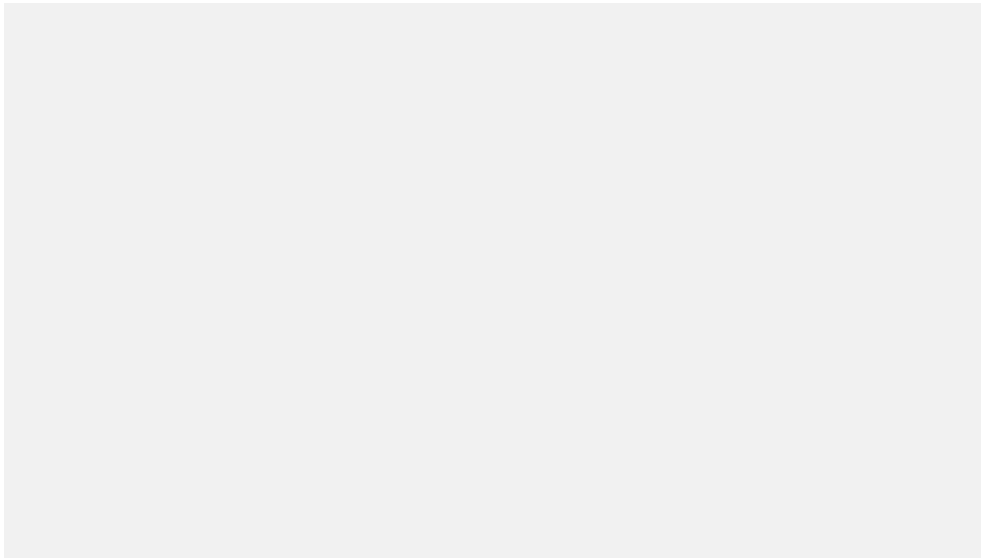


The author participates in a protest at the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). All images courtesy Jenny Wadhwa

I know the feeling of helplessness wrought by a headline. Then two headlines. And, before you know it, even more: 26 dead in massacre at elementary school; gunman kills nine at church Bible study; active shooter has YouTube headquarters on lockdown.

The shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary changed me. I live in Newtown, Connecticut, the small picturesque town that used to be known for its incredible ice cream, not mass murder. On December 14, 2012, the day of the attack, I was in sixth grade at Reed Intermediate School, which is down the road from Sandy Hook. But I still feel its repercussions. I'm in high school now, and instead of prom and SAT prep, I'm thinking about gun violence prevention. Celebrating my Sweet 16 feels wrong when I could be planning forums and writing speeches.

I didn't choose this path, but when you lose a friend or see the impact of murder on a community, you have no choice but to do something. The shooting at Sandy Hook killed my neighbors and friends. It had me scared for my life for five hours and made me feel like the world was my enemy.



The author's sixth grade yearbook photo

I will never forget the tone of the principal on the loudspeaker when he told us to "get into lockdown." Our teacher beckoned us in a hushed tone to get under the computer desks in the corner and stay quiet. We sat under those desks playing hand games for what seemed like forever.

The cell phone in my teacher's pocket rang endlessly. When he finally decided to answer it, he was told what was happening three miles down the road at Sandy Hook Elementary. The look on his face told us we had something real to be afraid of. When we were finally allowed to leave, a barricade of teachers shielded us from the open hallway.



Read: Sandy Hook Families Are Still Fighting

My mom was waiting outside. I'd never seen her cry like that before. We spent the rest of the afternoon calling our friends to check that their younger siblings at Sandy Hook made it home. For 20 families whose children were gunned down, the answer was unimaginable. They never got to grow up, never hugged their moms again like I did.

My peers and I have been dubbed the "Mass Shooting Generation." I hate that label, because it defines us by what's being done to us instead of what we are actually doing: demanding change. Teenagers all over the country are sick of waiting for legislators to keep us safe. We're taking gun control into our own hands.



The author (left) at a vigil for Parkland

After Sandy Hook, I felt compelled to do anything—no matter how small—that might make a difference. My sister and I organized bake sales around the country to raise money for the Newtown Memorial Fund. As 11-year-olds, selling cupcakes in front of Walmarts made us feel like we were taking action—and helped us heal a tiny bit.

My high school, Newtown High, is like any other: kids are busy with homework, sports, clubs, and jobs. But we're also trying to chip away at our own feeling of helplessness by giving back. We write **letters to other victims** of school shootings to make them feel less alone. It sounds cheesy, but a handwritten note to a grieving teen—or a note to demand action from a member of Congress—can have a huge impact.

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We're also working to change gun laws through the **Junior Newtown Action Alliance**. The most tangible way to enact legislation is to get people to vote. We're working so kids like me, who are still too young, can automatically get a voter registration form on their 17th birthday.

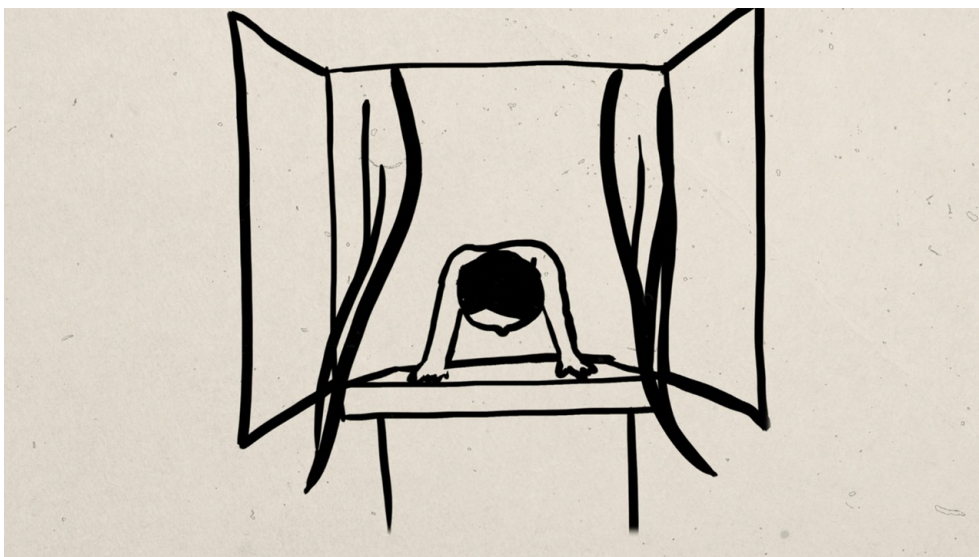


Read: These School Shooting Survivors Have Something to Say

Another aspect of our work with the Junior Newtown Action Alliance is raising awareness. One committee is filming videos of students recounting their Sandy Hook stories. A few friends and I are working on an Instagram page called @HumansOfNewtownCT to put a face on the impact of gun violence and show how one AR-15 affected so many more people than those who were actually struck by bullets. I believe if we can get the world to empathize with us, the opposition will have no choice but to listen.

It feels like we are finally beginning to move forward. The fact that this is becoming a national issue instead of one that's clustered around small towns and groups of people who feel uniquely affected is huge. It seems

like America is finally on our side—and that factions of gun violence prevention movements are unifying. The baby steps we were making before are becoming big leaps.



Now I'm interning at **The Avielle Foundation**, founded by the parents of Avielle Richman, a girl who was murdered at Sandy Hook. They're studying the science behind violence and compassion to try to understand what drives people to kill.

But beyond understanding why these things happen, I wanted to be capable of literally saving lives. I decided to become an EMT, and for five months, in four-hour adult classes, three nights a week, I learned how to be a **first responder**. For what it's worth, this was well before Rick Santorum absurdly suggested teaching children to perform CPR on wounded friends as a way to reduce casualties from school shootings.

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Moving forward, teens need to continue to put pressure on politicians who are taking money from the NRA. We need to keep exposing them, because it could have a tremendous impact on the way people vote. We also need to keep sharing our stories. This issue is so much more widespread than people think. By combining our efforts with teenagers from Chicago and Harlem, we can amplify our voices that much more.

The author (center) with other teens protesting at NRA Headquarters



Read: Parkland Has Already Changed America

I had the pleasure of meeting Aalayah Eastmond, a student from **Marjory Stoneman Douglas High**, and Ramon Contreras, a student from Harlem, at a protest at **NRA Headquarters** last week. They are organizing a Youth Over Guns march in New York City on June 2 to raise awareness of gun violence in communities of color and nationally. We are hoping for a large turnout to really take a stand and give places that get overlooked by the media a chance to tell their stories.

In Newtown, we're still scared. We had a fire drill today, and even though it was scheduled, I felt a flash of panic and thought to myself, "In Parkland, he pulled the fire alarm to get students out of their classrooms." My apprehension to walk into the hallway and out of the school, is not exclusive to me—it's felt all across America. What people need to realize is that we're not scared of mental illness or unarmed guards, we're scared of guns and inaction. We need to come together and do something about gun violence now, before another community is torn apart and another town becomes known for mass murder.

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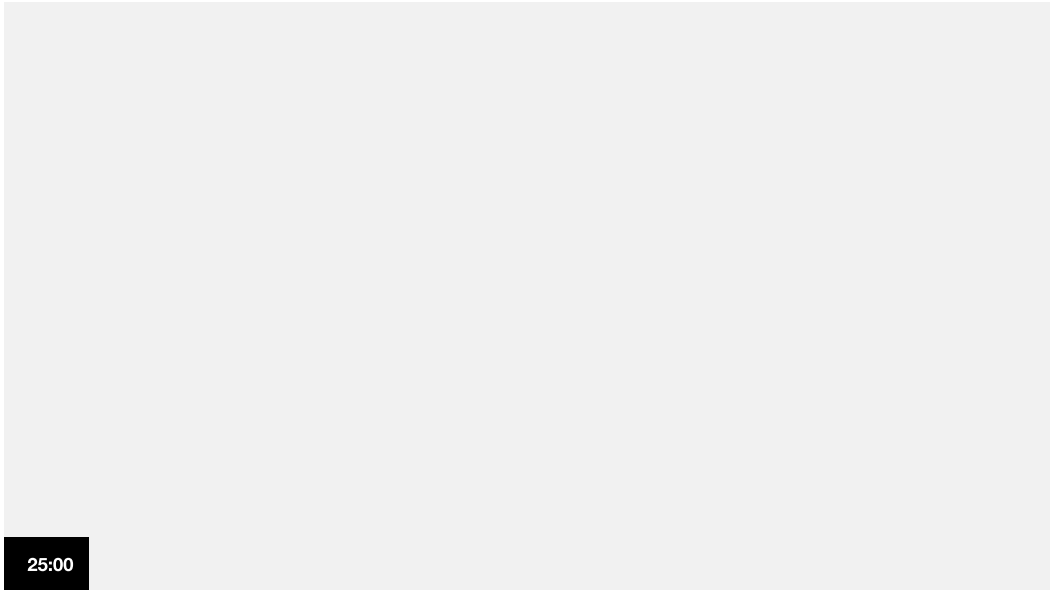
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