Why Did He Kill All Those Children?

by Phyllis Schlafly

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The idea for massacring children in an elementary school or shooting up a mall filled with Christmas shoppers does not come from reading books, watching movies, or listening to music. Does the incitement for such unspeakable acts come from hours of role-playing violent video games?

As we speculate on what was going on in the mind of the murderer, the media are trying to blame his evil act on the lack of gun control. But the ownership of firearms or attending a shooting range do not desensitize someone to the cold-blooded murder of many children.

The act of mass, cold blooded murder requires not only the idea for it, but also a desensitizing to the blood spattered result. Someone who murders dozens of children in an elementary school, as tragically occurred in Newtown, Connecticut, must have grown insensitive to the result or he would not have continued killing amid the horror.

A recent study found that the more someone plays violent video games, the more aggressive he is likely to become in real life. That study, released prior to its upcoming publication in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology in March 2013, seems to report the obvious, but it needs to be said.

The mass murderer at the Newtown elementary school, Adam Lanza, had an existence that "largely involved playing violent computer video games in a bedroom," as reported by the Telegraph in England. The British newspaper reported that Lanza had "spent hours playing violent video games such as Call Of Duty in a windowless bunker."

The liberal media in the United States were slow to publicize his video game preoccupation, but finally Connecticut authorities confirmed that Lanza had been playing "graphically violent" video games. While growing up, one of his favorite games was the violent game called Dynasty Warriors. It is common for law enforcement to fail to disclose to the public the extent to which a mass murderer had been playing violent video games, as well as what psychiatric or illegal drugs he may have been using.

In the case of Adam Lanza, it was a plumber who worked in his house who told what he had witnessed to a British newspaper. The U.S. media have also been ignoring other facts about the 20-year-old Lanza such as his mental diagnosis, medication, and the fact that he didn't have his father in the home because he had been divested of his father's authority by a family court.

Few people over age 40 are aware of how extremely violent many of these video games are, and how many hours teenagers spend playing them. Even some bright students drop out of college due to an addiction to video games.

In an outrageous example of judicial supremacy, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June 2011 that the video game industry has a First Amendment right to sell violent video games even to minors. The case is Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Association, and it imposed a First Amendment prohibition on states from protecting youngsters against violent video games.

If that same case came before the U.S. Supreme Court today, it seems unlikely that there would be 5 votes (or 4 or even 3) for the ridiculous notion that training teenagers how to kill, and desensitizing them to the bloodshed they cause, is a First Amendment "right" that overrules parents' rights over their own children. State legislators should pass laws to give the Supreme Court the opportunity to correct its mistake, and Congress should consider withdrawing this issue from federal court jurisdiction.

The Newtown elementary school is certainly not the only example of heinous crimes committed by young players of violent video games. A few days earlier in Oregon, video-game player Jacob Tyler Roberts massacred innocent people in a shopping mall in a manner reminiscent of a violent video game, and last summer there was a movie theater massacre killing 12 and injuring 58, by the suspect James Holmes, also a video game player.

In many of these terrible crimes, the perpetrator kills himself too, which makes the subsequent withholding of detailed information about his video game use unjustified. Even when the perpetrator survives, he has surely waived any right to privacy.

A state legislature or Congress should immediately require full disclosure to the public of the violent game playing activity found on the murderers' computers. Instead of scapegoating gun manufacturers, legislatures should require the violent video game industry to put big, clear warnings on their products as cigarette companies are forced to do.