

Violent Video Games Training Kids to Be Killers

I was born in 1951. World War II had only recently ended. I grew up playing army. I loved toy guns. I thought it would be cool to be a soldier. The idea of shooting the bad guys seemed exciting and patriotic.

I didn't know the Truth.

Most soldiers in the Civil War died with a loaded gun. One loaded his gun 23 times with bullets flying all around and never took a shot. The cartridges stacked up in his barrel. He didn't run from battle like a coward. He stood his ground. He just couldn't bring himself to kill.

In World War II, 15 percent of combat soldiers fired their weapons. Only 2 percent did most of the killing in ground combat. Most had difficulty looking a German or Japanese soldier in the eye and killing them. Much of the killing was done from a distance by artillery, bombing and strafing.

The military learned of these surprising statistics in 1947. They experimented with drugs and other things to make soldiers more willing to kill. By the Vietnam War, the ratio of troops who could be counted on to actually kill rose above 90 percent. The secret was actual battle simulation.

Troops who trained by marching around in formation and shooting at paper bullseyes proved ineffective at killing actual human beings face to face. Troops that simulate actual battles are vastly more capable of performing real operations in the field. The military now uses games and actual simulation.

Today's **video games** are getting more and more realistic. Long gone are the "tank" games with a total of 260 pixels. With

millions of pixels, massive processing power and stereo headphones, you can look someone in the face, pull your trigger and hear his blood splatter.

Today, 8-year-olds can spend hours in battle simulators right in their bedroom. I have no doubt I'd have done so as a child if that technology had been available to me. Since it was not, my battle reenactments would probably have been comical to behold. Imagine 8-year-old boys arguing, "I got you," and, "No, you didn't."

The vast majority of video game players will not become killers, but combine children who have deep emotional problems with simulated military training, and you can get real-life massacres.

Each of America's recent mass murderers were withdrawn, psychotic, violent video game players.

Not everyone who drinks winds up killing people in a drunk driving accident. That doesn't provide solace to those who've lost family members to drunk drivers. In the hands of the wrong people, alcohol is dangerous.

In the hands of the wrong people, video games are dangerous. The families who lost children at Sandy Hook Elementary don't care about all the children who can play video games with little impact. They're devastated by the one young man who trained on video games to kill their child.

Sandy Hook Elementary was not a school in some violent ghetto. It was a school with a waiting list in a nice neighborhood. Adam Lanza was not poor. He and his mother lived in a \$537,000 home. Her alimony checks were over \$250,000 a year.

The children in training to be the next mass murderers are not your local thugs and bullies. They're smart, quiet, withdrawn bombs being primed to explode. To them, a violent video game is like pornography to a pedophile—it heightens evil desires

until the only way left to satisfy them is to act them out in real life.

Yes, the danger is the psychopaths—not the average child—but who can say which girl or boy will become a psychopath? You can't rate a game "N—not for psychopaths."

If Adam Lanza's parents' divorce set him off, how common is divorce?

Those who are repulsed by the killings in Colorado and Connecticut need to be repulsed by the production and sale of violent video games. Those who make and sell such games are the trainers of those who mass murder children. It should be considered shameful to train mass murderers.

If the CEO of each retailer who sells violent video games had to walk through Sandy Hook Elementary and see the carnage of young children shot in the face at point-blank range, could they sleep at night and continue to sell violent video games? Will the next smart, quiet, withdrawn psychopath be trained in a bedroom, in a gated community, in Bentonville, Ark.?

We don't know where the next killer is being trained. We just know he is being trained.

He could be down the street from you. His mother could have bought him *Call of Duty: Black Ops II* for Christmas.

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