



REMEMBER THE VICTIMS: A man shot dead five people, including a three-year-old girl, before taking his own life in Plymouth last week

Incel violence rooted in belief that women should do whatever men want

LAST week's mass murder in Plymouth has brought a new word into the vocabulary of many people. Incel is an abbreviation of involuntarily celibate and refers to a man who does not or cannot form a physical relationship with women. In other words, they are not having sex and they want to be.

There has been a lot of analysis of incel culture or sub-culture, and whether it is or should be classified as terror threat and dealt with as such in order to provide more robust police powers to deal with threats of violence against women. There was also, predictably, a backlash from a number of men on social media who said women should collectively bear some responsibility for what had happened in Plymouth because misogyny and anti-male rhetoric is what has created incels.

Men blaming women for what other men have done is how the patriarchy has always operated. But a woman declining a date with a man isn't misogyny. What's wrong is that there are men out there who view women as dehumanised sex objects, a commodity that exists purely for male sexual pleasure and they blame women for the fact that they are not having sex.

Before anyone starts writing in the comments that it's "not all men", I know that. The overwhelming majority of men are sound in their attitude towards women and treatment of them. I raised my son with the advice that he should always treat girls the way he would want other boys to treat his sister, because that's a straightforward and simple standard by which every word or deed can be measured.

I hesitate to define incel as a culture. For me, a person's culture is an innate and unchangeable characteristic within their make-up. Your culture tends to be based on your identity, whether that be Irish, Ulster British or LGBTQI+, for example. So, if something is involuntary then by definition you want to change it. If you cease being incel by hooking

Patricia
MACBRIDE



up with someone or beginning a relationship, how, therefore, can you define it as a culture?

There is no doubt, however, that it is a movement. It's an online movement that has spilled over into real life and has led to several mass shootings across the world. The most recent of these took the lives of little Sophie Martyn and her father Lee, Maxine Davison, Stephen Washington and Kate Shepherd.

The growth of this movement has manifest itself in many forms. I've had gender-based insults and criticism on social media which is probably the most benign form. Female friends who use dating apps have told me how men have become verbally abusive when they have declined an invitation to go home with them on the first date and now only meet someone for a drink in pubs where they know they can make a quick exit by a side door if need be.

Despite being subjected to online abuse, coercive control, domestic violence, victim

Having an ideology in which you feel superior to women and then claiming to be a victim when women won't sleep with you doesn't make you oppressed

shaming, stalking and multiple other acts of violence and intimidation, women aren't going out in the streets, armed to the teeth, killing people indiscriminately.

The ideology of violent misogyny is being explained away. I've seen one news clip where "dad-deprived" boys were assessed as being at risk of underachievement and lacking social skills because they had been raised by single mothers without a positive male role model in their life. In its worst form, this can manifest itself in violent misogyny. Once again, a man blaming women for what other men have done.

Having gone down the documentary rabbit hole, there is undoubtedly a high level of mental health issues within the incel movement. That doesn't make it a psychological disorder, though, and it does not merit any sympathy for those who abuse or attack women. Incel violence is ideological violence with the purpose of creating fear in women and it is rooted in a belief that women should do whatever men want. Men don't have the right to have sex with any woman and it most certainly is not a woman's responsibility to keep men sexually occupied for fear of violent retribution on her or on society if she doesn't.

The anti-feminist trope that men feel emasculated because women aren't caring enough, or work too hard and don't give men enough attention, or did or didn't breastfeed them as babies has re-emerged in the last week too. Again, these are views that are grounded in male entitlement and a belief in male supremacy.

Having an ideology in which you feel superior to women and then claiming to be a victim when women won't sleep with you doesn't make you oppressed and your unhappiness certainly won't be fixed by violent misogyny.

My hope is that a light being shone in the dark corners of violent misogyny will create more male allies because these guys aren't taking no for an answer from women.

ON THIS DAY

AUGUST 19 1971

Hume and Cooper Arrested

TWO more civilians were shot dead by the Army yesterday – one in Derry and the other, a deaf mute, in Strabane – amidst the flood-tide of protests sweeping NI over internment. The death toll now stands at 28. Killed in Derry was Eamonn Lafferty, a baker, while the Strabane victim was Eamonn McDevitt.

In the Derry troubles yesterday two Opposition MPs, Mr John Hume and Mr Ivan Cooper, both covered in dye after troops used a water cannon on the crowd, were detained for several hours. Late last night, however, they were carried shoulder high into the Bogside following their release.

Catholics to Quit UDR

THE Ulster Defence Regiment was last night faced with the prospect of mass resignations by Catholic members. At a meeting of 31 Catholic UDR men and ex-members in Belfast, addressed by Mr Austin Currie, MP, only seven were prepared to go back on duty tonight. And it is believed that already many more of the dwindling number of Catholics in the force have decided to quit because of alleged Army brutalities during the round-up of internees. An Army photographer took pictures of those leaving last night's meeting.

Mr Currie said when the force was established he was in favour of Catholics joining it. As a result, however, of Army activity and the policy of the British Government, he was no longer prepared to ask Catholics to join the UDR because of the decision of the British Government to prop up the present Unionist government led by Mr Faulkner. Mr Currie referred to the one-sided searches which had taken place despite the fact that there considerable quantities of arms in Unionist areas.

'No Freedom No Rent' – Fitt

SPEAKING at a Civil Rights meeting in Divis complex and Unity Flats last night, Mr Gerry Fitt, leader of the SDLP, said the minority's clarion call should now be: 'No freedom, no rent'. Mr Fitt said it was now becoming very clear that the Unionist government at Stormont clearly regarded every Catholic in the North as being a member of a subversive organisation.

Vote of Confidence in Faulkner

MR BRIAN Faulkner yesterday received a vote of support from his Unionist Party colleagues.

WITH the situation deteriorating by the hour, the bulk of the UDR's Catholic members resigned in protest at internment. As the Unionist party backed Faulkner's high-risk policy, John Hume and Ivan Cooper were charged under the hated Special Powers Act.

EDITED BY ÉAMON PHOENIX
e.phoenix@irishnews.com