

# Alumnus and FBI Veteran Philip Andrew Shares Real-Life Negotiation Lessons

*Andrew once convinced a mass shooter to let his parents go. Now this retired FBI agent is sharing his negotiation expertise with DePaul students.*

By Robin Florzak | Photos by Kathy Hillegonds / May 16, 2018 / Posted in: Alumni, Faculty / [Twitter](#) / [Facebook](#)



DePaul alumnus and retired FBI agent Philip Andrew uses his crisis negotiations experience to teach business students negotiation techniques.

Retired Special Agent Philip Andrew (JD '95) draws on his experience as an FBI crisis negotiator and trainer to co-teach a course in negotiation skills to students at DePaul University's Driehaus College of Business. But the most pivotal negotiation of Andrew's life actually happened when he was a college student himself, 30 years ago this month.

May 20, 1988 was a "day full of promise," recalls Andrew, who was 20 years old at the time. He was looking forward to starting a summer internship with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office after completing his sophomore year at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He was back in his childhood home in Winnetka, Ill., chatting with his mother in the kitchen, when a woman with a gun

walked in their back door.

Her name was Laurie Dann—a name that would dominate the headlines for weeks after that day. Dann had just committed a series of attacks in the Andrews' North Shore community, culminating in a mass shooting at the nearby Hubbard Woods School. An 8-year-old boy was killed, and five other children were wounded.

Andrew, his mother Ruth Ann, and his father, Raymond, who came to the kitchen a short time later, didn't know about the violent rampage or who Dann was. They only knew that she was armed and frightened.

"We learned that she was afraid, that something had happened," Andrew recalls. "She told us a story that she had been attacked and was running from the person who attacked her. She said she shot the attacker. But she was also pretty clear that we were her hostages and that she did not want us close to her. She had us at gunpoint, so what she told us was a little incongruent."

For the next 90 minutes, Andrew and his parents talked with Dann, trying to find out what had happened and to negotiate their release. "We listened and we didn't threaten," Andrew says.

"We showed empathy." Andrew's mother gave a pair of shorts to Dann, who had shed her bloody pants before entering the home. "We learned that she lived nearby, that her parents lived nearby," Andrew recalls. He offered Dann the use of the family's phone to call her parents, and Dann called them. This allowed Andrew to ask for something in return.

"She was worried about other people coming into the house, so we offered to send my mother out to stop anyone from coming into the house. She agreed to that."

With Andrew's mother safe, Andrew and his father continued to negotiate with Dann. At a certain point, however, he and his father felt they had exhausted their options and had to try a different tactic. "We were concerned about her increasing level of agitation and erratic-ness," he says. "So, we just said we were leaving and that she could stay in the house where it was safe.

"We made a move for the door, and she pointed the gun at me. I said I would stay if she let my father go. She agreed to that." It was a pretty high-stakes negotiation to make at a young age.

Now alone with an increasingly anxious Dann, Andrew decided that his best chance for escape would be to disarm her.

"She looks to one side, and I think, this might be the moment (to go for the gun)," Andrew recalls. "I see a flash, I hear a pop and I think, 'she's shooting at me.'"

Dann shot Andrew in the right side of his chest. The bullet pierced both of his lungs, tore through his esophagus, stomach and pancreas, nicked his pericardium and lodged in his back. He didn't realize he had been shot, however, until he felt his lungs constricting and saw blood flowing down his chest as he fled the house.

"I was able to move, but slowly, losing lung capacity with every breath I took because my lungs were collapsing," he recalls. He ran to the police, who had been closing in on the house.

Andrew was a champion high school and college swimmer, and he says this helped him stay conscious as paramedics stabilized him and rushed him to the hospital. "It reminded me very much of the end of a swimming race, where your lungs are burning because you were holding your breath," he says. "That's the efficient way of finishing a fast race if you like to win. So in many ways, it was comforting to me."

Andrew underwent a 12-hour surgery that saved his life. In the Andrews' home, Dann used the gun to take her own life.

## An Imperative to Help People

Andrew's ordeal had a profound impact on what he decided to do with his life. "I wanted to be somebody engaged in helping people," he says. "Being prepared to help people in the most desperate circumstances became not only an interest, but also an imperative in my life."

After a lengthy hospital stay, Andrew completed his studies at the U of I. His interest in law enforcement and helping others led him to DePaul's School of Law.

"I really liked the scrappiness of DePaul," he says. "It was in this urban environment, and a fair number of those who go to DePaul become prosecutors. I was very dedicated to the idea of becoming a prosecutor." While in school, he became a public voice for gun control and served as the executive director of the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence. He also met his future wife, Michelle (JD '94), who was one year ahead of him in the law program.

After earning his law degree, Andrew completed several internships at the U.S. Attorney's Office and practiced law as an assistant general counsel for the Chicago Housing Authority. He then set a new goal—to join the FBI. In 1997 he was accepted into the FBI's Quantico training program, and soon began his career as an agent in the bureau's Topeka, Kansas office.

While Andrew was well-known in Chicago for his gun control and survivors' rights advocacy in the aftermath of the Winnetka shooting, his fellow FBI agents from other parts of the country didn't know his history. One night in 1999, Andrew was out to dinner with FBI colleagues after attending a conference when he ran into a Chicago friend who brought up the Winnetka shootings.

Andrew's surprised FBI colleagues asked him to share what happened. "I sort of reluctantly told them the story," he says. "As it turned out they were all negotiators, and they said, 'you need to tell that story to FBI crisis negotiators.' That was my entry into the negotiation program."

Andrew learned his craft from the best at the FBI, and then managed high-risk hostage negotiation situations. He also trained hundreds of law enforcement officers in negotiation techniques. Before retiring from the FBI earlier this year after a 21-year career, he served in the bureau's Chicago division as a special agent and Crisis Negotiation Team leader, focusing on gun violence, counterterrorism, counterintelligence and crisis management.

## A Return to DePaul and a New Challenge

Andrew reconnected with DePaul through a talk he gave on high stakes negotiations. Dan Heiser, chair of DePaul's Department of Management & Entrepreneurship, was in the audience, and he realized that DePaul business students could benefit from Andrew's negotiation expertise. He asked Andrew to partner with another adjunct professor at DePaul, Daniel T. Gillespie, an associate Cook County Circuit Court judge, to teach a negotiation skills course to undergraduate business and MBA students. This academic year Andrew and Gillespie have offered the class each quarter.

"During the first part of the course, students bring their real-life negotiation issues to class," explains Andrew. "These range from roommate issues to parenting issues, to sticky issues involving pay raises and job negotiations, and property purchasing issues. What we like to do is to involve the whole class in developing ideas for negotiation strategies. It's a very practical application of what they are learning." For the course's text, Andrew uses "Never Split the Difference: Negotiating As If Your Life Depended On It," a book written by his mentor, FBI hostage negotiator Chris Voss.

While Andrew's students are unlikely to be thrust into the kind of life-and-death situations he has faced, he believes the techniques he teaches will help prepare them for high-risk business negotiations that, if handled badly, could have catastrophic results for their companies and business relationships. "If they want to get good at it, they need to practice," he says. "That's the way we train crisis negotiators."

Andrew's unique experience as an FBI negotiator and gun violence survivor also has led to another opportunity for him to share his knowledge and help others. In February Chicago Archbishop Cardinal Blase J. Cupich appointed Andrew director of Violence Prevention Initiatives, a new position in the archdiocese. Andrew has been charged with leading the archdiocese's anti-violence initiatives through coalition-building and neighborhood revitalization efforts that address the roots of violence in Chicago.

Andrew says the calm, problem-solving approach he has used in negotiations for the past three decades serves him well in his new roles of adjunct professor and peacekeeper.

"It's about being well versed in empathy and active listening, and really trying to understand what somebody's perspective is and the story behind that perspective," he says. "That's very powerful in all circumstances."