

Innocent Fun?

Recently the world has been made aware of a most senseless and horrifying crime against students and staff of the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown Conn. Many of us as parents wept at the carnage as we read and heard that 20 young students and 5 staff members were gunned down. The apparent gunman suicided when hearing the first responders approaching the school.

We seek to make sense of such a dreadful act by having psychiatrists and other trained counsellors talk about the shooter as a loner who had access to the guns and wanted to take revenge on a society that possibly laughed at his awkward lack of social skills and which refused to allow him to join their circles of friendship. There are many plausible theories on what drove the young man to do such a criminal act.

One thing is certain. As we seek to explain this social violence there is one factor in the equation that no one will mention. The piece of the puzzle that I refer to is all wrapped up under Christmas trees in countless homes across our nation and the one south of us. Undoubtedly very few parents will have the wisdom to quietly remove that certain gift and substitute it for a more age appropriate one.

What are those gifts loving parents buy for their children? I refer to movies and games of violence that we feed indiscrim-

inately to our children during their formative years. Entering any store that specializes in these games and movies we see only the cover that depicts the contents.

Angry faces, mostly men, stare at us. The trailers we can catch on TV or in the stores selling these games or movies show people being slaughtered. I will not comment on the detail of what these things display. Your imagination cannot outdo the realities to be seen in these products. Check out an old favorite of many people called Texas chainsaw massacre (1974).

What is so amazing to some of us is that these items are even more horrifying than the scene that met the eyes of the police and medical people at Sandy Hook Elementary School last Friday morning.

People are incredulous at how such a horrible event could happen in a civilized society. But one thing is certain, no one will think of the fact that we tolerate such frenzies of blood letting in movie theatres and in our own homes. We feed our youngest family members this rubbish and call it entertainment and insist on freedom of speech for the movie makers. Is this the mindset of a "civilized society"?

Of course there are no photos published of the hellish scene in the school last Friday but we all know that every day scenes of much greater violence are

shown in movie theatres across the country. Games and movies displaying violence are indeed under the Christmas trees of millions of homes this year.

Will anyone think to remove these items designed to "entertain" our children? Or will we simply shrug our shoulders as we listen to those who demand we be allowed to feast our eyes on such images?

Why are we so senseless as to wonder why there is such carnage in a society that has an insatiable appetite for violence and which calls these movies and games "innocent fun"? Are we "innocent"? Is this form of entertainment really good for us and our children? Do the weeping families think such activity is "fun"?

One thing is for certain. Hollywood will only wait a year or two to create a movie based on this tragedy. They will make millions from it and the families affected so much by the loss of their family members will weep in silence as excited people flock to the theatres to see the story of their suffering. The show must go on as they say, and you may be certain that the show will come soon enough to your local theatre. After all, it is just "innocent fun" and no one is really hurt by it.

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