

= Marc Lépine =

Marc Lépine (French pronunciation : ? [maʔk lepin] ; October 26 , 1964 ? December 6 , 1989) was a 25 @-@ year @-@ old Canadian man from Montreal , Quebec , who in 1989 murdered 14 women , and wounded 10 women and four men at the École Polytechnique , an engineering school affiliated with the Université de Montréal , in the École Polytechnique massacre , also known as the " Montreal Massacre " .

Lépine was born in Montreal , the son of a Canadian nurse and an Algerian businessman . His father was abusive and contemptuous of women . After his parents separated when he was seven , his mother returned to nursing to support her children . Lépine and his younger sister lived with other families , seeing their mother on weekends . Lépine was considered bright but withdrawn and having difficulties with peer and family relationships . He changed his name to Marc Lépine at the age of 14 giving as the reason his hatred of his father . Lépine 's application to the Canadian Forces was rejected , and in 1982 he began a science program at a college , switching to a more technical program after one year . In 1986 , he dropped out of the course in his final term , and was subsequently fired from his job at a hospital due to his poor attitude . He began a computer programming course in 1988 , and again abandoned it before completion . Lépine twice applied for admission to the École Polytechnique , but lacked two required compulsory courses .

After several months of planning , Lépine entered the École Polytechnique de Montréal , on the afternoon of December 6 , 1989 . He had long complained about women working in non @-@ traditional jobs , and after separating men and women in a classroom , he shot the women , claiming that he was fighting feminism . He then moved into other parts of the building , only targeting the women in classrooms he went to , before killing himself . His suicide note blamed feminists for ruining his life .

Lépine 's actions have been variously ascribed to psychiatric diagnoses such as personality disorder , psychosis , or attachment disorder , or societal factors such as poverty , isolation , powerlessness , and violence in the media . The massacre is regarded by criminologists as an example of a hate crime against women , and by feminists and government officials as misogynist attack and an example of the larger issue of violence against women .

= = Life = =

= = = Childhood = = =

Marc Lépine was born Gamil Rodrigue Liass Gharbi on October 26 , 1964 in Montreal , Quebec , the son of Algerian immigrant Rachid Liass Gharbi and Canadian nurse Monique Lépine . His father Rachid , who was a mutual funds salesman , was travelling in the Caribbean at the time of his son 's birth . During his absence , his mother Monique discovered evidence that her husband had been having an affair . Rachid was a non @-@ practising Muslim , and Monique a former Catholic nun who had rejected organized religion after she left the convent . Their son was baptized a Roman Catholic as an infant , but received no religious instruction during his childhood ; his mother described her son as " a confirmed atheist all his life . " Gamil 's sister , Nadia , was born in 1967 .

Instability and violence marked the family : they moved frequently , and much of Lépine 's early childhood was spent in Costa Rica and Puerto Rico , where his father was working for a Swiss mutual funds company . The family returned to Montreal permanently in 1968 , shortly before a stock market crash led to the loss of much of the family 's assets . Rachid was an authoritarian , possessive and jealous man , frequently violent towards his wife and his children . He had contempt for women and believed that they were only intended to serve men . He required his wife to act as his personal secretary , slapping her if she made any errors in typing , and forcing her to retype documents in spite of the cries of their toddler . He was also neglectful and abusive towards his children , particularly his son , and discouraged any tenderness , as he considered it spoiling . In 1970 , following an incident in which Rachid struck Gamil so hard that the marks on his face were

visible a week later , his mother decided to leave . The legal separation was finalized in 1971 , and the divorce in 1976 . Following the separation , Gamil lived with his mother and younger sister Nadia ; soon after , their home and possessions were seized when Rachid defaulted on mortgage payments . Gamil was afraid of his father , and at first saw him on weekly supervised visits . The visits ended quickly , as Rachid ceased contact with his children soon after the separation . Gamil never again saw his father , and in the future refused to discuss him with others .

Rachid stopped making support payments after paying them twice , and to make ends meet , Monique returned to nursing . She subsequently started taking further courses to advance her career . During this time the children lived with other families during the week , seeing their mother only on weekends . Concerned about her children and parenting skills , she sought help for the family from a psychiatrist at St. Justine 's Hospital in 1976 ; the assessment concluded there was nothing wrong with the shy and withdrawn Gamil , but recommended therapy for his sister Nadia , who was challenging her authority .

= = = Adolescence = = =

After the divorce became final in 1976 , the children , then aged 12 and 9 , returned to live with their mother , who was director of nursing at a Montreal hospital . In 1977 , the family moved to a house purchased in the middle @-@ class Montreal suburb of Pierrefonds . Gamil Gharbi attended junior high and high school , where he was described as a quiet student who obtained average to above average marks . He developed a close friendship with another boy , but he did not fit in with other students . Taunted as an Arab because of his name , at the age of 14 he legally changed it to " Marc Lépine " , citing his hatred of his father as the reason for taking his mother 's surname . Lépine was uncommunicative and showed little emotion . He suffered from low self @-@ esteem , exacerbated by his chronic acne . Family relations remained difficult ; his younger sister Nadia publicly humiliated him about his acne and his lack of girlfriends . He fantasized about her death , and on one occasion made a mock grave for her . He was overjoyed when in 1981 she was placed in a group home because of her delinquent behaviour and drug abuse . Seeking a good male role model for Lépine , his mother arranged for a Big Brother . For two years , the experience proved positive as Lépine , often with his best friend , enjoyed the time with photography and moto @-@ cross motorcycles . However , in 1979 the meetings ceased abruptly when the Big Brother was detained on suspicion of molesting young boys . Both Lépine and his Big Brother denied that any molestation had occurred . Lépine owned an air rifle as a teenager , which he used to shoot pigeons near his home with his friend . They also enjoyed designing and building electronic gadgets . He developed an interest in World War II and an admiration of Adolf Hitler , and enjoyed action and horror movies . Lépine also took considerable responsibility at home , including cleaning and doing repairs while his mother worked .

Lépine applied to join the Canadian Forces as an officer cadet in September 1981 at the age of 17 , but was rejected during the interview process . He later told his friend it was because of difficulties accepting authority , and in his suicide letter , noted that he had been found to be " anti @-@ social " . An official statement from the military after the massacre stated that he had been " interviewed , assessed and determined to be unsuitable . "

= = = Adulthood = = =

In 1982 at the age of 18 , the family moved to Saint @-@ Laurent , closer to his mother 's work and to Lépine 's new Cégep . He lost contact with his school friend soon after the move . This period marks the beginning of the seven years which he described in his suicide note as having " brought [him] no joy " .

In August 1982 , Lépine began a two @-@ year pre @-@ university course in pure sciences at Cégep de Saint @-@ Laurent , failing two courses in the first semester but improving his grades considerably in the second semester . He worked part @-@ time at a local hospital where his mother was director of nursing , serving food and doing custodial work . He was seen as nervous ,

hyperactive , and immature by his colleagues . He developed an attraction to another employee , but he was too shy to act on his feelings . After a year at college , he switched from the university @-@ destined science program into electronics technology , a three @-@ year technical program geared more towards immediate employment . His teachers remembered him as being a model student , quiet , hardworking and generally doing well in his classes , particularly those related to electrotechnology . There was an unexplained drop in his marks in the fall 1985 term , and in February 1986 , during the last term of the program , he suddenly and without explanation stopped attending classes , as a result failing to complete his diploma .

He moved out of his mother 's home into his own apartment , and in 1986 he applied to study engineering at École Polytechnique de Montréal . He was admitted on the condition that he complete two compulsory courses , including one in solution chemistry . In 1987 , Lépine was fired from his job at the hospital for aggressive behaviour , as well as disrespect of superiors , and carelessness in his work . He was enraged at his dismissal , and at the time described a plan to commit a murderous rampage and then commit suicide . His friends noted that he was unpredictable , flying into rages when frustrated .

In the fall of 1987 , in order to complete his college diploma , Lépine took three courses , obtaining good marks in all of them , and in February 1988 , began a course in computer programming at a private college in downtown Montreal , funding his studies with government student loans . He moved into a downtown apartment with his old high school friend , and in the winter of 1989 took a CEGEP night @-@ course in solution chemistry , a prerequisite course for the École Polytechnique . Lépine wanted a girlfriend , but was generally ill at ease around women . He tended to boss women around and show off his knowledge in front of them . He spoke out to men about his dislike of feminists , career women and women in traditionally male occupations , such as the police force , stating that women should remain in the home , caring for their families . Lépine applied again to the École Polytechnique in 1989 ; however his application was rejected as he lacked required courses . In March 1989 he abandoned the course in computer programming , though he performed well in the CEGEP course , obtaining 100 % in his final exam . In April 1989 he met with a university admissions officer , and complained about how women were taking over the job market from men .

= = Massacre = =

The massacre appeared to have been planned for several months if not longer . In August 1989 , Lépine picked up an application for a firearms @-@ acquisition certificate , and in mid @-@ October , he received his permit . On November 21 , 1989 , Lépine purchased a Ruger Mini @-@ 14 semi @-@ automatic rifle at a local sporting goods store . Between October and December 1989 , Lépine was seen at least seven times at the École Polytechnique . Four days before the shooting , he brought his mother a present , though it was several weeks before her birthday ; he also brought a note and two bags of belongings , which she did not discover until long after the shooting . Lépine had previously always been very punctual paying his rent , but had not done so in December 1989 .

On December 6 , 1989 , Lépine walked into the École Polytechnique de Montréal . There , he entered a second @-@ floor classroom where he separated the men and women and then ordered the approximately 50 men to leave . Claiming that he was fighting feminism , he shot the nine women who remained , killing six and injuring the rest . After this , Lépine moved to other areas of the building , including the cafeteria , corridors and another classroom . A total of 14 women (12 engineering students , one nursing student , and one university employee) were killed , and four men and ten women injured before Lépine turned the gun on himself . The event was later described as a " pseudo @-@ community " type of " pseudo @-@ commando " murder @-@ suicide , in which the perpetrator targets a specific group , usually in a public place and intending to die in " a blaze of glory . "

A three @-@ page letter was found in the pocket of his jacket . The letter was never officially made public , but was leaked in November 1990 to Francine Pelletier , and published in the newspaper La Presse . In his suicide letter , Lépine claimed political motives , blaming feminists for ruining his life . He considered himself rational and expressed admiration for Denis Lortie , who had mounted an

attack on the Quebec National Assembly in 1984 for political reasons , killing three Quebec government employees . The letter also contained a list of nineteen Quebec women whom Lépine apparently wished to kill because of their feminism . Another letter , written to a friend , promised the explanation to the massacre lay by following clues left in Lépine 's apartment . The hunt led only to a suitcase of computer games and hardware .

Marc Lépine was buried in the Cimetière Notre @-@ Dame @-@ des @-@ Neiges in Montreal , a few blocks from where he committed the massacre .

= = = Rationale = = =

A police psychiatrist who interviewed Lépine 's family and entourage , and who had access to his letters , suggested that he may have had a serious personality disorder , as he chose the multiple homicide / suicide strategy (killing oneself after killing others) that is a characteristic of this disorder . The psychiatrist noted " extreme narcissistic vulnerability " as shown by fantasies of power and success combined with high levels of self @-@ criticism and difficulties dealing with rejection and failure . Feelings of powerlessness and incompetence were compensated for by a violent and grandiose imaginary life . Other psychiatrists suggested that Lépine was psychotic , having lost touch with reality as he tried to erase the memories of a brutal (and absent) father , while at the same time unconsciously identifying with a violent manhood that dominates women . Other theories were that Lépine 's experiences of abuse as a child had caused brain @-@ damage or led him to feel victimized as he faced losses and rejections in his later life .

His mother speculated that Lépine may have suffered from attachment disorder , due to the abuse and sense of abandonment he had experienced in his childhood . She also wondered whether Lépine viewed her as a feminist , and that the massacre might have been an unconscious attempt to get revenge for her neglect while she pursued her career , and for his sister 's taunts . Others take a less individualistic approach . Many feminists and governmental officials view it as an illustration of misogynist violence committed against women . Criminologists consider the massacre as an example of a hate or bias crime against women . A few antifeminists seek to rehabilitate Lépine as hero of the anti @-@ feminist cause . Others wondered if Lépine 's actions were the result of societal changes that had led to increased poverty , powerlessness , individual isolation or increased violence in the media and in society .

= = Suicide statement = =

The following is a translation of the suicide letter written by Lépine on the day of the shooting . The original letter in French is also available .

Forgive the mistakes , I had 15 minutes to write this . See also Annex .

Would you note that if I commit suicide today 89 @-@ 12 @-@ 06 it is not for economic reasons (for I have waited until I exhausted all my financial means , even refusing jobs) but for political reasons . Because I have decided to send the feminists , who have always ruined my life , to their Maker . For seven years life has brought me no joy and being totally blasé , I have decided to put an end to those viragos .

I tried in my youth to enter the Forces as an officer cadet , which would have allowed me possibly to get into the arsenal and precede Lortie in a raid . They refused me because asocial [sic] . I therefore had to wait until this day to execute my plans . In between , I continued my studies in a haphazard way for they never really interested me , knowing in advance my fate . Which did not prevent me from obtaining very good marks despite my theory of not handing in work and the lack of studying before exams .

Even if the Mad Killer epithet will be attributed to me by the media , I consider myself a rational erudite that only the arrival of the Grim Reaper has forced to take extreme acts . For why persevere to exist if it is only to please the government . Being rather backward @-@ looking by nature (except for science) , the feminists have always enraged me . They want to keep the advantages of women (e.g. cheaper insurance , extended maternity leave preceded by a preventative leave , etc .

) while seizing for themselves those of men .

Thus it is an obvious truth that if the Olympic Games removed the Men @-@ Women distinction , there would be Women only in the graceful events . So the feminists are not fighting to remove that barrier . They are so opportunistic they [do not] neglect to profit from the knowledge accumulated by men through the ages . They always try to misrepresent them every time they can . Thus , the other day , I heard they were honoring the Canadian men and women who fought at the frontline during the world wars . How can you explain [that since] women were not authorized to go to the frontline ? ? ? Will we hear of Caesar 's female legions and female galley slaves who of course took up 50 % of the ranks of history , though they never existed . A real Casus Belli .

Sorry for this too brief letter .

Marc Lépine

The letter is followed by the list of 19 names , with a note at the bottom :

" Nearly died today . The lack of time (because I started too late) has allowed these radical feminists to survive. Alea iacta est . "

= = Memorial = =

Canadians mark the day of the killings with a National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women .

In 2008 , Lépine 's mother Monique published *Aftermath* , a memoir of her own journey through the grief and pain of the incident . She had stayed silent until 2006 , when she decided to speak out for the first time in the wake of that year 's Dawson College shooting .

= = In popular culture = =

Lépine 's life and death was dramatized by Adam Kelly in his controversial play *The Anorak* .

The shooting was dramatized by Denis Villeneuve in the 2009 film *Polytechnique* . Actor Maxim Gaudette won a Genie Award for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of Lépine .