**In ‘Breakdown in Maine,’ FRONTLINE, Maine Public & the Portland Press Herald Investigate the Deadliest Mass Shooting in Maine’s History**

[***Breakdown in Maine***](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/breakdown-in-maine/)

December 10, 2024  
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In 2023, there were 656 mass shootings in the United States. The one in Lewiston, Maine — where an Army reservist killed 18 people and wounded 13 — was the year’s deadliest.

A new documentary premiering Dec. 10 investigates the massacre and the missed opportunities to prevent it. 

From the PBS investigative series [FRONTLINE](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/breakdown-in-maine/) and its [Local Journalism Initiative](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/topic/local-journalism/) partners the [*Portland Press Herald*](http://pressherald.com)and [Maine Public](http://mainepublic.org), [***Breakdown in Maine***](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/breakdown-in-maine/) examines a series of missteps by the military, local law enforcement and mental health providers before the tragedy. The documentary also probes Maine’s unique gun laws and details the shooter’s brain injuries, possibly sustained during his time as an Army grenade instructor. 

“There were breakdowns on a whole lot of levels,” *Portland* *Press Herald* reporter John Terhune says in the documentary. “It wasn't one mistake. It wasn't one person, wasn't one institution.”

Directed by Bronwyn Berry and produced by James Blue, ***Breakdown in Maine*** examines the devastating impact of the shooting, including on Maine’s Deaf community, which lost four people that day. 

"Whose fault is it? Who do we blame?" asks Megan Vozzella, whose husband, Steve, was killed in the shooting. "It makes me angry. He could have been stopped."

For the past year, Maine Public and the *Portland Press Herald*, along with FRONTLINE, have covered the Lewiston tragedy and its aftermath, combing through documents, listening to testimony and conducting dozens of interviews. 

The reporting teams found “countless instances where, if things were done a little bit differently, this may not have happened,” says Maine Public reporter Steve Mistler.

***Breakdown in Maine*** builds on the *Portland* *Press Herald’s* [in-depth stories](https://www.pressherald.com/breakdown/) and an ongoing [limited-series podcast](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/podcast/breakdown/) from Maine Public. To make the podcast accessible to the Deaf community, FRONTLINE is producing ASL-interpreted videos for each episode that will be available on YouTube soon.

The projects are part of FRONTLINE’s Local Journalism Initiative, an innovative effort to support and amplify investigative reporting in local newsrooms around the country. LJI launched in 2019 with funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and is based in FRONTLINE’s newsroom at GBH in Boston.

“Over the past five years, our Local Journalism Initiative partners have done remarkable reporting on everything [from](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/police-on-trial/) [policing](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/shots-fired/) to [lead poisoning](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/topic/poisoned/) to [mental health care](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/fractured/) in the criminal justice system,” says FRONTLINE Editor-in-Chief and Executive Producer Raney Aronson-Rath. “We are proud to work with Maine Public and the *Portland Press Herald* on ***Breakdown in Maine***,the latest chapter of this collaborative reporting effort.”

“This story is important not just because it has impacted so many lives, but also because of the lessons we can learn from investigating what may have been the most preventable mass shooting in recent history,” says director Bronwyn Berry.

“This project has highlighted the importance of having journalists rooted in local communities who are able to build trusting relationships that open deep veins of reporting to local, regional, and national levels,” says Mark Simpson, Maine Public's Director of News & Public Affairs. “Our partnership locally with the *Portland Press Herald* builds on efforts to provide accountability reporting, and our pairing with FRONTLINE levels up all our work. This project has also inspired conversations about what accessibility means across different platforms, particularly for the Maine Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. It’s made us aware of new approaches to our reporting and expanded our thinking.”  
  
“Even a state that often feels isolated from national turmoil can become the scene of unimaginable violence,” says Julia Arenstam, Portland Press Herald Managing Editor of News & Culture. “It was important to us to investigate the causes behind this tragedy for the people of Maine, for the victims and for the survivors. Working alongside FRONTLINE and Maine Public has allowed us to tell their stories, many in their own words. We are incredibly thankful for their trust in us and to be able to provide rigorous accountability reporting about what led up to the deadliest mass shooting in Maine’s history.”   
  
For the full story, watch [***Breakdown in Maine***](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/breakdown-in-maine/)*.*The documentary will be available to watch at [pbs.org/frontline](http://pbs.org/frontline) and in the [PBS App](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-app/) starting Dec. 10, 2024, at 7/6c. It will premiere on PBS stations ([check local listings](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/schedule/)), at [mainepublic.org](http://mainepublic.org) and [pressherald.com](http://pressherald.com), and on [FRONTLINE’s YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/@frontline) at 10/9c. The documentary will also be available on the [PBS Documentaries Prime Video Channel](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/storefront?ie=UTF8&benefitId=pbsdoc&pd_rd_w=jaV9l&pf_rd_p=4f4681c1-4528-47dd-bf61-c66d47adf7b6&pf_rd_r=GWK5A5WZXH14FH1CMMFK&pd_rd_r=2ec562c2-91bf-4a09-86ad-3939e089fa8d&pd_rd_wg=H6VfQ&qid=1624645405&linkCode=ll2&tag=sem_docs_general-20&linkId=f7030805de511b99f54545eb0528ac55&language=en_US&ref_=as_li_ss_tl&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwqpSwBhClARIsADlZ_TkFmLOYNmGC4DbSWExsBtyGErOVIY2bskq70E3cnKoiekzZQKcpprcaAtHVEALw_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds). [Subscribe to FRONTLINE’s newsletter](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/newsletter-subscriptions/) to get updates on events, [podcast episodes](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/podcast/breakdown/) and more related to ***Breakdown in Maine***.   
  
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**Credits**  
***Breakdown in Maine*** is a FRONTLINE Production with Storyboard Studios LLC.  The director is Bronwyn Berry. The producer is James Blue. The writers are Bronwyn Berry & James Blue. The journalists from the *Portland Press Herald* are Julia Arenstam and John Terhune; and from Maine Public, Steve Mistler and Susan Sharon. The CEO and Publisher of the Maine Trust for Local News/*Portland Press Herald* is Lisa DeSisto. The President and CEO of Maine Public is Rick Schneider. The senior editor of FRONTLINE’s Local Journalism Initiative is Erin Texeira. The editor-in-chief and executive producer of FRONTLINE is Raney Aronson-Rath.   
  
**About FRONTLINE**FRONTLINE, U.S. television’s longest running investigative documentary series, explores the issues of our times through powerful storytelling. FRONTLINE has won an Academy Award® as well as every major journalism and broadcasting award, including 108 Emmy Awards and 34 Peabody Awards. Visit [pbs.org/frontline](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/) and follow us on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3ScyryU9Oy9Wse3a8OAmYQ), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/frontlinepbs/), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/frontline-pbs), [X](https://twitter.com/frontlinepbs) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/frontline) to learn more. FRONTLINE is produced at GBH in Boston and is broadcast nationwide on PBS. Funding for FRONTLINE is provided through the support of PBS viewers and by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Additional support for FRONTLINE is provided by the Abrams Foundation, Park Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Heising-Simons Foundation, and the FRONTLINE Journalism Fund, with major support from Jon and Jo Ann Hagler on behalf of the Jon L. Hagler Foundation, from Koo and Patricia Yuen, and from Laura DeBonis. Additional support for *Breakdown in Maine* is provided by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

**About Maine Public**Maine Public is Maine’s premier, independent media resource, dedicated to creating exceptional opportunities for the communities it serves to engage with critical issues, compelling stories, and quality entertainment. Maine Public is renowned for creating award-winning programs, as well as airing content from PBS, NPR, and other independent producers. Formed in 1992, Maine Public is an independently owned and operated nonprofit organization with office and studio locations in Bangor, Augusta, Lewiston, and Portland, Maine. For more information, visit mainepublic.org. 

**About the *Portland Press Herald***The *Portland Press Herald* has long been Maine's go-to source for local news, sports, business and listings. The *Portland Press Herald* is part of the Maine Trust for Local News, the state’s largest network of independent news and media outlets. With 158 journalists on staff, the network serves audiences through five daily newspapers and 17 hyper-local weekly newspapers, in print and online. The Maine Trust for Local News is a subsidiary of the National Trust for Local News, a nonprofit committed to conserving and operating vibrant, sustainable local news enterprises across the country. **Press Contact:** Anne Husted, Associate Director of Publicity, Communications and Awards | frontlinemedia@wgbh.org | 617.300.5312