

I Don't Like Mondays

The silicon chip inside her head

Gets switched to overload

And nobody's gonna go to school today

She's gonna make them stay at home

And daddy doesn't understand it

He always said she was good as gold

And he can see no reasons

'Cos there are no reasons

What reason do you need to be shown?

On January 29th 1979, sixteen year old Brenda Ann Spencer, shot and killed two adults, and wounded eight children and a police officer. Using a rifle her father had bought her for Christmas she described the shootings as “It was just like shooting ducks in a pond.” and saying the kids looked like a herd of cows, who were “easy pickings.” The sixteen year old, who is still serving a twenty five years to life sentence in Corona at the California Institution for Women, showed no remorse for her actions and shrugged when asked why she committed the crime, her response being; “I don't like Monday's. This livens up the day.” The song inspired former lead singer of the Boomtown Rats, Bob Geldof to write the song “I don't like Mondays”. This shooting was one of many in a tragic trend that seemed to start in the Sixties and hit a sad and all time high in the 1990s, one of the more famous shootings being the tragedy at the Columbine High School in Colorado on the 20th of April 1999.

To all other students at the Columbine High School, this spring morning was as all others. People were walking between classes, some were in classes. Others were studying in the library, or readying themselves for lunch in the school cafeteria, and none of them knew what was about to unfold. As two students, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold parked their cars outside of the school; they alone knew what terror lay in wait for the unsuspecting students. The two soon to be killers had placed two propane bombs in the cafeteria, planning for them to detonate during the “A” lunch shift. The bombs had enough power in them to not

only destroy the whole room, but also bring down the room above, which was the library. Complete aware of the devastating effects these bombs could have, the teenagers returned to their respective cars and sat waiting, arming themselves in preparation for the bombs to detonate. When the bombs failed to detonate, the two met up near Harris' car. Taking their weapons with them, they started to walk towards the cafeteria. Moments later the shooting that would shock not only the whole of America, but the world, started. Twelve students and one teacher were killed, another twenty four were wounded, making the massacre the third worst in number of casualties in American school shooting history. Then the two boys took their own lives.

The Telex machine is kept so clean
And it types to a waiting world
And mother feels so shocked
Father's world is rocked
And their thoughts turn to their own little girl
Sweet 16 ain't that peachy keen
Now that ain't so neat to admit defeat
They can see no reasons
'Cos there are no reasons
What reasons do you need?

It's a statistical fact that children in America are more at danger of gun crime than in any other industrialized country in the world. Children bringing guns to school has become a big problem, not only at schools that struggle with gang violence, but in schools in the nicer areas, filled with the children of the middle class. Gun laws in America have several times been under the microscope. After the massacre in Columbine documentarian Michael Moore, dedicated a film to his investigation into how easy it was for young adults to get their hands on firearms and the slack in firearms laws that in his opinion made crimes such as the school killings easier to commit. In April of 2007 gun laws were once again under the scrutiny of the public eye after what to date is the worst school shooting in American history. Seung-Hui Cho had purchased two semi-automatic pistols only

a couple of years after he had been declared mentally ill by Virginia special justice, despite it being against federal law for him to own firearms. Something that once again sparked up the old discussion between voters, politicians and the media about American gun laws and the dangers it put the public in.

So what possess a teenager to commit such a dreadful crime? How can someone whose biggest worry should be their next exam, or how to get a date get to a point where they feel the need to not only harm themselves but bring the lives of others to a sudden end?

The answers are many, complicated and varied, all depending on who you ask. The American gun laws can only be blamed for the easy access it provides young citizens to guns. Legally or not, someone who wants a gun and has full intent to use a gun on themselves or others will get their hands on one. Maybe lax gun laws, ignorant gun distributors and faulty computer systems and regulations can be blamed to a degree, but they will never answer the big why. Why someone would want to kill innocent people in the first place. So come the parents and those high and mighty who try to blame different medium. Violent games such as Doom, Manhunt and Mortal Kombat have been accused of increasing violence in people who play them. Films like Natural Born Killers has been said to inspire violence, some witnesses of the Columbine shooting even described that as a scene out of the film The Matrix. Gangster Rap and hard rock music has for decades been accused of encouraging violence, but can crimes really be explained that easily? I don't think so. The human mind is amazing and has a complex structure, and when something tragic happens it cannot simply be explained by the manipulation of video games or song lyrics. Ironically it was gothic hard rocker Marilyn Manson that hit the nail on the head when speaking about the Columbine massacre. Having had the music of his band being accused of influencing violence in young people, Manson was asked by a reporter what he would have said to young Harris and Klebold. His effective response. "I wouldn't say a thing. I would just listen to them... and that's what nobody did".

We live in a society where no one listens to each other. Most kids go through school, high school, college and have happy lives. Others are bullied, preyed on and beaten up, or sometimes something that can feel even worse, simply ignored. No one listens to these children. Those who grow up thinking no one likes them. Maybe they have problems at home, maybe they have experienced abuse or maybe they have mental issues that are left undetected because nobody cares, or left untreated because no one is willing to find the time to help them. I have used the tragedies in American schools as examples, because these are the ones people know, but the truth is they are happening all over the world. Canada, Israel, Germany, Scotland, Australia... in more and more countries, in all the world's continents tragedy strikes as children kill children and then themselves or choose to spare their own lives, but showing no remorse. Maybe one day people will start to listen. Maybe gun laws will change, governments will become stricter, schools will receive funding specifically to

detect and help those who are social underachievers and are liable to commit dreadful crimes. Maybe human kind will learn not to discriminate because of qualities that only run skin deep and that should not stop people from creating groups of those who are popular, and those who are treated like outcasts. Until then, we can all live in the hopes that there won't be anymore shootings. And that if it does happen again, hope that those involved aren't our own children, but remember through our relief that they will always be someone's children.

And all the playing's stopped in the playground now

She wants to play with the toys a while

And school's out early and soon we'll be learning

And the lesson today is how to die

And then the bullhorn crackles

And the captain tackles

With the problems of a house and wife

And he can see no reasons

'Cos there are no reasons

What reasons do you need to die?