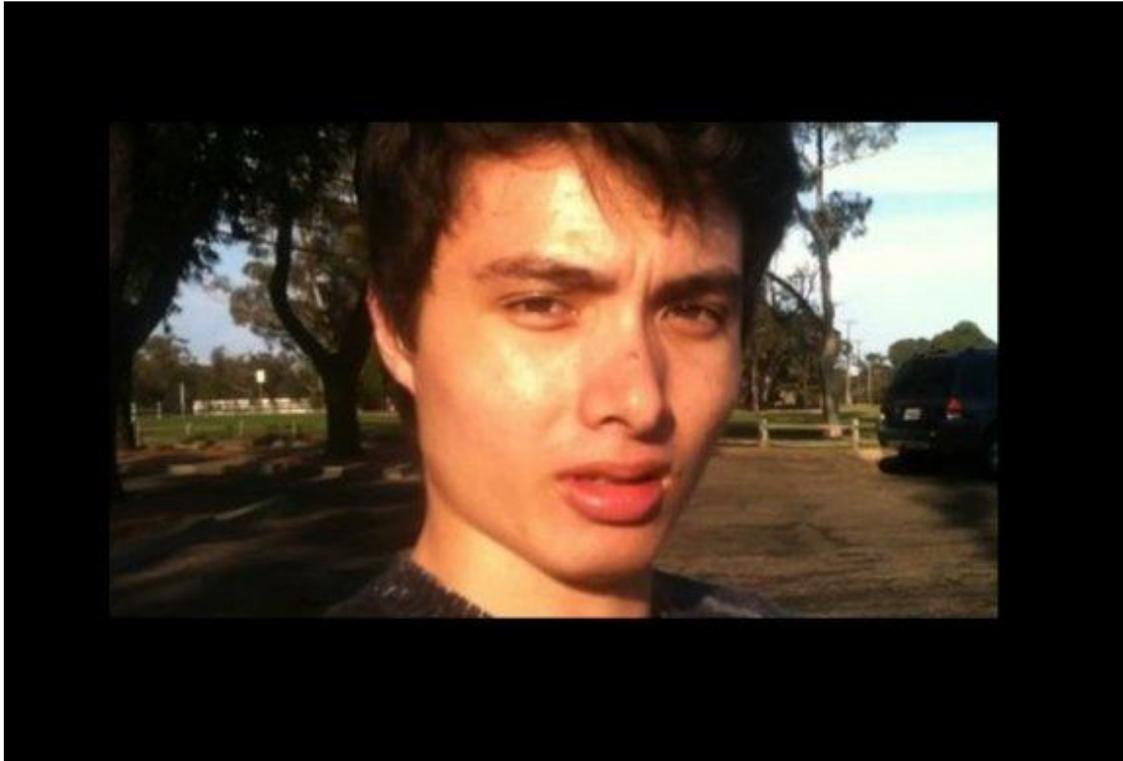


Incels (Involuntary celibates)



- Incels are heterosexual men who blame women and society for their lack of romantic success
- A subset of the online misogynist “[manosphere](#)” that includes Pick Up Artists and Men’s Rights Activists, incels are known for their deep-seated pessimism and profound sense of grievance against women
- The incel ideology is rooted in the belief that women have too much power in the sexual/romantic sphere and ruin incels’ lives by rejecting them
- Incels are [the most violent sector](#) of the manosphere, and have perpetrated a range of deadly attacks against women

When Cole Carini appeared in a Virginia emergency room in June 2020, he was missing a hand, several fingers from his other hand and was covered in shrapnel

wounds.

Investigators who searched his home found bomb-making materials and a letter describing a young man who goes to a mall to target “hot cheerleaders” with “deadly objects.” [The letter read, in part:](#) “I will not back down. I will not be afraid of the consequences no matter what I will be heroic I will make a statement like [\[incel murderer\]](#) Elliott Rodgers [sic] did he thought to himself.”

Just a month earlier, Armando Hernandez, Jr., drove to the Westgate Entertainment District near Phoenix, Arizona. He loaded [three 30-round magazines](#) for his AR-15 rifle, and started a video livestream as he stepped out of his car. [“Let's get this done, guys,”](#) he said.

By the time police apprehended Hernandez, he had shot three people, none fatally. He targeted couples, prosecutors say, because he was angry at his lack of romantic success with women. “Mr. Hernandez is a self-professed incel,” county prosecutor [Edward Leiter told a judge during a May 21 hearing.](#) “He was taking out his anger at society, the feeling that he has been bullied, the feeling that women didn’t want him.”

Carini and Hernandez are just the latest in a line of incels -- lonely, romantically frustrated young men -- whose anger has exploded in acts of deadly violence.

History and ideology

[Incels, or “involuntary celibates,”](#) are young, heterosexual men who blame women and society for their own inability to form romantic or sexual attachments. A relatively recent phenomenon, incels have the dubious honor of being the most violent element of [the manosphere](#) -- the interconnected online world of incels, PUAs (Pick up Artists), MGTOWs (Men Going Their Own Way) and MRAs (Men’s Rights Activists). In July 2020, [an MRA attacked the family](#) of a federal judge in New Jersey, killing her son and injuring her husband.

Law enforcement officials believe [violent incels have murdered at least 47](#) people in North America in the last six years. That number is likely low, given how little we know about incels, and how recently they have become a community of interest for law enforcement.

The term “incel” was coined in 1993 [by a young Canadian woman](#) as a label for her own single status, and as part of an effort to find and connect with similarly lonely people. Today, nearly all incels are men (the majority of whom are white) – and the few women who venture into the community’s online spaces tend to be roundly rejected. Further, the label of incel adopted now describes much more than loneliness or singledom, including the subset of incels who are consumed by homicidal rage.

The moniker was attached retroactively to [Marc Lepine](#), who in 1989 massacred 14 women at École Polytechnique in Montreal, and left behind a suicide note in which he blamed feminists for destroying his life. Since then, angry young men have taken up his cause, leaving women terrorized – and all too often, dead.

The underlying theme of incel ideology is that the current sexual “marketplace” gives women too much freedom to choose their own partners. Those partners tend not to be incels, who in turn believe they are being deprived of their sexual birthright. Some incels charge that women who deny them sex are committing “reverse rape” – just as dangerous and harmful as actual rape.

The incel worldview hinges on a few key beliefs, which include a number of cryptic terms:

Women will always revert to hypergamy – using sexual or romantic partnerships to elevate one’s own status. In the incel calculus, this means 80 percent of women want to date only the “top” 20 percent of available men, lavishing their attentions on only the best-looking and richest men, and leaving the remaining 80 percent of men (including incels) without a potential partner.

In incel-speak, Chads benefit from Hypergamy. Incels, on the other hand, suffer.

“Chads” are the men most women want to date. They are confident, brash and blessed with a very specific, apparently enviable bone structure – a point of obsessive discussions on incel forums, where members post longingly about undergoing extreme plastic surgery to achieve “Chad” status.

“Stacys,” meanwhile, are the women incels want to date, but who only want to date Chads. Incels seem to hate Chads and Stacys equally, but while they want to be Chads, they want to both date and kill Stacys.

Beneath incels’ coded language is a seething anger towards women and a deep well of self-loathing. This is immediately evident on incel chat rooms and other online forums, which are inundated by suicidal and homicidal rhetoric and threats.

Most incels don’t resort to violence, but in a growing number of cases, online threats manifest in deadly attacks, usually targeting women. America’s most infamous incel killing spree took place in May of 2014, when a man named [Elliot Rodger](#) opened fire near the campus of UC Santa Barbara.

Shortly before his rampage, [Rodger posted a lengthy manifesto and video](#), blaming women for his unhappiness and referring to himself as “the supreme gentleman.” His attack left six women dead and 14 people wounded. Rodger, who shot himself in his car after committing the attacks, has served as inspiration for a number of incel attacks.

[Alek Minassian](#), who murdered 10 people in Toronto and [Scott Beierle](#), who shot and killed two in Tallahassee, Florida, both name-checked Rodger, as did Carini, in Virginia. Rodger is cited frequently on incel message boards as “E.R.” – as in “I’m going to pull an E.R. one of these days.”

As public awareness about incels grows, more potential attacks are being identified and thwarted. That said, violent incels remain a significant concern; in 2020 alone, North American authorities have arrested five self-identified incels for killing or plotting to kill women. In the spring of 2020, Canadian authorities classified an alleged incel murder as an act of terrorism, signaling a new approach to addressing the incel threat.

Incel Glossary

Ascend (also known as “Deincelification” or “Deincelization”): A verb used to describe an incel having sex or forming a romantic connection. This term has an existential connotation, as it refers to incels rising above their former community and overcoming the traits that held them back from sex and/or love. (One important caveat to “ascension” is that the sex cannot be with an escort; this is referred to as “escortcel”).

Blackpill: A nihilistic worldview adopted by the incel community. A “Blackpilled” male believes that no matter what he does to improve himself, he will never find a romantic and/or sexual partner and is doomed to a life of unhappiness and rejection.

Chad: A term referring to the archetypal “anti-incel:” a white, straight male with Aryan features and other “desirable” physical traits. Chads are simultaneously despised and revered by incels, who believe that all women inherently desire these men.

ER (also known as “going ER”): A reference to Elliot Rodger, an incel who committed mass murder in Santa Barbara, California in 2014. Prior to the shooting, Rodger wrote an angry manifesto blaming women for rejecting him. “Going ER” refers to the act of committing mass murder, as inspired by Rodger.

Femcel: A woman who identifies with incelism. However, most [male incels reject the idea](#) that women can be incels, and these women are generally rejected by the larger incel community.

Foid: An abbreviation of “femoid” which combines the words “female” and “humanoid” or “female” and “android.” This term is derogatory and is used to reduce women to a sub-human group. Incels attribute their virgin status to these women, and therefore refer to them pejoratively.

Hypergamy: A term based on the biological principle that women are sexually selective for self-preservation. In the incel realm it describes the belief that women seek out men who are of higher status – either physically or financially – than they are and reject all other men who they view as consequently undesirable. Further, incels believe in the “80/20 Rule” which claims that the top 80% of women only go for the top 20% of men, leaving the bottom 20% of women for the bottom 80% of men.

Looksmaxxing: Any attempts made by incels to improve upon their physical appearance. These strategies can range from haircuts and new clothes to taking steroids and going to the gym, and all the way up to cosmetic surgery.

Normie: A person who is neurotypical with average attractiveness or intelligence. “Normies” are viewed by incels as superior. In the incel hierarchy, “Normies” fall between “Chads” and “incels.”

Ragefuel: Information that contributes to an incel’s increasingly angry state of mind. This information often surrounds elements of fundamental incel ideology, such as women and physically attractive men.

Ropefuel (also known as “Suicidefuel”): Topics that feed depressive or suicidal ideations among members of the incel spectrum. The use of the word “rope” refers to the suicidal method of hanging oneself. The opposite of “ropefuel” is “lifefuel.”

Stacy: Stacys are the (similarly archetypal) counterparts to Chads. They are described as beautiful, promiscuous women who can entice any man they choose, but are only interested in Chads. This term is used to stereotype and dehumanize women.

Truecel: A moniker used for “true incels,” or men who have never had any sexual or romantic contact with a woman. These men believe they will always be an incel regardless of any changes they implement to improve themselves. This term functions as the opposite of “fakecels” (fake incels) and “volcels” (voluntary celibates), who are looked down upon in the incel community.

Volcel (also known as “Fakecel”): A term describing a person who is voluntarily celibate, and therefore does not fulfill the criteria of incelhood. Incels believe that these people could have sex if they wanted to, whereas “truecels” have no hope for finding sexual partners. “Volcels” are viewed as frauds and are not accepted by the incel community.

Incel Violence and Plots (North America)

September 2020 -- David Kaufman, New York, USA:

Members of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force arrested [David Kaufman, a self-described incel](#), who reportedly tormented a Long Island couple for a year with death and rape threats, charging him with making threatening interstate communications and stalking. The complaint alleges that Kaufman admired Elliot Rodger and used social media platforms to threaten the couple and their friends, whom he blamed for "rejecting and depriving him of sex to which he believed he was entitled."

June 3, 2020 – Cole Carini, Richlands, Virginia, USA:

Carini accidentally detonated a homemade explosive device, injuring himself and leading investigators to find additional bomb making materials and notes supporting incel ideology at his home. Carini's note portrayed a bomber taking violent action against "hot cheerleaders" to "make a statement" like the attack perpetrated by **Elliot Rodger**.

May 20, 2020 - Armando Hernandez Jr., Glendale, Arizona, USA

Hernandez opened fire at the Westgate Entertainment District, **allegedly targeting couples**. Three people were injured in the shooting, two are said to be a couple. The prosecuting attorney labeled Hernandez as a "self-described incel" and alleged that he sent video recordings of the attack to a female he was interested in, hoping to impress her.

May 12, 2020 – Joseph Miner, Queens, New York, USA

Miner was **arrested during a sting operation** when he attempted to buy illegal weapons from undercover federal agents. He reportedly hoped to organize a "well-trained incel hit squad" to precipitate a race war targeting Jewish and Black people. Among his online comments: "God I hate women jews n-ggers."

April 21, 2020 - Carl Bennington, Covina, California, USA

Carl Bennington was arrested in April 2020 after making violent threats against women and teenage girls. Starting in 2016, Bennington used social media to harass and physically and sexually threaten women and teens, specifically females who rejected his advances. Bennington promoted incel ideology online and referred to Elliot Rodger as a victim.

February 24, 2020 – Toronto, Canada

An unnamed minor was charged with terrorism (upgraded from first degree murder) after a machete attack at an exotic massage parlor that killed one woman.

[Police cited evidence](#) that the attacker was motivated by incel beliefs.

December 2019 - Jean-Claude Rochefort, Montreal, Canada

Rochefort, an admirer of Marc Lepine and anti-feminist blogger, was arrested after posting content glorifying the 1989 massacre. [He was charged](#) with inciting hate against women for his inflammatory posts made around the time of the 30th anniversary of the École Polytechnique attack.

August 4, 2019 – Connor Betts, Dayton, Ohio, USA

Betts was killed by police after his shooting spree, which left nine people dead, including Betts' sister. While it does not appear that incel ideology was the primary motivation for Betts' attack, he did share some key beliefs with violent incels. He reportedly harbored anger towards women, and his former high school classmates [reported that Betts was suspended](#) for making a “hit list” of people he wanted to kill [and a “rape list”](#) of girls/women who had rejected him.

January 2019 - Christopher Wayne Cleary, Provo, Utah, USA

Cleary planned to target women and commit a [public mass casualty event](#) but was arrested before any plan came to fruition. Online posts detailed his distress over his virginity and inability to find a relationship partner.

November 2, 2018 - Scott Paul Beierle, Tallahassee, Florida, USA

Beierle shot six women, two fatally, [before killing himself](#) at Tallahassee Hot Yoga studio. In the years before the shooting he created original content that depicted graphic violence against women and he had a history of professional and personal misconduct towards women.

April 23, 2018 - Alek Minassian, Toronto, Canada

Minassian, apparently motivated by embarrassment over sexual rejection, deliberately drove a van into pedestrians, killing 10 and injuring 15. Minassian [self-identifies as an incel](#) and admirer of Elliot Rodger and said, in taped confessions, that he hoped his attack would spur more violent action from the incel community.

February 14, 2018 – Nikolas Cruz, Parkland, Florida, USA

Cruz, a 19-year-old former student, killed 17 people and injured 17 others at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School before [police apprehended him](#). While the Valentine's Day attack was not solely motivated by incel beliefs, Cruz's online posts referencing Elliot Rodger suggest ideological exposure.

December 7, 2017 - William Edward Atchison, Aztec, New Mexico, USA

Atchison killed two students at Aztec High School before turning the gun on himself. His [online activity](#) included a variety of [far right ideological content](#) and references to Elliot Rodger, praising Rodger's 2014 attack.

October 1, 2015 - Chris Harper Mercer, Roseburg, Oregon, USA

Mercer, a 26-year-old student at Umpqua Community College, [fatally shot nine people](#) before taking his own life. Prior to the attack, he posted on incel message boards lamenting his lack of sexual prospects.

May 23, 2014 - Elliot Rodger, Isla Vista, California, USA

[Rodger outlined his motives](#) in YouTube videos and an online manifesto that detailed his anger towards women because of sexual rejection. He killed six people before taking his own life. Rodger has become a macabre idol, the "Supreme Gentleman," for later violent incel perpetrators and is celebrated in online incel spaces.

August 4, 2009 - George Sodini, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Sodini shot and killed three women in an aerobics class at a Pittsburgh LA Fitness Gym before taking his own life. Notes and an [online blog detailed his feelings of abandonment](#) over his lack of sexual prospects or close relationships with women.

December 6, 1989 - Marc Lepine, Montreal, Canada

Lepine shot and killed 14 women at École Polytechnique in Montreal before taking his own life. [Lepine planned his attack](#) as a “stand against feminists,” who he blamed for ruining his life. He targeted female engineering students, a field he considered unfit for women.