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Carrie Casebook Essay
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There are many sources on the internet about school bullying, violence, femininity, and psychokinesis, which are all very prominent issues in the novel "Carrie" by Stephen King. One of these sources that references the issues of bullying in schools is a TED talk, "How we can reduce Bullying, School Shootings, and Violence" by Apollo Sevant. Now, you may think, well, this source is just a TED talk and anyone can post a video on the internet talking about a problem they are passionate about -- and that is true. So, because of that, this author is not extremely credible. Anyone can be nominated or someone could even nominate themselves to be a "TED Talker", as long as they have a story they want to share aloud. There is no speaker introduction, just a picture of himself along with the title of his TED talk, which is just another reason for us to question the credibility of Apollo. However, the website is usually known to be a reliable source for scientific claims, and is even used in classroom settings. So thankfully, before the video gets posted, the video is watched by the TED community to make sure the speaker has some background knowledge and presents valid information regarding the topic.

In "How we can reduce Bullying, School Shootings, and Violence" Sevant talks about the commonality of highschool bullying, violence, and gun shootings within schools. He proposes that in order to reduce these worldwide issues, there needs to be professional, proven anti-bully workshops that focus on empathy and mindfulness implemented into schools. The discussion of these topics will increase empathetic and mindfulness emotions within the school's students. Since loneliness is the common denominator of all school shooters, the conversations of empathy and mindfulness will be able to decrease feelings of loneliness by allowing students to know that they are not alone. If one feels empathy, they are more able to form connections with other students. The allowance of empathetic discussions and emotional expression is how we will be able to create a more peaceful world, according to Sevant.

Sevant shares a few personal and historical examples that provide evidence to his claim that discussions of empathy and mindfulness will reduce school shootings, violence, and bullying. First, he experienced gun violence first hand while facilitating an anti-bully workshop to 7th graders in a middle school, so he knows this is a real issue that is severely affecting many students. At one of his other empathy building/anti-bully workshops that Sevant led at Columbine High School, which happened to be right after a school shooting had taken place there, one of the shooters friends stood up after Sevant's speech and said that if his friend Dylan (the shooter) would have experienced this day, he never would have done what he did. From leading his workshops, Sevant says that he is able to recall seeing students that were planning on taking their own life,

but after experiencing the empathy/anti-bullying workshops realized that their lives matter and they're not alone. He is also able to see the positive transformations of students occur within just one day of doing the work he does. Each of his personal experiences is evidence that his empathy and mindfulness workshops will be successful. Each time he led this type of workshop at schools, it had a positive impact on the students.

In the TED Talk, Sevant also provides proof that loneliness is the number one reason for school shootings, violence, and bullying. Sevant informs us that the shooter charged for the Ocala, Florida Forest High School shooting was seen in an interview, and "when they asked him what made him do that shooting he said because I felt alone" (Sevent, 00:05:15- 00:05:23). Loneliness is the common denominator for all school shooters. Individuals aren't born as shooters or criminals, and Sevant uses the Parkland school shooter as proof of this. Sevant showed us his baby picture. He was a smiling happy baby -- definitely not someone who looks or acts like someone with violent intentions. What makes school shooters turn into someone violent is a combination of the loneliness they feel and the fact that they were once victims. If victims get to connect with others through empathetic and mindful communications, they will no longer feel lonely or like an outcast who is victimized.

We see this idea of loneliness in Stephen King's *Carrie*. Carrie was an outcast in her high school and was seen as the victim far too often. She was a victim of her mother's physical violence and inaccurate religious persuasion, Chris Hargenson's locker room assault, and the school's laughter at prom caused by Billy Nolan and Chris's pig blood stunt. Each of these incidents led to her outburst of murders and destruction towards the end of the novel. Carrie follows Sevant's researched idea that "most criminals were once victims before they became criminals" (00:08:38 - 00:08:43). Before Carrie became a criminal, she was a victim of her classmates, mother, and even teachers. If she only would have experienced more empathy and understanding, she might have been able to form some connections to dismantle the loneliness that she was feeling. We are only able to imagine what could have happened if she was to experience this. However, thanks to Sue Snell, we can get a small sneak peek into how this might have changed Carrie. Sue never directly expressed to Carrie the empathy and compassion she had for her, but she did try to apologize and make amends with Carrie through Tommy, her boyfriend. Sue asked Tommy to take Carrie to the prom instead of her, and Carrie was having a great night with him and his friends. She finally was able to connect and even form conversations with her classmates. As a result, she felt less lonely, and was able to keep her violent telekinetic impulses hidden...for then, anyway. Once Billy and Chris pulled their pig blood incident, Carrie felt alone and like an outcast once again.

Ultimately, if Carrie had received some kind consistent forms of empathy or mindfulness from others, she would have been able to form connections and discard

her feelings of loneliness, as she did at the beginning of prom night. Sadly, this didn't happen and no true and timely connections were formed with her mother or her classmates, so the town paid the ultimate price. Since the only bit of empathy for Carrie throughout the novel was shown by Sue, we can now understand why Sue might have been the only one who lived to tell that night, and what could have happened if Carrie was shown more empathy earlier on by her classmates.

References:

TEDxTalks, and Apollo Sevant. "How We Can Reduce Bullying, School Shootings, and Violence | Apollo Sevant | TEDxOcala." *YouTube*, YouTube, 12 Dec. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSH5AW51Mbo.