

Jon Romano

(Letter to the Albany Times Union from Prison)

To the Editor,

My name is Jon Romano and on February 9th, 2004, I was the Columbia High School shooter. I would appreciate if you printed my following message about school shootings. Also be sure to print all of it, and not changed around.

To the readers,

My name is Jon Romano, and at seventeen years old I'm at Clinton Correctional Facility. On February 9th, 2004, I was the shooter at Columbia High School. It was the worst mistake I ever made, and now I want to make sure others don't make the same mistake. For the readers that are still students, life can feel hard, I know. You might have plenty of problems and be having a horrible time. But I want you to remember, when it comes to suicide or homicide, it's a permanent answer to a temporary problem. There's other ways of doing things. Talking to someone, a therapist, priest or another religious figure (even if you're not religious they'll help). If medication ends up being best for you, find the right one for you, and stay on it even when you feel better.

Also remember things don't always go the way you plan. I just wanted to commit suicide and ended up with a twenty year prison sentence. I never expected to end up in prison, I didn't plan leaving that school alive. So never risk doing something that might have you end up in prison because things might happen differently than you expect.

I learned a lot of things once my freedom was taken away. The most important thing is how precious life is. I learned how to appreciate everything, enjoy the simple pleasures in life, and how to make the best of things. I was sixteen years, three months and ten days old when I got arrested. The smallest amount of time I have to do in prison is seventeen years, one month and four days. But you know what, I'm making the best of it.

It was said that I “studied” Columbine and was trying to repeat it. That’s just ridiculous. Plenty of things were said by the D.A. that were ridiculous, like that I wasn’t sorry. I’ve prayed for all those who were affected on that day. I’ve apologized to many, and been forgiven by many more. I now pray for those killed, wounded, and for the family of all those affected in the latest shooting in Minnesota.

Please nobody follow in mine or other’s footsteps by bringing a weapon to school. Please don’t even try to take your own life. Life is too precious whether you notice or not. Always remember if you hurt yourself or others, you’ll also be hurting your family and loved ones or theirs.

Jon Romano