

Genovese syndrom synopsis

Business



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Martin Gansberg's piece, "Thirty – Eight Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police," brings attention to the evils of indifference and the necessity to take action.

Gansberg uses a very real situation which ends up mirroring that of a horror story. Basically, 38 people consciously watch as a young woman, Catherine Genovese gets attacked. These people fail to report it as they didn't wish to get involved which leads to the woman's death. Due to cold hearted peoples' apathy, crimes and other wrong-doings go unreported and unsolved because the onlookers either don't want to get involved or think someone else will take care of it. Catherine Genovese was just your average, everyday citizen walking down the streets when an assailant came out of the shadows and attempted to murder her. Most people have been taught that there is safety in numbers, and people come to help those in need, but this story completely contradicts this.

Genovese ran and screamed but her cries fell on deaf ears as people were more concerned about their own sleep and well-being. The murderer goes on to brutally wound and kill Catherine over three waves of attacks, but what is completely shocking is nobody attempted to lend a single hand or say anything except for one man. The kindest, most caring citizen in the whole neighborhood yells "let that girl alone!" down to the attacker and then goes back to his own business, as though the only thing he wanted was his peace and quiet. On the other hand, the rest of the neighbors clearly didn't even want to make any more noise as they all stay quiet huddled up in their comfy living quarters. This undoubtedly shows just how heartless and caring

these people are. These people even confess to the cops later on their knowledge of the attack and that they just failed to take action.

When asked why, they say, “ I was tired” or “ I didn’t want to get involved” and “ Frankly, we were afraid”. They just stood in front of a cop and said their peace and comfort was more important than saving the life of an innocent girl. The people in this story, no doubt, are lacking a heart and the compassion for others that we today associate as a normal human characteristic. The events that unfolded on that one late night are very tragic and although they may seem extremely rare, are not. It may be quite uncommon for it to occur on such a large scale, but people standing back and just thinking someone else is going to take action is quite common.

Even today, “ social scientists still debate the causes of what is now known as the ‘ Genovese Syndrome.’” Referring to people seeing and not acting as the thought of getting involved is too much or else they think someone else is going to so why bother. When in some cases there is an actually reason that prevents people from acting such as no means of calling or the people are too old, this wasn’t the case. It was pure negligence and indifference about this women’s wellbeing and more caring on their personal life that caused the onlookers to not speak up. The Genovese Syndrome basically explores and explains the evils of a group of people such as it did in the story by showing that the people really just care about themselves. Overall this is a very sad story in which a young woman died for no reason.

Although we may not like to think so, this still happens in our modern world. It is incredibly hard to stop this as we are dealing with people and their

attitudes, but increasing awareness certainly helps. The people in this story are cruel, insensitive, and heartless onlookers to a murder in which they are just as guilty as the murderer. This story showed the evils of mankind with the only positive being that it got the word out, and maybe next time someone sees some wrongdoing they will remember the Genovese syndrome and take action.