

Texas, Colorado shootings: insight into fundamental flaws of society

Thomas Caffall, James Holmes and Jared Lee Loughner. In the past few months, the U.S. has experienced a number of public



BY ADITYA GARG
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shootings — most prominently, the Texas A&M University and Colorado

shootings. Instigated by Caffall, the Texas A&M shootings resulted in three dead and four injured. The

Colorado shootings, involving James Holmes, saw 12 dead and 58 others wounded.

While certainly tragic, these shootings have not only rocked our foundations but also have inspired widespread fear and intimidation throughout the nation. What has instigated such permeating acts of violence? Is this the result of loose gun control, poor law enforcement and government inaction, or does this represent a deeper instability of the American people?

While stricter regulations have the potential to somewhat infringe upon citizens' liberties, these shootings represent a deeper misconception, in part, of the general populace.

When evaluating both of

these shootings, we see there are a number of elements that are similar. In both cases, the shooters were college age students studying at universities. A major point in both of these shootings is that both of these students were dissatisfied with their lives.

Holmes had recently fallen out of favor from university professors and had failed a key oral exam. The Texas A&M shootings occurred while police officers were attempting to serve an eviction notice. Thus, ignoring the possibility

I believe that this demonstrates an important fact: people expect too much from their government and their society. Instead of taking responsibility and facing their problems, these citizens have been taught to rely solely on others.

This represents a fundamental flaw in our society: an emphasis on dependence instead of self-reliance and responsibility. While this may stem from a number of sources—school, community, relationships—if we are to prevent such occurrences

of the Second Amendment, I do want to point out that the public supersedes the individual. Thus, to protect the general public, we must enact stricter gun control.

Both of the individuals involved in the Texas and Colorado shootings were partly able to vent their anger on the public due to their ease in procuring guns, armor and explosives.

If we want to truly attempt to guarantee public safety, we must limit the flow of such weapons into the general public. Military-grade firearms and weapons are not needed for sport, hunting, personal enjoyment or protection. These firearms only serve as a medium to kill small children, teens and adults quickly and effectively.

In the context of the eight or more shootings that have happened recently, the public has come to find ease in a sickening mixture of fear and a false illusion of safety. Though Congress and government officials may continue to cower behind the power of the National Rifle Association, and people will continue to seek rights through the Second Amendment, it is time that the general populace accepts the true realities of widespread gun availability, unless they want another repetition of the aforementioned acts of violence.

While I do not wish to debate or conduct an extensive review of the Second Amendment, I do want to point out that the public supersedes the individual.

of mental instability, both of these shooters had a prominent motive.

Furthermore, many of us have failed to see that instead of facing their problems, these men committed mass slayings. Instead of confronting their problems, they chose to blame the government and the public.

in the future, we must first instill fundamental moral values.

However, these shootings also prompt the argument for stricter gun control. I acknowledge that gun control is a sensitive issue, and many believe that it is an established right of the people.

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'Legitimate rape' comment harmful, destructive

Words are just words — unless someone is listening. When a politician speaks, the nation listens.

This was certainly the case for Missouri Representative and long-time Paul Ryan ally Todd Akin when he responded to a question regarding the legality of abortion for pregnant victims of rape.



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"From what I understand from doctors, that's really rare," said Akin in his interview with the Jaco Report, a St. Louis news show. "If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down."

In this context, the word "legitimate" may seem harmless, but in fact it is nothing but dangerous. With this one simple word, Akin has created ambiguity where there should be universal understanding and assumption where there should be research.

The claim that legitimate rape does not result in pregnancy does two extremely harmful things to women. Firstly, it once again makes the definition of rape foggy. Secondly, it creates a misperception of women's bodies, thus tainting the understanding of sexual violence which is so paramount in the quest for protecting women, legally and socially.

Make no mistake: there are no varying degrees of rape.

Sexual violence against women is so pervasive, in part, because of widespread misconceptions like those shared by Todd Akin. He may have been the one to speak out this time, but how many more pro-life politicians are there who hold the same views? Plenty.

Whether pro-life or pro-choice, no humane individual wants sexual violence to persist. Akin's statement transcends the issue of abortion, though the two issues are undoubtedly interconnected.

In a nation governed by laws observing Akin's philosophy, a woman who becomes pregnant after being raped would be denied

an abortion, because obviously, if she had actually been raped, there would be no pregnancy. She then surrenders her autonomy, not to mention her body, to an ignorant legal system.

Would you want your daughter to be subject to such a system? What about your mother, friend, sister or girlfriend? What about you?

Thankfully, most of the popular media are shunning Akin for his statement. Still, for every person who disagrees with his comments based on reliable knowledge and research, there is one

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who holds his same misconception.

Education is key. If we as a society even hope to live in a world where sexual violence against women is obsolete, we must first create a world in which rape and sexual violence are understood and free of ambiguity.

How can we do this? By being vocal, for starters. After all, that was how this controversy was started. Akin's words were destructive, but words can also create positive change. Use your words for the latter; you never know who's listening.

This Week's

STAFF EDITORIAL

Remember why we are here

Vans parked in endless lines. Boxes galore. Mumbled pardons, cheerful hellos and long-awaited embraces across the quad.

Yes, it's that time of year where we scramble to drop our classes, make new friends, rekindle old friendships and altogether enjoy our college life.

Although we are grateful for our social life, cheap online book prices, and Friday nights out, we seem to overlook one critical factor: the simple reason why we are at Guilford at all.

Education.

We bemoan our ten page papers and even longer theses, procrastinating until the very last second to submit them to Moodle. We skim our readings instead of taking notes; we widen our margins instead of trudging through that last paragraph.

On a larger scale, classes are a means to graduation, and graduation, with that freshly-printed degree, is a means to a job.

We place more value on shortcuts, spending the time to research summaries of books and a few quotes instead of setting aside two hours to read.

More people would rather socialize than digest the intricacies of China in the fifth century, or head to Green Street in place of debating the finer points of our current political system and the importance of taking our place within it.

Plutarch once said, "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." Though it may seem like any degree is the ticket to a job, education is more than earning money. It's about engaging with the world on a local to global basis. With professors that provoke us to argue a point, we learn to debate policies.

By presenting a proposal to Community Senate, we gain negotiation skills. With all the information at our fingertips, in Hege Library, from our professors, and even from our peers, we realize that education is more than just sitting in a classroom; it's leaving the classroom and making a difference in the real world.

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