The events of that epic day in Newtown are captured through the separate, but interwoven experiences of five people: The Neighbor, The EMT, The Mother, The Cop, The Governor.

The Neighbor

Around 9:15 a.m., Gene Rosen hops shoes. Must be firewood, he thinks, as he walks up the stairs to the loft above his garage in his Riverside Road home. No hunter in his right mind would use that many rounds, and so near an elementary school. Rosen, 60, and a retired psychologist, goes about feeding his cat and two others he rescued.

The EMT

Just up the street, Cathy Dahmeyer hears the shots, too. God, are they real, she counts. The sounds make three rescue dogs jump. Probably as car backfiring, she says to herself. The one-story ranch house where Dahmeyer and her grown daughter live is on Sunnyview Terrace, across from the school and near the Sandy Hook firehouse. Dahmeyer had come home anchor or so earlier from working the night shift as an advanced emergency technician for the Newtown Volunteer Ambulance Corps. A busy night. Four calls, one every couple of hours. She has barely lain down to get some sleep.

The Mother

Across town, Therese Lessik pops open her Dell laptop in her home office. Earlier, she sent her 7-year-old daughter Eva off to kindergarten at Sandy Hook Elementary, tossing some tissues into her snack bag and watching her out to the bus stop. Now, an automated reverse 911 call comes in on her phone, telling of a shooting in town. Lessik, 50, isn’t scared. Probably a bank job, like the one a few years ago.

It’s the 15th year the Lessiks have lived in this big, comfortable, yellow Colonial near Sandy Hook Elementary, turning out to be more tolerable than others. Names of the injured and their conditions weren’t available Sunday night, MTA Assistant Police Chief Steve Connor said.

The Cop

Newtown’s iconic flagpole, 25, just down the hill from Sandy Hook Elementary, is a meeting place for five years. The 29-year-old officer has to take care of some routine business. He has been on the force five years. He has been on the force five years.

The Governor

And in Hartford, Gov. Dannel P. Malloy is about to preside over a meeting at the state Capitol to discuss health and human service issues with several of his commissioners. The previous evening, the governor hosted a Christmas party for 36 state senators, one of a series of such holiday events, some more tolerable than others.

He had gone jogging shortly after dawn, running a 22-minute circuit near Elizabeth Park, shoveling, then grabbing a cup of coffee for a to-go breakfast.

For their stories: See paper A13, A14.
Around 9:30 a.m., the Newtown police dispatch operator alerts units that a caller has reported a shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary.

Officer William Chapman bolts from his desk and out to his car. The school is three miles away — up the hill, a right on Church Hill Road, under Interstate 84 and by the shops and restaurants of Sandy Hook's four corners and past the cemetery with its iTunes gray tombstones dating to 1813. There's a light in the hallway, and that's why Chapman drives to Sandy Hook. He is on his cellphone with his rifle ready as he pulls into the school parking lot.

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A woman bus driver is with the students at Sandy Hook Volunteer Fire & Rescue. Hundreds of concerned families and friends are milling around. Reporters and photographers are mapping the property. Cars are clogging the road.

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Malloy says the elementary school shooting was not unlike the recent one from Sandy Hook Elementary School. "I give him a big hug," Dahlmeyer says. "No words are necessary. He knows, we know that little girl's family is in his arms, but he ends up working.

During the Christmas season, Thomas quickly explains to Era what happened. 

"She said, she demanded to know," LeSick says. 

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