

## Concordia Massacre

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On August 24<sup>th</sup> 1992, Dr. Valery Fabrikant killed four people in a span of approximately three minutes. He was a professor at Concordia University in Montreal, and the four dead were colleagues of his. The professor said that he was the victim of a “character assassination campaign” by his fellow professors and the university administration. In his posted statement Fabrikant stated that “The shootings took place because I felt my life to be in danger.” Although it does seem that Fabrikant was the victim of harassment and bullying, this in no way justifies the murder of four people. Dr. Valery Fabrikant obviously has some serious psychological problems. These problems could be depression, schizophrenia or even post-traumatic stress disorder after his cardiac arrest. People who suffer from these terrible disorders often have disorganized thinking, disturbed perceptions and inappropriate emotions and actions. To have done what Fabrikant did, one would have to suffer from disorganized thinking. This is why the criminology theory that best explains what happened in this case is the Individual Psychological Theory, since he knew what he was doing. However, because of his disturbed perceptions, he thought his actions were justified, and that he had no other options.

In his statement Fabrikant says “Am I sorry?” “These people dragged me through hell of mental suffering . . . This does not mean that I planned to kill them, but I certainly have no regrets that they are dead.” These are the words of a madman. He sees nothing wrong with the fact that four people are dead by his actions. Not only is he not sorry, but he continues to

blame everyone for what happened; the people who are dead, the university administration, and also the judicial system. These are paranoid, disorganized thoughts which are common among someone who is suffering from a serious psychological problem (Myers, 2007: 669). Even today, Fabrikant has not stopped blaming everyone else for his actions. Having spoken to him via e-mail, he continues to say that everyone is against him—even the Quebec doctors, who he says are “Deliberately denying me cardiac care.” Furthermore, the fact that Fabricant acted the way he did is, in itself, evidence of his mental illness.

It is also safe to say that Fabrikant took part in inappropriate actions because he was guided by inappropriate emotions. When a grown man decides to bring a gun and a hammer to school because “All legal means seemed to fail, I had no choice but to resort to an illegal way of protection,” many lines were crossed. He was no longer operating at a normal level of thinking. No reasonable person would ever think of doing such a thing, let alone actually following through with it. Fabrikant argues that he had no other choice but to act the way that he did. This is absurd, even if these people were harassing him as much as Fabrikant explains in his statement, he had other options. Studies have shown that individuals who are bullied or think they are being bullied, have a higher tendency to act aggressively (Ireland and Rowley, 2007: 377). Nevertheless, regardless of whether his actions were justified or not, it’s quite clear that Fabrikant had a mental illness. Accepting the university administrations’ offer of about \$200,000 in exchange for his resignation, would have been much better for his family than killing four people and ending up in jail. Again, this is a sign that all was not right with his head.

These are poor decisions made by a man on the brink. He finally went over the edge when he decided to shoot those people on that day.

Based on the previous information, it's clear that Fabrikant was a sick individual. Because of this, the psychological theory best explains his action. In his conclusion, Fabrikant said that he was the victim, not the perpetrator, and claims again that he acted in self-defense. He then went on to blame the judges, police, and medical doctors for being corrupt. Again, all of this sounds like is a paranoid and delusional man who is not capable of taking responsibility for his own actions. To top it off, this man not only claims it was self defense, but also says that it took courage to do what he did. To kill four unarmed people is courage? Then this man goes on to say that he hopes "to be remembered as a person who had enough courage to fight lawlessness with deadly force and I hope to encourage others to do the same." This is similar thinking to those responsible for such tragedies as Columbine High School and the Dawson College shootings. These men were all living in a fantasy world controlled by paranoia, fear, and a delusional sense of justice. Today Fabrikant sits in jail an old man stuck in his ways. He has not changed his view that he was the victim of a conspiracy. He makes no apologies for what he did, and even said that the doctors that diagnosed him as mentally ill are just insulting him. Again, the paranoia continues even from behind bars after all these years. What he did was terrible. However, hopefully we can at least learn from this tragedy and others like it. Learn to read warning signs, and maybe, through education, even attach less of a stigma to mental illness so people who are suffering from it will be more likely to come forward and seek professional help instead of letting those thoughts and emotions build up over time.

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