



Written by [Patrick J. Buchanan](#) on February 17, 2018

The Motives Behind the Massacre

“Enough is enough!” “This can’t go on!”



“This has to stop!”

These were among the comments that came through the blizzard of commentary after the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Broward County. We have heard these words before.

Unfortunately, such atrocities are not going to stop. For the ingredients that produce such slaughters are present and abundant in American society.

And what can stop a man full of hate, who has ceased to care about his life and is willing to end it, from getting a weapon in a country of 300 million guns and killing as many as he can in a public place before the police arrive?

An act of “absolute pure evil,” said Gov. Rick Scott, of the atrocity that took 17 lives and left a dozen more wounded. And evil is the right word.

While this massacre may be a product of mental illness, it is surely a product of moral depravity. For this was premeditated and plotted, done in copycat style to the mass killings to which this country has become all too accustomed.

Nikolas Cruz thought this through. He knew it was Valentine’s Day. He brought his fully loaded AR-15 with extra magazines and smoke grenades to the school that had expelled him. He set off a fire alarm, knowing it would bring students rushing into crowded halls where they would be easy to kill. He then escaped by mixing in with fleeing students.

The first ingredient then was an icy indifference toward human life and a willingness to slaughter former fellow students to deliver payback for whatever it was Cruz believed had been done to him at Douglas High.

In his case, the conscience was dead, or was buried beneath hatred, rage or resentment at those succeeding where he had failed. He had been rejected, cast aside, expelled. This would be his revenge, and it would be something for Douglas High and the nation to see — and never forget.

Indeed, it seems a common denominator of the atrocities to which we have been witness in recent years is that the perpetrators are nobodies who wish to die as somebodies.

If a sense of grievance against those perceived to have injured them is the goad that drives misfits like Cruz to mass murder, the magnet that draws them to it is infamy. Infamy is their shortcut to immortality.

From the killings in Columbine to Dylann Roof’s murder of black parishioners at the Charleston Church, from the Pulse nightclub massacre in Orlando to the slaughter of first-graders in Newtown, to Las Vegas last October where Stephen Paddock, firing from an upper floor of the Mandalay Bay, shot dead 58 people and wounded hundreds at a country music festival — these atrocities enter the social and cultural history of the nation. And those who carry them out achieve a recognition few Americans ever know. Charles Whitman, shooting 47 people from that Texas tower in 1966, is the original model.

Evil has its own hierarchy of rewards. Perhaps the most famous man of the 20th century was Hitler, with Stalin and Mao among his leading rivals.

Some of these individuals who seek to “go out” this way take their own lives when the responders



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arrive, or they commit “suicide by cop” and end their lives in a shootout. Others, Cruz among them, prefer to star in court, so the world can see who they are. And the commentators and TV cameras will again give them what they crave: massive publicity.

And we can’t change this. As soon as the story broke, the cameras came running, and we watched another staging of the familiar drama — the patrol cars, cops in body armor, ambulances, students running in panic or walking in line, talking TV heads demanding to know why the cowards in Congress won’t vote to outlaw AR-15s.

Yet, among the reasons gun-owners prize the AR-15 is that, not only in movies and TV shows is it the hero’s — and the villain’s — weapon of choice, but in real life, these are the kinds of rifles carried by the America’s most-admired warriors.

They are the modern version of muskets over the fireplace.

Another factor helps to explain what happened Wednesday: We are a formerly Christian society in an advanced state of decomposition.

Nikolas Cruz was a product of broken families. He was adopted. Both adoptive parents had died. Where did he get his ideas of right and wrong, good and evil? Before the Death of God and repeal of the Ten Commandments, in those dark old days, the 1950s, atrocities common now were almost nonexistent.

One imagines Nikolas sitting alone, watching coverage of the Las Vegas shooting, and thinking, “Why not? What have I got to lose? If this life is so miserable and unlikely to get better, why not go out, spectacularly, like that? If I did, they would remember who I was and what I did for the rest of their lives.”

And, so, regrettably, we shall.

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