

For immediate release:

Copycat Effect Researcher Predicts Red Lake School Shooting

Does sensational coverage of extreme real-life violence affect the safety of American schools, workplaces, and communities? Does media exposure of crime inspire copycat offenders?

On March 13, 2005 Terry Ratzmann, 44, shot dead seven churchgoers in Brookfield, Wisconsin, before turning the gun on himself. Two days prior, on March 11, a judge, a court reporter and a deputy were killed at Atlanta's Fulton County Courthouse. And most recently, on March 21st, nine people were killed in a Red Lake, Minnesota school-shooting before the teenage shooter killed himself.

As a growing number of shocking violent events seem to be “inspired” by media attention on film, television, the Internet or musical recordings, **Loren Coleman**, author of **THE COPYCAT EFFECT: How The Media and Popular Culture Trigger The Mayhem in Tomorrow's Headlines** (ISBN: 0743482239) examines the alarming connections between major “hot death” news stories in mass media and the “inspired” copycat epidemics of violence.

Coleman predicted the Red Lake, Minnesota school-shooting. On Friday, March 18, Coleman wrote in his [blog](#) that all the warning signs pointed to a “series of school shootings from March 20th through April 20th...I hope not, but every indication is that the media is entering its first post-9/11 'shooting rampage' feeding frenzy, and as March nears its end, and into April, 'school shootings' could be next.” **On the first day of school of this predicted period, the second deadliest school shooting after Columbine took place.**

The specific relationship between media coverage and the commission of copycat violence is the focus of **THE COPYCAT EFFECT**. The researcher/author notes in his book that the neo-Nazi underpinnings and the use of death and birth dates of Nazis of these suicidal young “school shooters” are significant components in past incidents – and now we see them again in the Red Lake, Minnesota events.

Coleman says: “*This next week, and the period around April 19-20, could be especially dangerous. After Columbine, there were 400 copycat incidents across the USA and Canada. We are moving into a volatile period in our schools this spring.*”

From imitators of **Natural Born Killers**, **Matrix**, and **The Deer Hunter** to the Columbine massacre and other school shootings, from the Golden Gate bridge jumpers to the Heaven's Gate cult suicides, **THE COPYCAT EFFECT** includes information on the 2002 Washington-area snipers John Muhammad and John Lee Malvo, whose actions spawned numerous sniper killings; fiery monk suicides, workplace rampages, teen suicide clusters; cult leaders Jim Jones and David Koresh; Jack the Ripper—who created copycat killers from the late 1800s into the 20th century—and today's suicide bombers and deathly plane hijackers.

For greater insight into the current epidemic of murder and suicide, and for an explanation of what can be done to predict and prevent it, read **THE COPYCAT EFFECT**.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Loren Coleman, M.S.W., is the author of **THE COPYCAT EFFECT: How The Media and Popular Culture Trigger The Mayhem in Tomorrow's Headlines** (ISBN: 0743482239)

Author Loren Coleman, 57, of Portland, Maine, has written and lectured extensively on the impact of media. Coleman offers illuminating insight on the fascinating relationship between the American violence and the media in the United States.

He first began working in the mental health field in 1967 before moving on to his consultant work of today. As a senior researcher at the Muskie School of Public Policy, University of Southern Maine, from 1983 through 1996, he was the director of eight million dollars' worth of federal projects, which investigated epidemics in suicide, arson, substance abuse, child maltreatment, sexual crime, and other behaviors. He continues to speak throughout the country on media and violence topics. Coleman has been an adjunct associate professor at the University of Southern Maine, and has produced award-winning documentaries. Additionally, he has taught at Boston University, University of New England, St. Joseph's College, and other area colleges since 1980.

Coleman is the author, coauthor, or editor of over 20 books, including the acclaimed *Suicide Clusters* (Psychotherapy and Social Science Book Club selection, Faber and Faber, 1987). His work has been covered in *The New York Times*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *The Sporting News*, and on ESPN. His work has involved trainings and manuals for law enforcement officers and forensic guidelines for child abuse and suicide investigations, and dealing with the media. Coleman has appeared on many programs, including *The Larry King Show*, *All Things Considered*, *Inside Edition*, and other media forums as an authority on suicide clusters, Heaven's Gate, Waco, Hemingway, and Columbine. Since the mid-1980s, Coleman has trained and consulted around the country and in Canada on suicide clusters and school violence.

For more information about **THE COPYCAT EFFECT**, or to interview **LOREN COLEMAN**, please contact Alex Dake at 212-989-3616, or adake@cosimobooks.com.

THE COPYCAT EFFECT

By Loren Coleman

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