

Bowling for columbine

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According to Megan McArdle, " Since 1982, there have been at least 62 mass shootings* across the country, with the killings unfolding in 30 states from Massachusetts to Hawaii. Twenty-five of these mass shootings have occurred since 2006, and seven of them took place in 2012. " Violence in schools as well as the country is on the rise at an alarming rate, raising questions about gun control. After viewing the documentary Bowling for Columbine, I was intrigued. What follows is a summary of the documentary viewed and my thoughtful reaction.

First, the shocking information and summary of school shootings and gun control must be understood. Throughout the documentary, shocking information on school shootings is shown. On April 20, 1999, the town of Littleton, Colorado was changed forever by the violent acts of two students at Columbine High School. According to the documentary, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold started their morning off by bowling at a local bowling alley. Harris and Klebold then proceeded to the high school equipped with ammunition and guns legally purchased at Kmart.

Along with the firearms and ammunition, Harris and Klebold were dressed in long, black trench coats, earning them the name, " Trench Coat Mafia". Once at the school, pipe bombs were set-off, ensuing mass chaos. Harris and Klebold then fired over 900 rounds of ammunition on students and teachers, killing 12 students and 2 teachers followed by committing suicide. After ignoring pleas, the National Rifle Society (NRA) held a pro-gun rally in Littleton, Colorado a mere Ten days after the school shooting at Columbine.

Charleston Heston, NRA President, caused quite a stir when asked to leave and take his guns with saying, " you can pry them from my cold dead

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hands". After Columbine, schools locked down on their students. Many schools enforced new uniform policies to ensure weapons could not be concealed in clothing or other places. Along with clothing options, the definition of weapons changed from guns and knives to paper, chicken strips, hair color, paperclips, kilts, and even finger pointing while saying ' pow-pow'. Numerous things have been blamed for the violence that occurred at Columbine.

Some of these things includemusic, video games, movies, race, the media, bullying, and in Littleton, Lockheed Martin. Lockheed Martin is the world's largest manufacturer of weapons and is responsible for many of the weapons used in wars. On April 20, 1999, President Clinton dropped the biggest assault on Kosovo the war had seen. Lockheed Martin built the majority of the bombs and missiles used. Columbine was not the first and sadly, not the last of school shootings and violence in America. Before the Columbine shooting, Timothy McVey, Terry Nichols, and James Nichols bombed a federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people.

James Nichols was the only member that was not convicted, although all of the planning and bomb construction was done on his organic farm in Decker, Michigan. Moore went to visit Nichols on his farm to interviewhim on his stance on gun control and the Oklahoma City Bombing. Nichols, along with Klebold and Harris, used the Anarchist Cookbook to make many of the bombs used in their acts of violence. When asked why not use words instead of violence, Nichols replied, " The pen is mightier than the sword. But you need to have a sword too if it doesn't work".

Gun Control in America is a very controversial issue. While many states have laws against guns, Virginia, Utah mandates that all citizens must own a weapon. Every year, the United States has over 11, 127 killings by guns, while Germany, France, Canada, U. K. , Australia, and Japan have a combined total of 973 killings per year. Many things such as divorce, poverty, violent music and video games, and a history of violent behavior in the United States have all been speculated as causes for school violence.

While there have been many things blamed as a cause for violence, statistics show that murders have decreased by 20% but the media coverage has gone up by 600%. Each night, the media portrays America as a scary place full of nightmares around every corner, ensuing fear and panic in the general public. In Canada, news coverage is more positive and viewers are not being pumped full of fear daily. While the factors are the same, the rates for violence are far fewer. There is a misconception that Canadians do not own guns, but each family has an average of 7 guns per household.

With less fear and violence, it is common for Canadians to keep their doors unlocked, a theory tested and proved to be true by Moore. Once again tragedy struck in Flint, Michigan on February 29, 2000, when 6-year-old Dedrick Owens shot and killed his classmate, Kayla Rolland. Flint, Michigan has close to 87% of people living below the poverty line and many are enrolled in the 'Welfare to Work' program. The welfare program has many single parents riding a bus for over an hour one-way to a minimum wage job, often leaving children unattended, being the case with Dedrick Owens.

Left unsupervised, Owens was able to access a gun and bring it to school. Many people wanted Owens tried as an adult, although he was only 6 years

old. Eight months after the shooting, Heston and the NRA arrived in Flint, Michigan for the “ Get Out and Vote” campaign. Heston was criticized for, once again, showing up to a town of a recent school shooting. When interviewed by Moore, Heston became very upset and stopped the interview when asked why he comes to towns to hold rallies after school shootings. Next, my thoughtful reaction to the documentary along with questions.

While I found the documentary to be very interesting, I feel that it focused too much on being a smear campaign towards the NRA and showed very little on Columbine, yet the title was Bowling for Columbine. Instead of conveying the severity of the massacre, Moore downplayed the situation by calling Harris and Klebold ‘ boys’. By doing this, Moore made it seem as though Harris and Klebold did not understand what they were doing as well as making them seem more innocent. In reality, Klebold and Harris “ had begun thinking about a large massacre as early as April 1998 - a full year before the actual event” (Rosenberg 1).

Throughout the documentary, Moore creates a lot of false impressions, many of them being with Charleston Heston. For instance, Moore splices many of Heston’s speeches to make it seem as though he is a villain. One particular quote, “ From my cold dead hands” was taken from a speech done one year later in South Carolina, not at the rally held 10 days after in Denver, Colorado shown in Bowling for Columbine. Moore also makes Heston seem like a racist when in fact, Heston worked with Martin Luther King Jr. in protests and helped break Hollywood’s color barrier (hardylaw. net).

Along with false impressions, I was left wondering where Moore got his statistics and information seeing as he listed no sources. According to Moore, <https://assignbuster.com/bowling-for-columbine/>

in 2002 there were 11, 127 deaths by guns in the United States when it is actually closer to 8, 000 (Hardy 1). While the documentary had many things I did not agree with, there were a few that I appreciated. The film opened my eyes to the violence that goes on each day throughout the World. Gun control is a major issue that needs to be addressed, especially the issue of determining how people can obtain weapons and ammunition.

At the end of the film, Moore and two survivors from Columbine get Kmart to stop selling weapons and bullets. Personally, I think this was the most honest and sincere part of the entire documentary. In conclusion, there are many things that I learned after viewing Bowling For Columbine. What followed was a summary of the documentary along with my thoughtful reactions. When asked what he would say to Harris and Klebold if he had the chance, Marylin Manson replied, " Nothing! I would listen, that's what nobody did". Perhaps violence in schools, as well as life, could be reduced if people just took the time to listen.

Works Cited Hardy, David T. Bowling for Columbine. David T. Hardy, Apr. 2003. Web. 12 Mar 2013. McArdle, Megan. Department of Awful Statistics: Are Mass Shootings Really On the Rise? The Daily Beast, 28 Jan. 2013. Web. 12 Mar. 2013. Rosenberg, Jennifer. Columbine Massacre. About, N. d. Web. 12 Mar. 2013