



Young American Males Are Not All Right

The May 24 mass shooting of schoolchildren at Robb Elementary School in the border town of Uvalde, Texas by a deranged 18-year-old youth stunned the nation. The public demanded that something be done. Politicians responded by calling for greater gun control, including bans on certain weapons, stronger background checks, and a higher legal age to purchase semi-automatic weapons. Others, often on the more conservative side of the political spectrum, called for arming teachers, requiring armed security guards at every campus, and fortifying schools against intruders. Congress quickly passed a bipartisan compromise gun safety bill.

Without a doubt, the United States has experienced a wave of mass shootings in schools and colleges. Here is a list of *24 such shootings in the last decade*. *Known facts about the shooters are instructive, suggesting a cultural problem that stricter gun control laws are unlikely to solve:*

2012 - Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown, CT - 20 kids and 6 employees killed by a 20-year-old white male who also died, who was living with his mother

2013 - Santa Monica College shooting, Santa Monica, CA - 5 killed, 4 injured on or near the campus by a 23-year-old white male who also died, who was living with his mother; Sparks Middle School, Sparks, NV - 1 killed, 2 injured by a 12-year-old Hispanic male who also died

2014 - Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA - 1 dead, 3 injured by a 27-year-old Hispanic male; Marysville Pilchuck High School, Marysville, WA - 5 killed, 1 injured by a 15-year-old Native American male; Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL - 3 injured by a 31-year-old black male lawyer who also died

2015 - Southwestern Classical Academy, Flint, MI - 7 injured, 18- and 19-year-old black males charged; Umpqua Community College near Roseburg, OR - 9 killed, 8 injured by a 26-year-old black male student who also died, who was living with his mother; Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ - 1 killed, 3 injured by an 18-year-old white male student; Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN - 1 killed, 3 injured, 2 20-year-old

black males indicted but charges later dismissed after recantation by a witness

2016 - Muskegon Heights High School, Muskegon Heights, MI - 4 injured including the 21-year-old black gunman; Jeremiah E. Burke High School, Dorchester, MA - 1 killed, 3 injured by a 20-year-old black male; Townville Elementary School, Townville, SC - 2 killed, 3 injured by a 14-year-old white male; June Jordan High School for Equity, San Francisco, CA - 4 injured, a 17-year-old male charged

2017 - Rancho Tehama Elementary School, Tehama County, CA - 5 killed, 18 injured at sites including the school by a 44-year-old white male, who also died

2018 - Marshall County High School near Benton, KY - 2 killed, 14 injured by a 15-year-old white male student; Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Parkland, FL - 17 killed, 17 injured by a 19-year-old white male former student whose adoptive parents had both died; Santa Fe High School, Santa Fe, TX - 10 killed, 13 injured, a 17-year-old white male student charged

2019 - University of North Carolina at Charlotte - 2 killed, 4 injured by a 23-year-old white male former student; STEM School, Highlands Ranch, CO - 1 killed, 8 injured by an 18-year-old white male and a 16-year-old white "transgendered" person; Saugus High School, Santa Clarita, CA - 2 dead, 3 injured by a 16-year-old white male student who also died, who was living with his mother

2021 - Grambling State University, Grambling, LA - 1 killed, 7 injured, 19- and 20-year-old black males arrested; Oxford High School, Oxford Township, MI - 4 killed, 7 injured, a 15-year-old white male arrested

2022 - Robb Elementary School, Uvalde, TX - 21 killed, 17 injured by an 18-year-old Hispanic male, who also died. This massacre came only 10 days after a mass shooting that killed 10 blacks and injured 3 other people at a Buffalo, NY grocery store. The accused shooter, an 18-year-old white male from an intact middle-class family, was reputed to be a devotee

of violent online streaming video games. Then, a rooftop gunman killed 7 and injured at least 45 at a July 4 parade in affluent Highland Park, IL, in the 309th U.S. shooting of 4 or more people this year. The confessed killer is a 21-year-old white male, reportedly a videogame enthusiast whose parents lived apart.

Looking at this numbing list of 26 mass shootings in 10 years, one must ask: What is going on with American youth? *The known or suspected shooters overwhelmingly ranged from 12 to 25 years old, all were male, and more than half were white.* At least six (probably more, but the information is not readily available) lived in homes without a father present. Some of the killers exhibited notable warning signs that authority figures in their lives failed to act on. The deficits of African-American youth are common knowledge, but disturbing trends afflict white youth as well. These trends are apparent in school dropout rates, drug usage, suicide rates, and time spent on social media or gaming and not socializing in person with peers.

The Boy Crisis

In a 2019 interview on CBS's *60 Minutes*, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell warned that *the greatest danger to the future of America's economy is young males who are unprepared educationally and socially for the employment market.* His warning was ignored.¹

The "boy crisis" exists across developed Western countries, but it is especially egregious in the United States. Too many young males lack proficiency in core subjects—reading, mathematics and science. The suicide rate for boys aged 15 to 19 is three times higher than for girls, and for boys aged 20 to 24 is four and a half times higher than for girls. Many boys have concluded that being male is "toxic." This is what they are being taught in school.

Nearly 18.5 million children in America are growing up without their fathers in the home. America is the world leader in fatherlessness. Studies show that boys are affected more than girls by the absence of male/father models. Many of those without fathers experience what is called "purpose void." Dad deprivation is a good predictor in the increasing rates of male suicide, drug overdose, obesity, and withdrawal into video game addiction. One psychological study found that every 1 percent increase in fatherlessness in a neighborhood predicted a 3 percent increase in adolescent violence.²

A new research brief from the Institute for Family Studies used the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth to examine the relationship between fatherlessness and three outcomes for young men in the 2000s and 2010s: college completion, idleness, and involvement with the criminal justice system. The researchers found that, compared to young men who

grew up with their biological father, *young men who grew up without their biological father:*

- *were less than half as likely to graduate from college by their mid-20s;*
- *were significantly more likely to be idle in their mid-20s (19 percent vs. 11 percent); and*
- *were twice as likely to have spent time in jail by their mid-20s.*³

It is estimated that about 32 percent of American boys are currently growing up without their fathers, a proportion that is nearly double what it was in 1960.⁴

Boys without fathers won't find many male models in the classroom either, where only a quarter of teachers are male.⁵ By 2018, 88 percent of girls were graduating from high school on time, while boys were falling behind, with only 82 percent graduating on time.⁶

Today substantially more women go to college than men. College enrollments have dropped dramatically in the last half decade, with men accounting for a much larger share of the drop than women. American colleges and universities now enroll roughly six women for every four men. Forgoing college is not necessarily a bad decision, especially given the cost and the sorry state of colleges today and the high demand for skilled trades; but we are definitely seeing a mismatch between men's and women's educational attainments, which has negative consequences for marriage formation. Moreover, *college enrollment rates for poor and working-class white men are lower than for black, Latino and Asian men.*⁷

The Lost Generation Z

Generation Z, those born 1995-2010, are becoming the lost generation. Boys on the younger end of this generation are especially adrift. They have grown up in a culture in disarray.

This generation is ill-read, addicted to social media, and secular. Asked in a 2021 survey what they consider the most important issues they are concerned with, Generation Z members ranked LGBTQA rights first, with 71 percent listing this as their top concern. Other highly ranked concerns included gender equality, immigration rights, income equality, racial justice, "black lives matter" and "reproductive rights." Only 16 percent said that they turn to someone from their religious community during challenging times.⁸

In another survey conducted in 2021, an astonishing 39 percent of U.S. GenZers aged 18-24 identified as LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer or Questioning). This identification is far higher than the estimated 5 to 6 percent of the general population who identify as gay.⁹ Of course there is a faddish quality to this identification. As one researcher noted, the "LGBT identity gives them comfort, but there's a big

difference between claiming the identity and living the lifestyle.”¹⁰

While socially aware, as might be typical of any young generation, this generation is generally ill-informed. In one study conducted in 2018, *only 2 percent of American teens read a newspaper on a regular basis*. Only a third have read a book for pleasure in any given year. Instead their time was spent looking at social media, texting, gaming, and surfing the web. *For high school seniors of this generation, over six hours a day were spent on social media*. Fewer and fewer are even watching television.¹¹

Pew Research found in 2019 that teens were spending their leisure time (about 5 hours a day on average) surfing the web, gaming and watching videos. (Presumably pornographic web sites and/or violent videogames account for some of these hours.) They spent less time than their peers a decade ago on socializing, attending parties, or sporting or entertainment events. Boys spent more hours on leisure and more time on screens than female peers. Boys reported they got less excited about what they might learn in school on a given day than did girls.¹²

The teen trends identified above have undoubtedly worsened during the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic, as education at all levels deteriorated due to closures, conversion to online instruction, and masking rules.

Gen Z's problems are damaging the U.S. military, which recently sounded the alarm on recruitment. Army chief of staff General James McConville reported that only 23 percent of Americans between the ages of 17 and 24 currently qualify to join up. Obesity, lack of education, criminal records and mental health issues are among the common disqualifying factors. Furthermore, only 9 percent of those eligible to serve are interested in doing so, according to a Defense Department survey obtained by NBC News. Consequently, every branch of the armed services is struggling to reach its recruitment goals. And the military's "woke" policies and vaccine mandate don't help in appealing to young white males, who form the backbone of the combat forces.

Drugged Out, Depressed, Underemployed

Many of today's young males are drugged out, depressed and underemployed. Drugs, legal and illegal, have become the blight of America. Opioid deaths have soared to unprecedented levels, especially from 2019 to 2021, culminating in more than 107,000 deaths in 2021 (see *Mindszenty Report*, June 2022). These deaths have come from both illicit and prescription opioid drugs, as well as methamphetamines and antidepressants. Most of these drug-involved overdose deaths occurred among males (69 percent), and most resulted from fentanyl.¹³ Men in general

are more likely than women to become dependent on alcohol and drugs.

Young males across socioeconomic lines are being mowed down by drug overdoses, but it should be noted that middle-aged males have the highest rate of such deaths.¹⁴ Drug poisonings are the leading cause of death for middle-aged white males aged 45-52, topping suicides (which have grown), chronic liver disease and diabetes. As middle-aged white (non-Hispanic) deaths due to these causes have skyrocketed since 1999 in the U.S., men in Western European countries have experienced a steady decline in middle-age mortality.¹⁵

Less Marriage and Work, More Suicide

In the last three decades, trends in the labor market have turned downward for males.¹⁶ This downward path is evident in skills, employment rates, occupation stature, and real wage levels. High school graduation rates for females reached 91 percent for those born in 1975, while only 88 percent for males born in the same year, a gender gap that has since widened and is reflected in those going to college.

Real earnings for young males have declined in recent decades. As might be expected, the steepest declines are for males under the age of 40 with high school or lower education. Only for males with four or more years of college do we see real earnings growth. In traditionally male-dominated blue-collar occupations such as skilled manufacturing, transportation, and a variety of less-skilled manual labor, job opportunities have deteriorated. *It is not that jobs are lacking; fewer men seem motivated to seek work*. The labor force participation rate for men aged 20-24 dropped from 82.6 percent to 71.0 percent from 2000 to 2020.¹⁷

Making matters worse is the decline of marriage rates. Drops in marriage rates are seen in every socioeconomic and racial group, but the drop is sharpest for blacks and poor whites. In 1970, 69 percent of black men with less than a high school diploma were married. Today only 17 percent are married. Marriage rates correlate with income levels—which disproportionately affects poor black males—but marriage rates are also declining among the middle class.¹⁸

Given the long-term decline in real wages and earning potential for lower-skilled jobs, most men cannot support a household with such jobs. Marriage rates for college-educated males have also declined, but not as steeply as for less-educated males.

Men have become increasingly absent from living arrangements involving children.¹⁹ In 1970, 75 percent of white men with a high school diploma or less were living with a child. By 2010, only 40 percent were. Polling of Gen Z

indicates that more than half of that generation wants to remain single and put their own needs first.

The effects of this social isolation and declining economic opportunities are evident in the alarming rise of suicide among white males. Men die by suicide 3.6 times more often than women. The suicide rate for whites is twice as high as for blacks, Asians and Pacific Islanders. The result is that *white men account for nearly 70 percent of the suicide deaths in America today*.²⁰ The overall suicide rate increased significantly for the age group 25 to 34 from 2011 to 2020 (from 11 to 18 per 100,000) and among the age group 15 to 24 (from 11 to over 14 per 100,000) in the same period. And these figures are pre-Covid-19.

Young Men Need Help

America is at risk of losing a generation of young white males. There is no single explanation as to why or one single answer as to what can be done. What is clear, however, is that white males have become the punching bag of our society. Proponents of pernicious critical race theory staffing our institutions accuse white males of “white privilege” and the perpetuation of racism and sexism. White males often lack role models within their families, schools and popular culture. Their masculinity is attacked as toxic. The culture promotes the advancement of women, people of color and LGBT identifiers, while deriding successful white males. Affirmative action exists for every identity group except white heterosexual males.

While not unique to males, the weakening of religion in American life has not helped them. Belief in God has dropped to a historic low of 68 percent among young adults, dropping at least 10 percentage points from the average of 2013-2017 polls, according to a Gallup poll conducted in May.

As American youth are demoralized and increasingly unchurched, they turn to drugs, gaming and social media.

This can be turned around—if our political, cultural, religious and educational leadership, plus, more importantly, the parents of these youth, take responsibility for addressing these issues.

The late, much-missed right-wing journalist Andrew Breitbart liked to say that “politics is downstream from culture,” and that to change politics one must first change the culture. The culture rests on us. For the sake of younger generations, we must all do our part to model and promote the healthy habits and values of traditional Judeo-Christian culture.

¹ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2019/04/07/males-risk-boy-crisis-identity-america-future-addiction-suicide-column/3331366002/>.

² Ibid.

³ “‘Life Without Father’: Less College, Less Work, and More Prison for Those Growing Up Without Their Biological Father,” W. Bradford Wilcox, Wendy Wang and Alysse ElHage, Institute for Family Studies, June 17, 2022.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ https://www.realclearpolitics.com/2021/10/10/boys_in_crisis_schools_are_falling_young_mails_553742.html#!

⁶ https://www.realclearpolicy.com/2021/09/16/colleges_have_a_guy_problem_794673.html#!

⁷ Douglas Belkin, “A Generation of Men Give Up on College: ‘I Just Feel Lost,’” *Wall Street Journal*, September 6, 2021.

⁸ <https://religiondispatches.org/gen-z-is-turning-away-from-religion-in-order-to-live-out-their-values/>.

⁹ Paul Bond, “Nearly 40 Percent of U.S. Gen Zs, 30 Percent of Young Christians Identify as LGBTQ,” *Poll Suggests*, *Newsweek*, October 20, 2021.

¹⁰ <https://www.newsweek.com/nearly-40-percent-us-gen-zs-30-percent-christians-identify-lgbtq-poll-shows-1641085>.

¹¹ Joe Concha, “Study: Only Two Percent of Teens Read Newspaper, One Third Have Not Read Book for Pleasure Last Year,” *The Hill*, July 27, 2018.

¹² <https://pewresearch.tumblr.com/post/183245577744/the-way-us-teens-spend-their-time-is-changing/amp>.

¹³ <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates>.

¹⁴ <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.1518393112>;

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35077954/>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ <https://www.thirdway.org/report/wayward-sons-the-emerging-gender-gap-in-labor-markets-and-education>.

¹⁷ <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/civilian-labor-force-participation-rate.htm>.

¹⁸ Richard V. Reeves and Christopher Pulliam, “Middle class marriage is declining, and likely deepening inequality,” *brookings.edu*, March 11, 2020.

¹⁹ Ibid. Also, <https://www.datingnews.com/industry-trends/marriage-stats-by-age-race-state-generation/>.

²⁰ <https://www.brgeneral.org/news-blog/2021/july/men-and-suicide-why-are-white-men-most-at-risk-/>; <https://www.freep.com/story/opinion/contributors/2019/04/12/suicide-rates-prevention-white-men/3436883002/>; <https://mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america>.

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