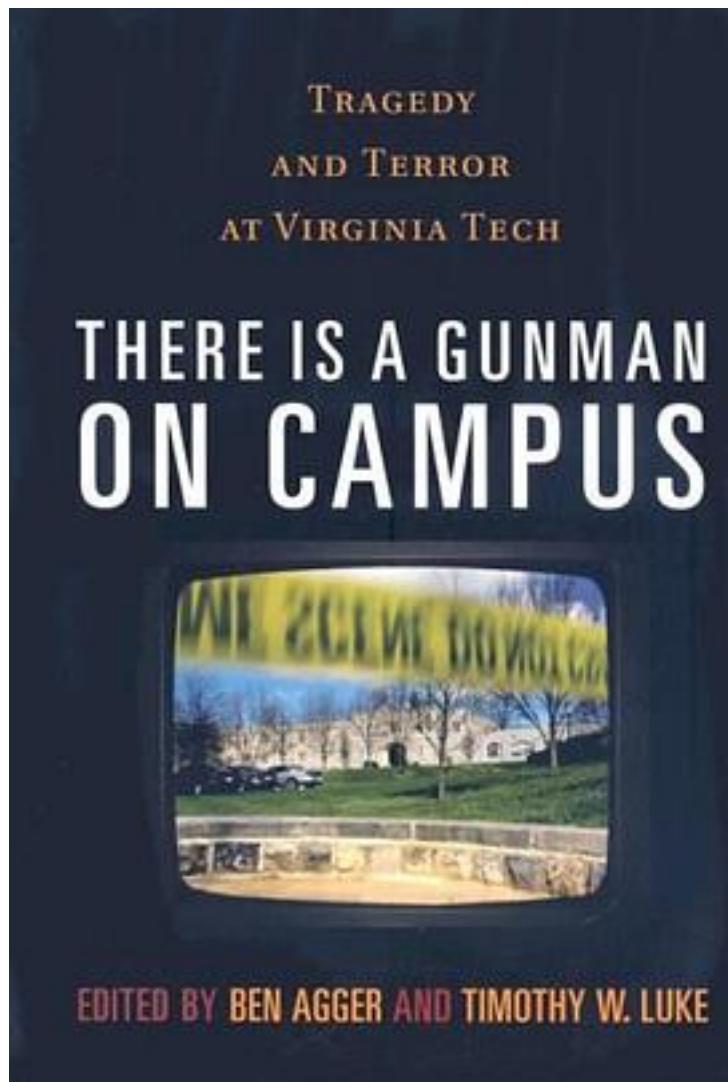


There is a Gunman on Campus



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著者:Agger, Ben (EDT)/ Luke, Timothy W. (EDT)

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In our media-saturated culture, momentous events occur quickly, as news and images are broadcast around the country and the world. We are often riveted by the news and our everyday reality is suddenly changed. Yet, almost as quickly, that critical event is replaced by a new story. The old event fades from memory, and we move on to the next thing before understanding why it commanded our attention and how our world was changed. On April 16, 2007, such an event occurred on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, Virginia. That day a student killed 32 of his classmates and professors and then turned the gun on himself. The media focused their power and our attention on the campus, the students and faculty of Virginia Tech, and the gunman and his victims. But we have yet to understand fully what happened in Blacksburg. There is a Gunman on Campus brings our thoughts back to the shocking campus shootings and the public reactions to the event, shining needed light on what occurred at the university, how American society reacted, and how it all fits into contemporary culture. The contributors to this insightful and compelling volume preserve and deepen our memory of April 16th. Many of the authors are distinguished men and women of letters, and some were on the Virginia Tech campus the day when the shots rang out. From the psychology of the shooter to the role of media in covering the event to parallels to other American tragedies such as Columbine, the chapters constitute an incisive portrait of early 21st century America.

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