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Paper 3 - Research-Based Analysis

Comprising half of the world’s population, men, alongside women have served as one of the pillars of our society. Historically, in a world filled to the brim with violence and long, laborious work, men typically took the role of Provider, creating a surplus of goods to support their family, risking life and limb to protect them from danger. However, the winds of time have reshaped everything, and in an age of automation, large, international bodies like the UN to resolve disputes, heavily armed police forces to protect us and industrious career driven women, this role has become largely redundant. The societal role which gave men meaning and purpose seemingly vanished overnight, and I have seen firsthand the void that has opened in their hearts. It is as if many of the men I know have lost the will to live, still in shock from the seismic shift of culture and economics from the past five decades. As a result of male employment becoming more difficult and less rewarding from the value of a college degree greatly increasing, alongside women becoming financially self-sufficient, men, especially those below the professional class feel purposeless and directionless, resulting in them drifting to the margins of society. Compounded by the marriage wealth divide and an education system biased towards wealthy and long term thinking students, this has resulted in a vicious intergenerational cycle of poor achievement and social failure among men. Unfortunately, because of the complexity of this issue and lack of consensus, this problem will not get resolved on a societal wide level any time soon.

Before we dive deeper into the crisis of men, we should explain what masculinity is, and how it influences men’s decisions. Masculinity is defined as the qualities and attributes characteristic of boys and men (Oxford Dictionary). Biologically, males are more interested in things than people, have much more physical aggression, risk taking behavior and sex drive than females (Reeves 85) and take more time to mentally mature (Reeves 160). Each of these differences, though helpful in some contexts, has contributed to this crisis in different ways. For a variety of both economic and cultural factors, namely the outsourcing and automation of American manufacturing and mining jobs since the 1970s (Kahloon 7-8), the precipitous decline in married, two parent families in the poor and working classes since the 1960s (Wilcox, Wang 2-3), and the otherwise positive and liberating independence women have gained in the past few decades from the erosion of hurdles to education (Reeves 5) and employment (Reeves 26-27), a perfect storm of male malaise has brewed. This storm has created an intergenerational downward vortex as men who are stuck in unemployment or unsteady dead end jobs cannot get married because the mom, already on a tight income does not want to support a ‘deadbeat’ dad, resulting in poor boys being born out of wedlock, with little contact with their father. These boys then struggle to be academically focused and strive for long term goals and achievements because their mom struggles to financially support them and guide them the way two parents could, made worse by them being more psychologically vulnerable to unstable, broken home lives than girls (Guo 3). As a result, many of them struggle to achieve higher education, with the acquisition of criminal records and dropping out of high school not being uncommon (Reeves 60). These boys cannot keep up in the economic race since jobs increasingly require more skills and longer years of education, naturally favoring those with patience, discipline, planning and stability. As a result, the cycle continues. Obviously, these are not the only factors causing non-privileged boys to flounder in the classroom, with the maturity gap between boys and girls (worse goal planning and impulsivity), a lack of male role models in the classroom environment (Manfre 2), school systems being too rigid, penalizing and not hands on enough (Friedersdorf 12), and a pop culture personifying school and academia as ‘unmanly’(Sax 4) being good examples. Because the male malaise is such a widespread social problem, defining even a single factor like men not doing as well in education reveals a vast web of connections and influences, such that it is very difficult to properly analyze a single aspect without knowledge of others. Because of the complexity of this issue and the ongoing culture war, there is debate over whether men even have a crisis in masculinity, much less what the core causes are and, more importantly, good solutions to this crisis. It is much akin to the blind men touching an elephant, each getting a different, limited interpretation without seeing the full picture. To get a nuanced understanding of this issue, the causal effects and the destructive feedback loops they generate will be examined in greater detail to better illustrate the seriousness of this crisis, and why any current attempts at a solution are unlikely to be effective.

As a result of globalization and automation, good paying, steady blue collar jobs in manufacturing and mining have dried up, resulting in an epidemic of wage stagnation and joblessness among working class men. As America became urbanized and industrialized in the early to mid 20th centuries, new, widespread industrial jobs served as a source of social mobility “on a scale never before seen”, with labor unions giving workers “an unprecedented degree of economic security”(The Consilience Project 3). Because industrial jobs were protected by unions, they were resistant to layoffs, unfair working conditions and poor salaries, allowing a man to support an entire family with little education or experience. Unlike today, in which financial stability is often insecure and at times perilous despite a college degree, a vast toolbox of skills and a web of connections, during those times it was hard to not find steady, well paying work. Furthermore, these jobs were fulfilling and rewarding, with the reliance on physical strength, the inherent element of risk in dealing with heavy equipment and machinery, and the hands-on work of fashioning a physical product gave the predominantly male workers a sense of satisfaction and pride, knowing they were providing the products impacting the lives of everyday people across the globe. They were providing not only for global consumers, but also their local families and community, as the money from their spending and the taxes taken from their revenue supported a network of social capital which allowed “families, groups of friends, religious institutions, and voluntary organizations all to flourish and mediate community life”(The Consilience Project 4). Through their wages, men served as the pillars for their family, friends and community, financially supporting the infrastructure, culture and institutions that formed the basis of a vibrant society. Obviously, not everything was sunshine and rainbows, with the oppression of women alongside racial and sexual minorities being widespread, but overall society was healthy and well functioning. Unfortunately, this time of plenty would not last forever. In a period of about six decades from 1950 to 2010, the “very heterogenous” process of deindustrialization took place, with the “deindustrialization of cities like Detroit, St. Louis, and New York in the mid-to-late 1950s'', the “Federal Reserve policy of the period 1979-1984” to raise interest rates, and the extreme loss in 2000 to 2010 to “NAFTA, the global automotive industry crisis, and the ‘China shock’”(The Consilience Project 5-6) all eroding America’s industrial base. The industrial base which served as the anchor to these men’s lives disintegrated, resulting in them not only losing financial stability, but also losing “the stable social role of ‘having a steady job’ and participating in a public sphere of others with the same role”(The Consilience Project 7). This affected not only those working in industry themselves, but also those working in the local businesses, governments, and public services like education. The institution of industry which they had structured their entire lives on crumbled, with no alternatives to take its place. For those that were lucky, “precarious service sector” (The Consilience Project 7) took its place, just barely able to survive the poor working conditions they faced and the meager wages they earned. The community of coworkers they had evaporated, leaving them more lonely than ever before. They could not financially support their families and communities any longer, making the foundation of their marriage and participation in civil society crumble because they no longer could play the role of breadwinner. Because of their lost jobs, they were less ‘marriageable’, such that they were more vulnerable to divorce as a result (Wilcox, Wang 10). Altogether, these shocks assisted in taking away the identities of men that gave them meaning and purpose. However, the changing economy cannot entirely explain what started the crisis of men in the first place, with social and cultural changes like the decline of marriage norms playing as big of a role.

As a result of the moral deregulation and deinstitutionalization of marriage, marriage has dropped precipitously among the poor and working classes in the past five decades. Before the 1970s, it was expected for couples to get married and have kids such that “the vast majority of Americans got and stayed married, and most children lived in stable, two-parent families'', and “there were not large class divides in American family life”(Wilcox, Wang 2). For a variety of reasons, including marriage being conceptualized as a joint contract for mutual survival instead of individual fulfillment, the societal pressure and expectation of couples marrying, and the great degree of moralization and rigidity regarding sex, people were pushed into getting married and staying married. As popularized in the lyrics of Frank Sinatra, “love and marriage is like a horse and carriage”(Sinatra 1-2) is exemplary of the attitude at the time. There was pressure on women to not be seen as a spinster or a slut and men to not be seen as a loser or womanizer, effectively compelling them to marry. Because couples generally married and did not divorce, children grew up in stable two parent families where the father had an integral role in the lives of his wife and children. Although his role was often patriarchal, there was a solid, consistent means by which he could connect with his wife and kids, giving him a reason to continue his daily existence. He had people who he could sacrifice his time and energy towards, making the work he did all the more important when there was a family at home who depended upon his success. This was all the more important to working class men working hard, difficult jobs. However, these strict, repressive social norms holding marriage together could not last. The societal changes of “the counterculture, sexual revolution, and rise of expressive individualism in the 1960s and 1970s” undercut the “norms, values, and virtues that sustain[ed] strong and stable marriages and families”(Wilcox, Wang 11-12). The apple was bitten: instead of being socially pressured into marrying, people could now choose whether or not they wanted to marry. The rug of artificial social norms that coerced people into marrying was pulled out, allowing people the freedom to make poor romantic and sexual decisions without being socially ostracized.. As a result, the brunt of these changes hit those below the middle class, as they “have a smaller economic stake in marriage and have depended more on marriage-related norms to get and stay married”, “tend to take a short term view of [sex, marriage and parenting]”, and have adapted a “more permissive orientation towards matters such as divorce and premarital sex”(Wilcox, Wang 13-14). The poor and working class, who already struggled to make good career and financial decisions lacked the wealth, discipline and patience to endure the challenges of getting married and raising strong families. Ironically, the freedom they gained was destructive, as they could not make these decisions by their own will. Like alcohol introduced to the Native Americans, they could not handle the new found freedom and temptation they were given, resulting in catastrophic effects to their way of life. The effects are staggering: according to a survey by the American Community Survey in 2015, 56 percent of middle and upper class, 39 percent of working class and 26 percent of working class adults are currently married, such that “poor Americans are almost three times more likely to cohabit, and working class Americans are twice as likely to cohabit, compared with their middle-and upper-class peers age 18-55”(Wilcox, Wang 3). Instead of being a mutual agreement to help survive together, marriage is now seen as the capstone of achievements in life (Reeves 39), with those having the wealth, discipline and planning already being the ones who marry more often. Successful women marry successful men. Women are no longer bound to marriage as the only socially acceptable way to have kids: they are free to work by themselves and be single parents without any serious repercussions from their friends, communities or broader society. Some even support the lifestyle, saying that it is empowering. In combination with the aforementioned economic downturns in the past five decades that have made men less marriageable, this has caused many women in the poor and working classes to not get married and have children out of wedlock, taking away another cornerstone that men built their lives on.

Because many men in the poor and working classes are not married and have children outside of marriage, they struggle to connect and interact with their kids and have stable relationships, giving them even less reason to be involved with their children and society as a whole. When children are born outside of marriage, the bonds their parents share holding the relationship together is considerably weaker, as there is no financial, moral or legal system disincentivizing them from leaving. The fragility of the relationship between the parents makes separation a very common outcome, in which custody by default is given entirely to the woman. As a result, men face the barriers of “legal and child support systems that seek primarily to extract money, and mothers who act as ‘gatekeeper’ to their children”(Reeves 172-173). It is difficult for these separated, unmarried fathers to interact with their kids, with these barriers signaling that these men are not wanted in their children’s lives aside from the child support they are required to give. If they’re making it so hard to spend time with my kids, why should I even try? Does it even matter if I may not be the father? Without the sail of marriage or resident children to guide their ship, they don’t see much of the point of working either, as “men who are not providers, or at least do not see themselves as such, work less”(Reeves 38). In a cyclical, destructive cycle, men who do not have families do not see the reason to work hard and achieve goals, and those lazy and directionless men struggle to get married and maintain a strong relationship with their kids. If these men were unlucky enough to have kids out of wedlock, they are trapped in child support payments while given restricted access to them, impoverishing and taking an emotional toll on them. The loss of a stable home life and blue-collar jobs served as a one-two punch to these men, taking away the things that gave them the greatest meaning in their lives. This is further worsened by the fact that “women find more meaning in their lives, and from more sources, then men”(Reeves 39), meaning that the loss of these things has affected men to a much greater degree. It should be no surprise then that these men checked out on life, becoming permanently jobless ‘deadbeat’ dads who never speak to their kids, often escaping to the pleasures of drugs, alcohol or TV to numb their pain. They may get prison sentences and criminal records, further inhibiting their ability to get a job and raise a good family. They are simply too traumatized to adapt to the shifting tides of change. Unfortunately, the failures of these many fathers have transferred to their sons, as these setbacks, in combination with the inherently greater difficulties boys face in education causes many to fall off the academic ladder, resulting in an intergenerational cycle of poverty and disaffection among these men.

Since boys take longer to mentally mature than girls and schools create an unfriendly environment for boys, education at all levels is inherently more difficult for boys than girls. Biologically, women are wired to mentally mature more quickly than boys, as studies have found that “in adolescence, on average girls are more developed by about 2 to 3 years in terms of the peak of their synapses and in their connectivity processes”(Reeves 10). Effectively, women are mentally ‘older’ than their male peers, allowing them to make better decisions in the long term. They plan more, have more realistic goals and have more motivation to become financially independent. This is especially important during middle school and high school, when “students need to be worrying about their GPA, getting ready for tests, and staying out of trouble”(Reeves 10). At a time of absurdly competitive college admissions, a school discipline policy that is more than happy to dole out detentions, suspensions and expulsions, a GPA metric that rewards students for not missing assignments or flunking exams rather than doing good, original work, and a system of sequential advanced classes that make it difficult to get back on track if you failed a class, the ability to plan ahead and delay gratification is key to success. I know firsthand, having almost dropped out of all my advanced classes at the start of freshman year of highschool because I couldn’t restrain myself from gaming, and almost not making it to college because I didn’t transfer to this school until the last moment. This would be all the more worse for someone who went to juvie because they got into a fistfight or shoplifted, who could only get into community college because they took remedial classes and didn’t study for the ACT or SAT, who has to pay child support because he knocked up a girl while in high school, and who didn’t have much time for school because they had to work fast food. The bad actions these kids take can quickly spiral out of control, making it very difficult for them to get back on course. This is made worse by the increasingly abstract and disciplinarian means of teaching in schools in recent years, such that boys “may become turned off or frustrated and may attempt to have their needs met by seeking negative attention”, resulting in these boys becoming “labeled as troublemakers or diagnosed with hyperactivity” and punished for it, locking them into “a terrible cycle of punishment and bad behavior”(Murray 1-2). The reduction of recess, phys ed, shop courses, and ‘hands on’ activities makes boys feel like school isn’t for them, causing them to physically act out or draw violent images because they are frustrated and are not as mature and good at constructively expressing their discontent as girls. The faculty, not empathizing with the pain of these boys and instead seeing them as disruptive to the ‘good’ learners punishes them, failing to understand that all these boys want is a bit of sympathy and the ability to learn things they like. The initial annoyance and discomfort these boys have grows, and they become more aggressive to get the teacher’s attention or zoned out as to escape to an alternate world that accepts them. I can certainly attest to this as someone who has always been on the troublemaker radar of teachers and read books or played games in class. Schools try to fit boys into this constrictive mold, and those who cannot fit or do not want to fit are penalized, implicitly getting the message that they are not wanted in the education system. It is only natural then that men are the bulk of high school dropouts, underachievers and prisoners, barring them from gainful employment in a world of resumes and criminal background checks. Unfortunately, the disadvantages that boys face is only compounded by their greater vulnerability to challenging upbringings, making them all the more susceptible to failure like their fathers before them.

Since boys react worse to impoverished backgrounds and unstable homes than girls, the disadvantages they already face in education translates to worse life outcomes, leading to a vicious intergenerational cycle of poverty, crime and malaise. Compared to girls, boys’ upbringing is significantly more important to how they will turn out later in life, as “the gender differences [in achievement] are minimal in households with resources - but among poorer families, boys systematically fall short of their sisters and female peers”(Guo 1). There are probably a number of factors behind this relationship, as children being raised “in neighborhoods with high levels of crime, and a large share of single-parent households seem to be particularly detrimental to boys”(Reeves 71). Unfortunately, it seems like boys are simply not as mentally resilient as girls, since the circumstances they are raised in affects them considerably more. Perhaps because the masculine identity is so fragile and socially constructed, boys need male role models, a stable family and a supportive community to ‘learn the ropes’ in a positive way so they can have good life outcomes. Perhaps there is some evolutionary purpose behind this, as men are more disposable than women. Maybe it is because impoverished men commit more ‘blue-collar’ crimes like theft, assault and drug abuse more than those in the middle and upper classes, such that they are more often caught and convicted of crimes. Maybe girls don’t suffer as much because they have a parent and role models of the same gender. We can’t say for certain. This effect translates into education, in which boys “raised by single parents, especially single mothers, have worse outcomes than girls (including their own sisters) at school and lower rates of college enrollment, in part because of bigger differences in behavioral problems in the classroom”(Reeves 71), and girls “raised in the poorest families (i.e. the bottom fifth of the distribution) are 57% more likely to get a 4-year college degree than boys from similar backgrounds, compared to a difference of just 8% among those from affluent (top fifth) families”(Reeves 71). It is here that pieces start to fit together. Because poor and working class men have been hit hardest by the recent trends in the job market and the decline in marriage, this directly damages the potential for their boys to academically achieve a college degree, or even enroll in college. Combine this with the inherent disadvantages boys face in education (especially the poor ones who can’t stay disciplined or have their parents game the system), and you have a recipe for dropouts and academic underachievers. Because higher education is one of the key factors to escaping poverty and marrying, this irreparably damages the chances these boys have to become financially successful, responsible adults. Unsuccessful men have even more unsuccessful children, creating a destructive feedback loop fueling social and economic inequality. In our financially and morally deregulated world, those at the top enjoy all the benefits of gender equality and globalized free market capitalism, while those boys at the bottom languish from the structure previous generations had collapsing. Unfortunately, nobody can agree on what the causes are, and potential solutions to the crisis have not worked.

As a result of political polarization and the culture war, there is a complete lack of consensus regarding the root causes of the male malaise, such that there is a dearth of possible solutions that can be implemented. When readers were asked “Why are men and boys struggling, What should we do about it?” In an October issue of the Atlantic (Friedersdorf 2), the responses were incredibly varied. Some blame it on a culture hostile to boys and men, where they are “constantly being denied (in a subliminal way) the right to be masculine”(Friedersdorf 2), and does not give them “opportunit[ies] to earn respect”(Friedersdorf 3). Others believe that it is because male culture is too toxic, leaving them with “no idea how to deal with their advantages”, that they “stifle their emotional needs” to “be leaders, to be rocks, to be strong, to be providers” and not seek help with problems (Friedersdorf 7), that they see women as “potential opportunities for sex” instead of friends and role models (Friedersdorf 14), and that they “grasp at predetermined roles from bygone days” in a world of gender equality, instead of just trying to “become good people''(Friedersdorf 4). Still others seem ambivalent about doing anything, with some arguing that it is natural for boys to be floundering since girls “should be more highly educated and more suited on average to work that requires more education”(Friedersdorf 17-18), or that “liberal capitalism has successfully defined both men and women’s ideal roles'', and that we should stop trying for an impossible ideal of competition and ‘success’(Friedersdorf 5-6). While most of these aren’t inaccurate statements, they don’t really see the bigger picture, pathologizing men as either blank slates or biological machines. They focus on the level of people and popular culture, not having any actionable plans for change, focused more on a narrative. They effectively take most of the responsibility off of themselves and instead blame others for the problem, or pretend that there isn’t a problem at all. A few have actual proposals, with some arguing for a “national service requirement”(Friedersdorf 5), implementing policies like increasing the requirements for physical activity and a less structured classroom(Friedersdorf 11), revitalizing Boy Scouts and hands-on courses (Friedersdorf 14), or to “include mandatory counseling”, a daily class “inclusive of household economics and financial literacy” and “career exploration” so boys can have more realistic guidance and not have unrealistic goals for a career (Friedersdorf 10). Clearly, these people do see a connection with education and the raft of disaffected young men in society, or with modern men lacking motivation. Some of these ideas, like the national service requirement, are a bit unrealistic, but they can at least be evaluated as a success or failure. They are levelheaded, rational ideas. However, these ideas are drowned out by the white noise of the more sensational and irrational responses, making one doubt if these ideas are actually effective since there is a lack of consensus. Similarly, there are many policymakers and institutes with actual proposals and policies to make a dent in this crisis, but because of the culture war in which “the Left see a war on girls and women; the Right see a war on boys and men”(Reeves 129), neither side is willing to give much ground and compromise and try out new ideas. They are afraid of giving ground to ‘the enemy’, so they clog up the system to prevent the opposition from doing anything. From which, the political system has become so gridlocked that policies that could possibly ameliorate the crisis get stuck in the quagmire of partisan politics, making it effectively almost impossible to get any policies signed into law and implemented. This is made even worse by almost all policies tested not being effective at helping boys and men, such that there seems to be no solution to the crisis in the near future.

Because the crisis of men seems more sociological than economic, current attempts to help men through financial incentives have utterly failed, such that it seems unlikely any solution will happen in the near future. In current initiatives to improve life outcomes, such as improving graduation rates, getting better education outcomes and improving employment rates, there is a “clear, recurring pattern in evaluation studies of policy interventions, with stronger effects for girls and women than for boys and men”(Reeves 79). Despite many of these programs being designed to coax these boys and men into university and the workplace, they have fallen flat on their face. For example, the Paycheck Plus pilot program, a program designed for “incentivizing younger men … to participate in the formal economy” had “no detectable effect among men”(Reeves 77-78). Though men are given as many opportunities as women to escape the grip of poverty and live a happy, successful life, they are not taking them. Their problems are not caused by their material condition, but rather their internal psychology. Women seem to have more “motivation, independence, persistence, and planning” than men (Reeves 80). They are willing to dream big, and will grind for years to see that their dream becomes a reality. Men, however, don’t see the point of trying or looking ahead, since there is nothing for them to look forward to. What’s the point to working hard and staying disciplined if I’m not going to be the breadwinner for the family? Maybe I’m just not as smart or capable as a woman, or maybe education is too girly for me. That’s probably what a lot of men think when they see female majority campuses, mostly female high achievers and faculty, and media that glamorizes uneducated and impulsive men as ‘masculine’. As a result, there has been a “decline in agency, aspiration and motivation”(Reeves 81) in men. They seem to have lost the will to live, coasting by life as they let precious opportunities repeatedly slip from their grasp. If men don’t believe in themselves, then how can a wad of cash or a scholarship to a university really change their perceptions? Clearly, current policy needs to fundamentally alter its strategy to get men on the right track in life, but that is a lot easier said than done. The sociological nature of men’s malaise makes solutions extremely tricky. Potential solutions such as increasing male role models by recruiting men for HEAL (Health, Education, Administration and Literacy) jobs, making education more boy friendly, and changing family law to let unmarried fathers have joint custody would get serious opposition from both political aisles. Furthermore, these solutions would be much more difficult to test out, as it would require tampering with legal and education systems that would almost certainly be prone to sex discrimination lawsuits. Nor are these solutions proven to work: one of the studies done on red-shirting, Reeves’ signature policy of having boys enter school a year later than girls found “‘substantial evidence’ that the practice is linked to higher high-school-dropout rates and lower overall earnings”(Kahloon 10). Even if helpful interventions were found, the escalating culture war and increasing polarization means that clearing the hurdles to implement these policies would be extremely difficult. All the while, the male crisis will only continue to spiral out of control. It could be years or decades before effective fixes could be found and delivered, by which point it would be too late to save these men who are on the trajectory to becoming lost or are already becoming more lost by the day.

As it currently appears, the situation seems a bit hopeless. As a result of the decline of male-dominated industrial jobs, the precipitous decline in marriage, men are facing an existential crisis to their identity, such that many have dropped out of education and the workplace. This is made worse by an education system that is unfriendly to them, in addition to being more psychologically susceptible to the effects of poverty, crime and broken homes, such that these boys and men are stuck in a worsening intergenerational cycle of poverty, malaise and crime. Many men stew in discontent on dark internet forums or political extremist groups like the Proud Boys, or escape to hedonic pleasures like porn, drugs and gaming to numb their pain. Some live in their parents’ basement, too embarrassed by their failure to launch to go out and take opportunities to change their lives. Current policy research to address the crisis has not been effective, and the current political polarization makes it difficult for any fixes to actually be implemented. While not all of us are aware of the causes, many of us have witnessed the outward signs of trouble: the opioid epidemic, the election of Donald Trump and current far-right extremism, the incel movement and the popularization of toxic men like Andrew Tate. While this crisis will not resolve itself on a society wide level any time soon, I still believe that it is possible for individual men to escape the vortex. This problem seems clustered around men without college degrees and in the poor and working classes. It is not impossible to escape this, but I believe a few things are key. Firstly, focusing on schoolwork and long term processes, stoically denying yourself the numerous addictions available nowadays, such as the virtual fantasies of video games, porn and social media, or the physical addictions of alcohol, drugs and unhealthy food. Secondly, deliberately and repeatedly going out of your way to meet new people and make new friends, even if you are socially awkward and risk embarrassing yourself. I wouldn’t have been an officer in Sustainable Engineering if I hadn’t shown up for a meeting on a rainy September day, and then continued to show up even when I didn’t feel like it. Thirdly, having a positive, humble mindset. I embrace failure, as I know I need to make mistakes to learn. When others make mistakes, I know I probably would have made the same mistakes that they did if I was in a similar situation, so I try my best to not judge them harshly. By taking an outlook of responsibility and heroism in life, I believe that anyone, even these lost, disaffected men can push through the setbacks life has given them and eventually find purpose, understanding, love and community.

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