



Usually, this column is reserved for my thoughts on the Indians. It serves as my soap box to climb on and shout at the top of my lungs about what's going wrong with the Tribe or to applaud the good things that the organization is doing. Sometimes, I can't find a topic to write about and I'm left to ramble, like I'm back in college writing a paper about some ancient society for a humanities gen ed class. Other times, I know exactly what I want to write about and the words flow like a river near its cresting point.

But this time, baseball takes a back seat. By now, you have all heard about the horrifying, awful story from Aurora, CO as 71 people were shot by one of society's biggest scumbags at a local premiere of *The Dark Knight Rises*. There were twelve people in that theater who thought they were going to have fun at the movies and see a highly anticipated premiere. Not only did they not see the movie, but they never saw the outside of the theater again.

You can find the details of what happened at any news outlet because, quite frankly, I don't care to read them again or transcribe them for you. It's one of the most heinous attacks the country has ever seen and certainly one of the worst in my lifetime. The event isn't just tragic for the deceased dozen or the families of those individuals. There were kids in that theater. They were either struck by bullets or "lucky" enough to just run out of the theater dodging dead bodies and pools of blood. They'll be scarred for life now from what they saw. Adults will be too, but at least most of them have the ability to compartmentalize what happened. The children will wake up screaming and probably deal with psychological issues for the rest of their lives.

Far too often, we hear stories like this. Not of this magnitude necessarily, but senseless shootings that result in the destruction of numerous lives. It's a dangerous world out there to begin with, but it's made all the more dangerous by disturbed individuals like alleged shooter, James Holmes. In most cases, it's hard to tell that these people are among us, as they look like

normal people. Hell, Holmes was working on a PhD in neuroscience at the University of Colorado, which is certainly not a field for somebody whose brain wiring is off. Or, at least you wouldn't think.

Too often, with these types of incidents, the media and certain people will look to blame everything but the suspect. Personal accountability just doesn't exist enough anymore. One person is guilty in this case. It's not Warner Brothers, who produced *The Dark Knight Rises*. It's not the creator of Batman or the villains in the series. It's not the other person of the relationship that went sour or the person who bullied or made fun of the shooter. It's the shooter.

I don't have any children yet, but at 25 years old, I'm not even sure that I want to have any. Is it fair to expose somebody to the world that we live in today? Random shootings like what happened in Tuscaloosa earlier in the week. The Chardon High School tragedy. The Virginia Tech shootings in 2007. Columbine. People knowingly setting deadly wildfires. Rampant crime in even the most unexpected places. Kidnappings. Rapes. Strangling the mother of your children while on vacation. The media and certain people will look to blame everything but the suspect. Personal accountability just doesn't exist enough anymore.

No, we can't live in fear. No, we can't stop living our lives. Not a single one of us knows what will happen tomorrow, or even five minutes from now. We can better educate ourselves to spot warning signs. We can keep lines of communication open with our children and loved ones to know when something just isn't right. We can be more aware of our surroundings and avoid compromising situations.

However, nobody expects to go to the movies and be turned into a prop at a shooting range. Seemingly, nothing could have been done to prevent this. As of now, we don't know if Holmes told anyone of his plan. We have no idea if somebody saw him entering the building from a back door and thought about how strange that seemed, only to not pursue it further.

All we know is that 71 innocent people were wounded, 12 of them fatally, and the lives of every person in that theater, every person who knows somebody who was in that theater, and every person who responded to that theater, whether they were a first responder or a doctor and nurse at a hospital, were changed forever. And it's sad. And it's disgusting. And it's despicable.

Anybody with a shred of empathy in them has felt awful about this incident since they found out about it and the majority of them don't know a victim or anyone who was in theater #9. Most of us have run the gamut of emotions from sadness to frustration to anger to worry about our own friends and family. If only James Holmes had thought about any of those things when he walked through that door with three fully-loaded weapons.

Unfathomable tragedies like the Aurora theater shootings serve as a reminder to live life to the fullest, love those around you to the fullest, and let them know that you love them. Too many times in this busy, technology-filled world, we're too inundated with distractions to end a phone call with "I love you" or give somebody a hug as they walk out the door.

You should do that from now on. I don't think I need to tell you why.