

THAT'S WHY THEY CALL IT SENSELESS VIOLENCE

As you've heard, a killer wearing a bullet proof vest and wielding four guns shot up an Aurora, CO midnight showing of The Dark Knight Rises last night. 12 have died, 50 are wounded. It is an utterly senseless tragedy.

The news has been filled, primarily, with two things: horrible narratives from the survivors, and an almost systematic checking off of explanations that we tend to use to explain such violence. Not Islamic terrorism, the FBI said. Not a veteran, DOD has already said. Maybe a crazed video gamer trying to live out the games he plays? As if every act of violence must be easily classifiable—to serve the news cycle, perhaps, or reassure people about the certainty of life.

The suspect—a white, 24-year old Aurora resident named James Holmes—defies the easiest explanations, though his mother's response suggests this senseless violence is not surprising from him.

A San Diego woman who identified herself as James Holmes' mother told ABC News she had awoken unaware of the shooting and had not yet been contacted by authorities. She immediately expressed concern that her son may have been involved.

"You have the right person," she said, apparently speaking on gut instinct. "I need to call the police... I need to fly out to Colorado."

Perhaps to make the whole thing even more senseless is the setting: an auditorium full of people just settling in to watch a narrative that attempts to make sense of violence and good and evil.

No doubt in days to come we'll find something—the killer's psyche, easy gun laws, some perceived slight—to make more sense of this act. Probably, our society will do nothing to address underlying causes. Possibly, this will serve as one more reason to ratchet up security theater.

At this point, it's worth asking whether it serves anyone to rush for the easy narrative—the Hollywood movie explanation—when ultimately this is senseless violence.