



Throughout the modern age, there have, unfortunately been many tragic events involving mass shootings and violent crimes. As a result, both the media and those involved will likely look for something to blame.

In many cases it will be violent video games that come under scrutiny, with common examples being the Grand Theft Auto series, Mortal Kombat and Doom.

Though the case of violence in the gaming world being a direct influence to these horrific cases is quite compelling, is it really that simple? Is simply giving a child or adult a “murder simulator” really a likely cause for this? Or is it just an easy source that the media and families can blame rather than look into other and

potentially more viable causes?

In March of 2014, a 14-year-old named Eldon G. Samuel III, killed his father and brother with a .45 calibre pistol and shotgun, before repeatedly stabbing them with a machete and turning himself in.

Upon being arrested, he claimed that he was inspired by the violent character of Trevor in GTA 5. In most cases this could almost seem cut-and-dry. Boy plays a violent game and becomes a killer. But it wasn't quite that simple. After the incident, his psychiatrist claimed that Eldon had a past of abuse from his father and a habit of torturing small animals.

It seems there is no clear single cause for his actions.

Though he himself said the game was what inspired his actions, it was clear his upbringing had an equally negative affect on his upbringing.

In a similar case, an 8-year-old boy shot his grandmother whilst playing with a .38 calibre firearm. It was discovered that he was playing GTA IV before the incident, and so once again, a clear scapegoat has been found. But why isn't it questioned that the boy had a firearm in the first place?

In addition, why was someone his age allowed to play such a game? It isn't a secret the GTA series is violent and contains many adult themes, so why isn't the parenting to blame?

Many people seem to believe in the hypodermic needle theory when violence is involved. That we take in all there is from media and believe every word we hear.

Though this isn't necessarily the case, as audiences clearly interpret what they watch on they're as an active viewer. This reception theory states that people can have agree, disagree or be indifferent about what they see on their own volition.

When the Mortal Kombat game came out, there was massive controversy surrounding the gore filled “fatalities” that could be performed on other characters.

The possibility that this could be affecting young gamers into encouraging violence spread a moral panic all across the globe.

This, along with the advertising that promoted killing people within the game, the subject was brought up in US Congress as a strong matter.

This, along with other games, led to the creation of the ESRB (Entertainment Software Rating Board), which is now regulates the age ratings on games and other content.

This action was made to give parents and children insight into if the content of the game if appropriate for them, thus making easier prevent violent crimes “influenced” by video games.

Yet in this modern age, many crimes are still blamed on this, which begs the question, is the main cause of these violent crimes a fault of parents letting their children play these games?

Further, most cases, once you look past the history of games they play, the perpetrators will have other negative influences, ranging from drinking, drugs, bad parenting and access to the weaponry in the first place.

Despite all the evidence that amounts to video games being a sure-fire cause to violence in the real world, the fact still remains that there was conflict before the invention of gaming. So perhaps violence has inspired our games, rather than games inspire our violence?