

Seung-hui cho: man-made monster

Psychology



**ASSIGN
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We hear stories about abstract monsters in childhood, grow up watching the news showcase these animalistic criminals and learn about the traits that make them different from the rest of society. However, what happens when society itself creates these monsters? Seung-Hui Cho was a fourth-year student at Virginia Tech who executed one of the worst massacres in American history. Though he was both a victim and a victimizer, Cho was victimized by society around him and his mental illnesses that went untreated long before he carried out any victimizing of his own.

Psychologically, Cho was a very disturbed individual who suffered from selective mutism and depression. He fell victim to these mental illnesses that hindered his ability to communicate and form relationships. Because Cho was also an immigrant, there was a double language barrier in addition to a cultural barrier that left him unable to conform to societal norms and therefore, alienated. So, do we blame the students who bullied Cho or the teachers who dismissed his social anxiety? Do we blame violence in American culture or perhaps, American gun laws?

When it comes down to how this tragedy could have been prevented, it's important to keep in mind that there are various factors that led to it as a collective. Cho had a history of being mentally unstable and raised a fleet of red flags with his stalking, suicidal behavior and occurrences with the police. This tragedy could have been avoided with proper lockdown of the campus after the first spree, tighter gun control policies and/or if Cho had received consistent treatment. The biggest fault, however, was the lack of involvement displayed by law enforcement and mental health professionals throughout Cho's descent into madness.

After being ruled potentially dangerous to himself and others by the court, he was let go after a night's detainment. He then was released with a court order to obtain treatment, which he never complied to. Unfortunately, nobody followed through. The honesty of the situation though, is that nobody will ever know how it could have been avoided. The Virginia Tech massacre was the product of a number of things: untreated mental illness, societal ignorance, cultural influence and lack of a support system. It was a gruesome shooting that made individuals think, is the monster the thing under the bed or the thing sleeping in it?