



My Twisted World

Elliot Rodger

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A 141-page manifesto/autobiography of Elliot Rodger. He details his life, his motivation for the 2014 Isla Vista attack, and his plans for carrying out the massacre.

-----NOTE TO READERS:-----

This manifesto contains graphic descriptions of violence, some sexuality, and misogynistic and racist remarks. Reader discretion is advised. Content is not suitable for minors.

My Twisted World Details

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From Reader Review My Twisted World for online ebook

Jayden gonzalez says

My Twisted World contains some of the most cogently argued reviews of the hottest movies, video games, and even fantasy novels of the past two decades. Its author, the late Elliot Rodger, whisks the reader away with him on a wide-ranging discussion on the relative merits of blockbuster films like *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, *Star Wars Episode III: The Revenge of the Sith*, as well as the hit HBO fantasy series *A Game of Thrones*. If you're not a film buff, no need to worry: there's plenty here for game fans to sink their teeth into, including an in-depth appraisal of *Pokemon: Red Version* and the inspiring tale of how he overcame a debilitating *World of Warcraft* addiction. Spliced in between these offerings of pop cultural wisdom are humorous personal anecdotes of Rodger's--or should I call them rants?--that ensure that the reader will never be bored.

Overall I award this collection 5 Goodreads stars out of 5, solidifying this as one of the best reads you can do.

Letitia says

If what Elliot Rodger so desperately wanted was to have sex with a woman, why did he choose mass homicide instead of something (more direct) like raping a woman?

Not that I'm condoning either action, obviously, but how twisted was he that he landed on his final decision? I read this "manifesto" with tabloidic compulsion, to gain closure on this question and other terrifying phantoms of psychosis and evil that gripped me after hearing about the Isla Vista massacre.

The manifesto is poorly written, psychotically reasoned, and obviously unedited for redundancy, but presses you with a fervent, heartfelt honesty that compels you to keep skimming down the next page.

After having read it, I'm beginning to understand: His problem was primarily social rejection, not sexual deprivation. He saw life around him through the lens of Hollywood and the culture of high school / college parties, spent most of his life trying to work his way into deserving the "pleasurable lives" that others had and would not even have had the self-confidence to carry out rape, because women made him feel like an "inferior insect".

While reading, I found it disturbingly difficult to distinguish between A) a vicious cycle of friendlessness (a few bad experiences with social rejection -> lack of friends -> lack of perspective -> jealous rage at the "Desirables" and scorn at the "Undesirables" -> social rejection) and B) an actual, clinically sociopathic lack of empathy with others. He does show empathy as a child (when his friend James Ellis' mother dies, and when saving his little brother from drowning) but I've heard that mental disorders tend to surface in young men in their 20s and nobody has concluded whether Rodger actually suffers from some sort of psychopathy.

This is a typical A) paragraph that gets repeated 100X in the book and that might remind many of familiar

thoughts in adolescence:

"My usual day went as follows: I woke up alone in my bed, with no girl beside me, and did a few minutes of exercise before I showered and got ready for college; I then drove to Starbucks to have my morning latte and felt envious whenever I saw a young couple there; I would then attend my two classes where no one said a word to me, having to endure the torment of watching other guys talking to the girls I liked; And then I would go home alone, open the door to my lonely room, and feel absolutely miserable. The loneliness was suffocating. I could barely breathe. If only one pretty girl had at least given me a chance and tried to get to know me, everything would have turned out differently, but girls continued to treat me with disdain."

Here is a more fascinating, revealing type-B passage:

"After a few weeks of living with [Spencer], I realized that I had a psychological problem with his presence in my apartment. Even though there was no trouble between us, I hated having someone constantly in my vicinity to judge how pathetic my life was. I could hide the details of my lonely, celibate life from the rest of the world, but I could not hide it from Spencer. The fact that I never had any girls over to my room was clear enough that I was an undesirable outcast, and I hated it when people knew this about me and judged me for it. Spencer was there to witness it all, and I would eventually come to hate him just because of that."

The Zen saying, "Suffering is wishing the world to be other than it is" recurs often while reading about his circular struggles in his hopeless mental prison.

But regardless of mental pain (which he suffered for 8 years and could have suffered for many more), I think the trigger for his "Day of Retribution" was the seeming lack of progress in his life. He kept hoping things would change, but eventually after moving to his ultimate "paradise" of Santa Barbara and two years passing, with him still not getting any closer to achieving his life goals, and the same milestones of birthdays and Christmases cycling around identically, interchangeably, that led him to the terminal decision that things were never going to get better and that he had no more attractive option than to vent his hate upon the merciless world. In all stories about reformation and redemption, in the darkest hour there is always the pinhole prospect of things getting better, that next year will be better than the last. There is the warden offering an education and hope of advancing one's mind. We'll never know, but the conclusion I came to, personally, was that the end of progress is the end of humanity.

Reading Wolf says

I am rating this a Four and here is why:

I feel this autobiographical account of Elliot Rodger's life is actually important for people to read. Now hold

your pitchforks, it is important because psychologically Rodger was in a very bad place.

From an early age he was a loner, and while I have no homicidal tendencies, I do feel I can relate to his early life. Except I disappeared into books and imaginary play rather than video games. Cause I'm a child born in the early 80s...we had Nintendo. Rodger's desperation to fit in with the cool kids feels familiar. I tried to fit in, but by high school, I came to terms with my inability to fit in. Hell people didn't even spell my name right in my yearbook after going to school with me for over seven years. But I don't think that is what went wrong with Rodger.

I think this really needs to be studied. We can't pin this down to this or that as the cause of his mania. This was a whole lot bigger than violent video games, social isolation, and misogyny. This is scary, so scary. Elliot Rodger was a mystery of life.

He was given everything one could possibly be given, in terms of material needs. His family tried to spend time with him. Yet somewhere things got out of hand. He became obsessive. He obsessed over girls/women, he obsessed over his friendships and former acquaintances, and he became jealous...so very jealous. He became angry, very angry.

I have to stop reading this, I am getting so upset. The obsessive jealous and pure hatred he spews through his writing is just mind boggling.

But this NEEDS to be studied by psychologists. Professionals need to incorporate this as an example when teaching students of psychology. We CANNOT let something like this happen again. We need to understand the real cause.

While I am sure there are people who believe he doesn't deserve the attention media is giving this event and that this glorifies violence, I believe we have to prevent this from happening again. We can say all day he was just crazy, that is so much of a blanket statement guys. But I don't think he is the only person that has these thoughts. I feel so scared to think someone out there, man/woman/child, is on their way to becoming Elliot Rodger.

It scares the shit out of me. Especially the Epilogue, I have never cried reading a sad book or even when Dumbledore died, but I cried when I read the Epilogue of this, I wanted to understand why, but I just could not understand why he was filled with so much hate. I don't think he even understood. I honestly think this guy had no idea. And that is why we need to prevent this happening again.

Elizabeth Sagan says

What does this book have? First of all, terrible writing. OK, I'm into watching toxic and sick videos on Youtube and into reading toxic and sick books. And this book might have been, maybe, pretty good... if not for the terrible writing. Second, an unlikable character. You can make a terrible person feel likeable, you can feel for a villain, but this is not the case. This guy was a spoiled, narcissistic, delusional, power-hungry, racist prick and he couldn't even write.

*

However. It was a unique experience. You don't have the chance to read such a thing too often, knowing that it was real. But this is not a good read. It is... an interesting read. Towards the end I started skipping through pages because information kept repeating itself and it was sooo boring and I wanted it done with. It had some paragraphs that I would describe as epic, especially at the end, the beginning was quite interesting (maybe because I didn't know yet what a terrible book it will be) and some parts were mind-boggling because it is

absolutely incredible that someone could think like that and feel so much hate.

*

I will not get into the mental-health discussion, even though maybe I should, and I will not talk about why I think he has come to such terrible conclusions. And I will rate the book, not the author. The only thing I want to say is that he was a troubled man and he suffered from mental illnesses. This doesn't excuse or justify what he has done. If anything, this book should raise awareness and help prevent such things from happening again.

Joshua Sorkin says

More than anything, I am struck by the way Rodger engineers the world's "rejection" of him. I do not think he wanted sex or romance; I think his desire was for pure violence, and so he set up a thought structure wherein he would commit violence if not satisfied by sex, and then enacted a set of behaviors that would guarantee the absence of sex.

There are echoes of various other misanthropic works here, such as Cho Seung-Hui's "Richard McBeef" and Sayyid Qutb's "The America I Have Seen".

Rodger frequently indulges in cliché and repetition of activities; one comes away with an impression of the protagonist as a man who, when confronted with the terror of creating new social connections, retreats to a set of ingrained activities and thinking patterns. In this way, perhaps, Rodger's wealth worked against him, because it allowed him to hide in addictive indulgences when otherwise he would have been forced to pursue new relationships and develop a more sociable personality to get what he wanted. What comes across is a man suffering from the pain of debilitating social anxiety who has learned that he can self-medicate with consumption and repetition, and who, having so anesthetized himself, leaves his violent urges free to overtake his thoughts.

Rock Tiller says

He was extremely sensitive as a child. Experiences that would have been brushed aside by normal children deeply affected him. This led him to a state of extreme anxiety which never went away.

He favoured social isolation as it was the only available respite from his anxiety. This served him well until he hit puberty. It was not so much the newly activated desire for girls which damaged him but his desire for social acceptance.

It was from this point onwards that he became trapped in an ever intensifying catch-22 of desire and fear. He witnessed his peers progressing with their social development and deeply desired to join and equal them but the prospect also terrified him. He desperately desired the result, but deeply feared what he knew he would need to do in order to get the result. The massively amplified anxiety that he had felt since childhood exacerbated his fears.

In order to mitigate these overwhelming stressors, he turned to a way out; fantasy games. In so doing, he lost all motivation to keep up with the social development that his peers were experiencing. As the years progressed, Elliot paid close attention to the levels to which his peers had progressed. He recognised that they had long since left him behind, and this led to his extreme jealousy which would continue to intensify

with every year that passed and he felt as if he had fallen further and further behind.

He began to blame them for it. He repressed the fact that his fear had caused him to fail to socially develop by mitigating it with anger. The cause of his exacerbated anxiety, his extreme sensitivity, then began to feed the anger too. The anger was directed towards those whose social development had continued once his had stagnated.

His blaming of others became an obsession. He blamed them for causing his fear. As a child, he had experienced teasing and bullying. Due to his hyper-sensitivity, every insult and even minor teasing incident hit him like a bullet. They all stung at the heart of his issue; fear of social rejection.

He began to lose all ability to view other human beings as anything other than the enemy. Even though he retained and made a few friends, his attitude in their presence was increasingly negative and even hostile.

Due to his powerful fear of social rejection, Elliot was nearly incapable of seeking others to befriend. He was incredibly terrified that he wouldn't be accepted or that he would be laughed at for even suggesting it. He anticipated such failures and the thought terrified him. He wanted others to seek him out to both become and remain his friends without any painful effort on his part. This was the way that he came to see all socialisation. He could not understand that friendship and socialisation are two-way. His thought process was very individualistically oriented. He wanted a girl to pursue him and become his girlfriend. He wanted her to do the work. He wanted somebody to break through his barrier of fear and pull him out. Of course, that doesn't happen. Human beings react to stimuli. Elliot provided no stimuli. On the inside, Elliot experienced extraordinary emotions and desires. On the outside, to ease his fear of rejection, he didn't express them.

In his late teens and post-teen years, Elliot developed another coping mechanism to help to suppress his fear and validate his desire; vanity. He sought desperately to see himself in a positive light. He bought expensive clothing and began to take pride in his appearance. As with all of Elliot's emotions, this was massively exacerbated by his hyper-sensitivity. Through his vanity, he came to see himself as the pinnacle of human evolution. He developed narcissism. This narcissism validated another of Elliot's trails; the desire for others to seek him out.

This further intensified his anger towards his peers whose social development had exceeded his. He started to view them as less worthy. He began to direct the anger towards those who he viewed to be at the pinnacle of social development; young couples.

His narcissism, which began as a coping strategy, became ideological. He began to favour social-Darwinism. He came to believe that women were inferior and even animalistic for desiring men who did not rank highly on his personalised social scale. Elliot, in his narcissistic state, placed himself at the top of this scale. He placed all others below him. He did all of this in order to validate and thus maintain the anger that he had long utilised to repress his unbearable and ever intensifying fear of social rejection.

When he came to the eventual conclusion to plot his killing spree, he did so for a number of reasons. He wanted to commit suicide. He wanted an end to his pain, fear and anger. He also desired infamy due to his narcissism. As he stated in the manifesto, "Infamy is better than total obscurity". He wanted to make a mark on history. He stated quite often that he wanted to "punish" his peers for surpassing his level of social development. He wanted to harm other people for the sense of pleasure he would receive from this 'revenge'. He wanted them to experience the pain that he had experienced himself as that would, in his view, balance the world. Furthermore, he wanted to fuel his narcissistic sense of masculinity by taking the 'manly' option and 'fighting' rather than cowering. He certainly didn't conceal his reasons.

In conclusion, his issues stemmed entirely from his quite obvious High Functioning Autism which caused his hyper-sensitivity as both a child and an adult. It was the hyper-sensitivity which led him to experience

dramatically intensified emotions and come to misinterpret the world and his surroundings as actively hostile toward him.

The solution to his problem was very straightforward. Elliot needed social training and re-education. He needed to be surrounded by people who would teach him how to come out of his shell and seek friendship. He needed to spend several years in a controlled social environment with professionals who would get to know him at the deepest level. He was unable to seek, so he needed to be sought. Although he saw some "hired friends" as he called them, they were not appropriate to his situation, which was far more deeply troubled than any of those people could have hoped to understand. Elliot needed the best that mental healthcare had to offer. He needed a lot of support and he received very little.

In order to avoid this type of situation in the future, such individuals with hyper-sensitivity should be identified early on and treated with great care. They need to be trained in the social arts, as they will otherwise fail to acquire them due to their condition. Special attention should also be given to those who appear to strongly fear social rejection. That is one of humanity's most primal and instinctive fears which must not be underestimated.

Jason says

I'm sure books about the thinking behind mass murderers are overwhelmingly written by journalists or others wanting to make a quick buck off the infamy of others.

Even then, many years may have lapsed before biographies are published, with the mandatory psychoanalysis, rehearsed formulaic condemnations and obligatory hanging questions of what society could've done differently.

So to be able to read a first hand account on the recent shootings in Isla Vista is a rare opportunity. On top of that, the writing was well structured and well written (save a few repetitions). I don't think anybody in recent history has provided an autobiography of such detail to explain injustices they've perceived and to describe, as articulately as Elliot Rodgers has, in his own words, his twisted world.

Despite his horrendous crimes, he has provided a valuable insight for society to improve from the low base that has become common (ie our sex-centric popular culture, where virgin-shaming and slut shaming goes coexists in a contradictory twisted world).

For all the above, I'm giving it 5 stars.

Ethan says

TL:DR - Elliot lacks empathy, is needy, and blames others. The solution is the Golden Rule.

Elliot Rodger was a young man who entirely lacked empathy. Not once in his autobiography did he ever hint about the thoughts or feelings of others. He saw people as servants for his pleasure.

This attitude roots in his upbringing. His divorced parents are very wealthy; however, they were notably lacking in disciplining their child and helping him correct his problems until it is far too late. Their parenting

strategy consisted of throwing money (cars, maids, playmates, therapists) at all of Elliot's problems.

Elliot became very spoiled; however, money could not buy him happiness. When forced to interact with others in school, Elliot was a very anti-social kid. He was a very needy person. His actions (dyeing his hair, skateboarding, etc.) were attempts to be one of the 'cool' kids, seeking other's approval to justify his existence. When he didn't receive attention, Elliot hypocritically blamed others for his problems. His scapegoats were attractive women and foreign men (despite being a mixed race immigrant himself).

In high school, Elliot developed a negative opinion of himself due to his lack of success with girls. Throughout the autobiography, he reinforced the fact that he is a hopeless virgin. Rather than improving himself, Elliot turned to distractions such as video games, fantasy, and alcohol. He continued to blame others, and his hate became his world view. Elliot became a very unattractive person. In his college years, Elliot was a desperate man. His opinion of himself changed from hopelessness to delusions of grandeur. Elliot believe that the only way to attract women was to be rich and attractive, and that he was deserving of the most attractive women society had to offer. Hypocritically, Elliot dehumanized both men and women for the hedonistic habits he so desired. Ultimately, he ceded control of his life to the lottery and revenge, rather than facing his problems and improving himself.

Elliot Rodger did not become a murderer overnight. He continually demonstrated anti-social behavior long before he killed. He poured coffee on couples, sprayed people with orange juice from a water gun, and started fights at parties. Elliot Rodger, the Santa Barbra killer, was a long time coming.

It's easy to write Elliot off as a monster, a lunatic, a misogynist, and a racist. All of these things are true. Elliot Rodger has to be held accountable for his actions; however, dehumanizing a dead man doesn't prevent future shootings. It's just as easy to point to societal structures, such as gun control, male privilege, prostitution laws, police incompetence (prison), parental neglect, video games, alcohol, and mental care (drugs or therapy). These 'solutions' would help as much as winning the lottery or having sex; they are band-aids on a deep wound. By doing these things, we would be shirking our responsibilities as individuals just as Elliot had done.

Elliot needed to learn empathy. This stems from kindness and constructive criticism, something anyone can give daily. Unfortunately, we think this responsibility is limited to parents and other appointed role models. Simple habits like these practiced by everyone can prevent the next Elliot Rodger in your community.

Smile,
Stand up straight
"Good Morning, Elliot ",
"How was your day?",
"Thanks for having lunch with me.",
"Wow, that shirt looks good on you. I bet those girls would be all over you if you smiled more."
smile See you've got a nice smile."
"She didn't like it when you started complaining about your life. The next time time you approach a girl, what can you do differently?"

Krystal says

Highly disturbing. If you decide to read it, go in with an open-mind. At parts I was disgusted and at others I

pondered the flaws of our culture and the power and madness loneliness brings. A must-read for anyone with an interest in the human condition.

Muna says

Ja dette var da noe. Bare å lese om du liker å høre sipping fra en liten bitch

Aleksandar Trapara says

I don't often get to read a book written by a real mass murderer. It's a unique experience.

I'd normally give this book only four out of five stars due to its unnecessary repetitiveness, but I think it has been unfairly treated by the Goodreads community so far, so I'm rating it a 5 in order to improve its unreasonably low rating. I have a feeling that some of the people who rated the book poorly actually rated the very author and his doings rather than the story he wrote, and were unwilling to commend it for reasons of fearing social stigma.

Yes, the writer of this book was indeed a deeply spoiled, narcissistic, racist, sexist, power-hungry person with a profound inferiority complex and a number of fixed ideas; he was delusional in the extreme and what he eventually did was beyond horrible. Nonetheless, I believe this is a well-written biography and an invaluable first-hand account of the way one gets to the point where they develop a murderous personality.

Elliot Rodger had never managed to reach emotional maturity. He was still a child, both mentally and physically, when he was thrust into the world of promiscuity which confused and terrified him immensely, forcing him to cringe and seek shelter in his own world wherein he developed a jealousy towards the cliques of popular kids he so desperately wanted to infiltrate. Peer-pressured into not loving things he had loved as a child and hopelessly attempting to imitate everything the 'cool kids' did, he never succeeded in forming any lasting friendships. He only found satisfaction in trying to be better than other people, which led to his either hating people because he believed they were better than him, or deeming them worthless because they couldn't *benefit* him in any way. Never acquiring necessary social skills, he believed girls hated him, constantly speaking of being 'rejected' by them, although he had never been truly rejected. He was just too scared to approach them.

While I was reading the story, I kept wondering what would have become of him if he had spent his life in a different society. I do share his opinion that the world he lived in is indeed sick. This may seem like a banal example, but in what kind of first-world society do random people drive by you in a car and throw eggs at you laughing? Or in what kind of prestigious school for rich kids do they intentionally push you against lockers while walking by in a corridor? That's just downright lame. I thought it only happens in movies. I believe that his dysfunctional family and the *toxic* society immensely fueled his alienation from people and negatively influenced his moral values. No wonder he became sick. He was a time bomb. I am not trying to justify his acts, I'm just saying that his surroundings should share an equal responsibility for the killings.

The amount of depression this story inflicted upon me equals the one from B. E. Ellis's *Less Than Zero*. The two books' environments bear an uncanny resemblance, but unlike the main protagonist of the latter, who resorted to drugs and debauchery in order to deal with the absurdity and pointlessness of his own life, the main character of *My Twisted World* lulled himself in the virtual world of video games, fantasizing about torturing people around him.

Near the end of the story I was so immersed in it that I actually rooted for the narrator to reappraise his attitude, as if it was a work of fiction. But it isn't. Poor him. And poor people he killed. And poor their families and friends. Poor everyone....

This is one of the most disturbing and depressing books I have ever read. It should be thoroughly analyzed and people should draw conclusions from it, learning from Rodger's mistakes, the mistakes of his friends and parents, and the society's.

I don't know what kind of legacy this story is going to leave. I suppose it's going to be adapted into a movie by Sofia Coppola or somebody. I hope the *manifesto* isn't going to be endorsed by an army of teens unable to get girlfriends, armed to the teeth, as I'm afraid that a lot of young people could share his views.

Storm Diaboli says

A very well written look into the world of an emotionally stunted, lost and depressed boy. The opening paragraph of this manifesto is so chilling that even without the back story it grips the reader in the way all good books do. I knew when I read those first few lines that I was going to be unable to put this down. As I dive into the book I start to recognize the similarities between myself and the author. This could have been me! A thought seemingly shared by many of the users in the online community. This is the story of Elliot as told from his perspective. As I narrated this tale to my sisters they both got the chills, yes I kid you not. This is the kind of thing that gets inside your skin, something that is so deeply disturbing that you push it to the back of your mind because thinking about it is just too MUCH for you to handle. I recommend this to any one who is depressed, lonely, bullied or mistreated. Elliot is gone but his message lives on and we all have something to learn from him. *I do not condone or endorse mass killing. Infamy is better than obscurity.

Alan Jacobs says

This "manifesto" (so-called) by the Santa Barbara mass murderer is riveting. If a novelist were to imagine what the mind of a mass murderer contained, it would not be as revealing as the autobiography that Elliot Rodger left behind. The man was deeply conscious of his social inadequacies, and retained detailed memories of every year of his life from the time he started school onward. He knew exactly when his happiness ended, when his existence turned to bitterness. He developed his own twisted philosophy of life, and ultimately a vision of how the world should be, and how it would be if he were to rule: men living without sex and without women; all women imprisoned and left to die, except those who would breed.

There are parts of this work to which many of us can relate: the sting of rejection, the desire to lash out and punish the rejecters, the spurious belief that those in the rejecter class are having a great life while we are left to suffer.

Other parts are beyond comprehension. He never had any consciousness of the privileged life that he led, and thought that the only way he could get a [blonde] girl is to attain greater, much greater wealth. He believed that he deserved that great wealth for no other reason than that he was "superior," "magnificent," and a "gentleman."

There is practically no mention of events in the world beyond his immediate presence, beyond him, his family, his friends. No consciousness of society as a whole, no thoughts about anything civic or political. His

interests were very limited: early on it was skateboarding, and then he was obsessed with a video game called World of Warcraft. He liked a few science fiction movies, and some animated features. Other than that, he was only focused on popularity, and blonde girls. With no notion that friends and blondes might like him, might not reject him, if he had some interest that he could talk with them about.

There is little indication that he has been in treatment. Scant mention of psychiatry, or of medication. Occasionally, his parents hire others, perhaps social workers, to talk with Elliot, to be his friend, but Elliot ends up isolating from them.

This autobiography has none of the hallmarks of derangement: his descriptions of his life are carefully arranged, mostly flow logically from one incident to the next, totally chronological. All his sentences are carefully constructed, few typos, few misspellings. His vocabulary is somewhat limited, but it is good enough to express the horrors that perceives in his life.

I can't help but feel that if he were in the right environment, he might have found answers, might have awakened from his nightmare, and then may even have found a blonde. Instead, he was immersed in a La-La-Land ethos centered on physical beauty, monetary wealth, celebrity, blondness. He could not see outside of that, and unless he could have those things, he felt that he didn't count, that he was a non-person.

Maybe his mind was just hardwired in a horrible way that could not be undone. But I have to believe that there was some way out, but he went down the totally wrong paths, and deeper into his own dungeon.

My Twisted World is available free: just search for it. It costs nothing, and it will haunt you.

Peter Derk says

My writing teacher Tom Spanbauer always quotes this saying:

"When you meet someone, look them in the eye and be kind, because within those eyes there is a great battle waging."

That's all I could think about while I read this.

You might remember the author of this piece as the Isla Vista shooter. Which you might remember as the event that various news outlets chalked up to the perpetrator being a misogynist. Which also ignited the #notallmen hashtag, out of which came #yesallwomen.

While I obviously don't condone, endorse, or believe in what he did, and while his beliefs are very, VERY far from my own...I read the entire damn thing, and I think that saying misogyny is responsible for the events is a gross, irresponsible oversimplification.

The young man said some very misogynist things, and don't get me wrong, a lot of the writing was certainly misogynist. The writer didn't seem to think of women as people so much as indicators of status. Yes, at its heart, the piece is misogynist.

However.

That ignores a boatload of other things. And I can't help but notice a pattern. Whenever something like this happens, we look to the issues of the day to say, "Here's why it happened."

Columbine was Marilyn Manson's fault. Or Grand Theft Auto's. One killing blames gun control, another lack of mental health care. Or the parents. Or racism. Bullying. Whatever we're talking about, lo and behold, we then say "Oh, here's why this happened" dust our hands and walk away. We can be satisfied because we have something to do now, an issue to address.

What I can't help but feel is that the response to the Isla Vista killings was a representation of exactly why news is really, really fucked up right now. Because I looked, and there was some very bad newswriting going on right after the crimes. It seemed that very few actually read this manifesto, which was out there and a valuable piece of the story. Yet so many sources used the same quotes from the last 10% of the writings. There are many, many disturbing things in here. Near the end of his life, the perpetrator has a very bizarre obsession with winning the lottery. He makes multiple trips to Arizona because he is 100% convinced he will win Powerball. This happens half a dozen times, and each time he's convinced that the lottery is the only way to change his life.

He makes a lot of references to how he's destined for greatness. Not infamy, but greatness.

He talks a lot about men and women, couples, and he talks about them with obvious immaturity and lack of personal development. He mentions at least three times when he dumped liquids on people, from his car or once after buying a Super Soaker and filling it with orange juice, just because he felt personally attacked by them having fun or having what he perceived as good lives.

There are also parts that were cripplingly lonely. Especially when he talks about his childhood, his anxiety around other people. He talks quite a bit about being small and weak. As a kid, he realizes that basketball players are tall, and he uses kid logic to deduce that playing basketball makes a person tall. So he spends hours shooting hoops at home, waiting to grow. He cries more than any other person in any other piece of writing I've ever read. As an adult, he cries very, very often.

While I say there were many disturbing things, there's also something disturbing the reader brings to the table. Honestly, when he was young, his experiences were not unlike those of most normal American kids.

There was a battle waging within Elliot Rodger. No doubt. Even near the end, towards the very end of this piece, he says over and over how he feels trapped, how he's scared to die and how he doesn't really want to do what he did, but he just feels like there's no other path for him. It's very strange, and he seems very, very scared.

Just to say again. I don't think any of what he did was right. And I would never seek to excuse it.

What I want to say, after reading this, is that...well, I guess I feel like someone shoots up a place, we come up with the quickest answer as to why, and then we move on. We decide what to label the killer, and then we don't think of that person as a person anymore. They're just, simply, a murderer.

Tom Spanbauer taught me something else really important, the idea of unpacking something. You can call someone a dad in a story, and then let someone fill in the details typical of a sitcom dad. But when you unpack that character, really describe, it's harder to ignore the reality of that person.

We pack away killers like Elliot Rodger with a word like misogyny. Then we can say we're not like him, so we're safe. We can check the box and then ignore the rest of an entire life that led to such horrible acts. We do that, file it away, and then we're shocked that this happens again and again.

I'm calling us out for that behavior. For skimming the surface of something, finding the first answer that pops up, and accepting it as the entirety of the truth. It's sad, but we can't read news anymore and know what the fuck happened, what's going on. If you want to talk about something, then you'd better look into it yourself.

No one else is going to do it for you.

And news outlets, if you want to maintain any credibility, do the work. Tell the story right, and don't blend in other content just to get clicks. I'll call it out right now, I think Slate is an example of an outlet that fused this particular story with more attractive elements because, let's face it, saying "Someone killed and we can't really say why" is a less clickable story than "Misogynist Killers Endanger Us All." And how will that help your revenue? Who is going to click a boring headline, and more importantly, click the Prudential Insurance banner that's currently (11/20/2014) above the story?

Quick calling out of marketing bullshit, by the way, Prudential, are you aware your ad is at the top of this page? Is that where you want to be? And Slate, is this an accident, having insurance above a story about a killer? Just thought that was interesting.

I guess what I'm saying with all of this, what Tom Spanbauer says is true. Look someone in the eyes, see the battle. If you don't have the time or energy to do that, then don't pretend like you did.

Leo Robertson says

I don't feel right giving this a rating, but it was worth reading, I thought. Not at all because this guy deserves any attention, even though he is, by his own evaluation, highly intelligent, attractive, born of aristocracy and destined for greatness. He even designs the perfect society at the end, with no women, and then males, not knowing what women are, are free from the need of them and the need for love. (I don't agree but I'll check if my husband does.) And sure, there are fascinating insights like "Wealth is one of the most important defining factors of self-worth and superiority."

Ugh. Anyway: I learned about this through 4chan's /lit/ board, where they started a thread to say it was great literature. I couldn't tell if it was a joke or not- still can't- but I got curious and Googled and found it here: <http://abclocal.go.com/three/kabc/kab...>

And I was compelled to finish this tedious, poorly written, repetitive nonsense. Unreadable without scanning. (Remind you of any fiction writers who tried to replicate this kind of text?)

But becomes somewhat of an interesting indictment of popular American culture through the enormously narcissistic grandiose entitlement this kid expresses, so convinced as he apparently is that he'll never get a pretty (god forbid she isn't) blonde (god forbid she isn't) white (god forbid she isn't) girlfriend without being a millionaire, but is clearly intent on going to any lengths other than setting realistic goals, self-reflection or working hard. Attempts at therapy end in instant quitting, dismissal or prescription of controversial drugs.

Not to say that the way any culture operates makes anything a foregone conclusion- but it can surely exacerbate and facilitate.
