

Prey: Cyberbullying's Consequences Toward Victim's Mental Health and His Social Life

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ABSTRACT

This screenplay project focuses on cyberbullying's impacts on its victims, both mentally and physically. The goal is to shed light into this action of crime that is often overlooked, to make a better cyberspace environment, and to raise awareness to the public, especially cyberbullying perpetrators, to stop what they are doing. To do so, this creative thesis uses the cyberbullying concept that points out how cyberspace bullying can trigger paranoia and depression among many other mental disorders. The work is based on theories on paranoia, depression and cyberbullying itself. From the screenplay, it is shown how the main characters got cyberbullied, and later went from a healthy, hardworking, resilient man to a mentally broken human being as a consequence. By understanding the impact the act of cyberbullying can have on a person's life, cyberspace users can be more responsible and refrain themselves from the act of cyberbullying.

Keywords: Cyberbully, Screenplay, Depression, Paranoia, Psychological Thriller.

INTRODUCTION

Cyberbully is one of the most concerning issues in the world, including Indonesia. Cyberbullying can be defined as willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). In 2019, jakartapost.com wrote that data from the research conducted by Polling Indonesia, in collaboration with Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) showed that almost half of Indonesian netizens, 49 percent to be exact, were victims to cyberbullying. In 2020, the newest data report that nearly half of young people worldwide, around 47%, have received threatening, intimidating, or nasty messages online (enough.org, 2020). I choose cyberbullying as the issue I would like to address because it is uncontrollable, a complex and growing web of online crime committed without remorse and knowledge that what they did was also a crime, so much so that even law enforcement can not capture them and let them be. Hinduja and Patchin (2008) stated that "One of the most important steps a district can take to help protect its students and protect itself from legal liability is to have a clear and comprehensive policy regarding bullying and harassment, technology, and their intersection: cyberbullying" (as cited in Fegenbush 2009, p.4-5)

There are four types of reasons behind online bullies identified by Aftab (2008), The Vengeful Angel, Power Hungry, Revenge of the Nerds, Mean Girls, and Inadvertent (Fegenbush, 2009) I will be focusing on The Vengeful Angel type for this project because that type is what is commonly seen in cyberspace. This type of online bullies target those they think are victimizing one of their own or others, they do not view themselves as bullies, but as defenders of others (Fegenbush, 2009). Cyberbullying toward innocent people is no longer a new thing. In my research, I found out that one of the most recent suspects for sexual crime cases in Indonesia, which is harassment toward multiple men, Gilang Eizan's brother was almost attacked by a netizen. Since netizens could no longer punish Gilang because he was behind bars, they targeted his brother. It shows that people still do not see cyberbullying as a crime, and that the act of stopping it taken a wrong path over the years.

The issue I really want to address here is the mental condition of cyberbullying victims and how the social factors among them, namely isolation, rejection, and humiliation intensify the mental disorders. Cyberbullying victimization can elevate negative effects in the victim's mental health, it is deemed responsible for the rise of depression and paranoia among many other mental disorders (Schenk, 2011). Victims were most frequently impacted by their victimization by feeling frustrated, stressed, sad or hurt, angry, and/or experienced difficulty concentrating (Schenk, 2011). Typical responses to cyberbullying will include frustration, anger, sadness, unsafe, sense of helplessness, and lower self-esteem. Because the victims of cyberbullying will most likely feel many negative emotions, it could lead to the victims being afraid, embarrassed, and blaming oneself (Schenk, 2011). Depression is a mental disorder that is identified by depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, decreased energy, feeling of self-guilt and low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, and poor concentration (Marcus, et al. 2012). Common symptoms that can also resurface are thoughts about death, impaired concentration, sleep and appetite disturbances (Wirback, 2018). Depression also tends to be a recurrent and relapsing disorder, which means that it can always find a way to happen again (Wirback, 2018).

Another mental disorder that can resurface because of cyberbullying is paranoia. Paranoia is the way a person perceives and relates to other people and the world with characteristics such as suspicion, mistrust, or hostility towards them (Cromby & Harper, 2009) Individuals that suffer from this disorder tend to carry pervasive feelings of mistrust toward others, they could also perceive others and their environment as being dangerous when there is zero evidence of threat, they hold grudges or act in a vindictive manner towards others in response to perceived attacks or slights (Lewis & Ridenour, 2017). In psychiatry, paranoia is understood as symptom instead of an experience to be considered with its own term (Cromby & Harper, 2009) This mental disorder also usually associated with schizophrenia, delusional disorder or paranoid personality disorder, but it can also be related to depression and anxiety diagnoses (American Psychiatric Association, 1994 as cited in Cromby & Harper, 2009).

Cyberbullying can also trigger social problems, it is stated that victims behave in similar manners, they told someone, avoided friends or peers or stopped going to events (Schenk, 2011). Research also shows that victims of cyberbullying tend to be more isolated and less accepted by their peers, they consciously avoid the internet, dwelling on the harassment, also feeling jumpy and irritable (Schenk, 2011). Social factors are very influential when it comes to determining how people who suffer from depression and paranoia can be better or even more shattered mentally. The sufferer of depression or paranoia can dive into more severe conditions when their social environment withdraws or does not even show any support towards them. Because the sufferer will act as the negative marker with their behaviour and habits, people tend to situate themselves away from them or isolate them, and prefer not to talk and think about them or reject them (Cromby & Harper, 2009).

For this creative thesis, I choose a screenplay as the media to communicate the issues I want to show. The first time I was ever amazed by any form of art was when I started to watch films. Later, when I learned the concept of screenplay, I realized that this form of writing is a base for everything in movies, and the reason I fell in love with movies from the start. Visuals and complex production techniques in movies have to be supported by their great stories, it is the first step that will determine how the movie came to life in front of the audience. I find it interesting to write unique and impactful stories. Screenplay will not live as a writing only, it can be made into a film by a film studio or independently, and can be distributed as widely as possible to later provide a chance for audiences or readers to see things from the point of view they have never been in, to shed light into this action of crime that is often overlooked, to make a better cyberspace environment, and to raise awareness to the public, especially cyberbullying perpetrators, to stop what they are doing

There are several films and series that inspire me to create my creative work. They are: *Parasite* (Ho, 2019), *Don't Breathe* (Alvarez, 2016) *Joker* (Phillips, 2019) and some episodes of *Black Mirror*, such as

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Crocodile (Hillcoat, 2017) and *Nosedive* (Wright, 2016). These films deal with different things but fall into the same aspects from my creative work. All of them center on or contain aspects of characters psychology, and how they change throughout the story. The similarity between these films or series and my screenplay is that all will show how the characters got isolated, rejected and humiliated by their society. Also fitting with my creative work, the characters in these films and series also embodied if not one, both depression and paranoia.

By creating this creative work, I want the readers or audiences to see how the act of cyberbully can destroy the victims. Therefore, I chose psychological thrillers as the genre to shape the story and world of my screenplay. "Psychological Thrillers genre characteristics are a dissolving sense of reality, reticence in moral pronouncements, obsessive and pathological characters, the narrative privileging of complex, tortured relationships" (Munt, 1994, as cited in Pittard, 2012, p.531). Thriller itself is a genre that persistently seeks to raise the stakes of the narrative, heightening or exaggerating the experience of events by transforming them into a rising curve of danger, violence, or shock (Glover, 2003, as cited in Pittard, 2012). Because I want to show the mental destruction process and horror of being a cyberbully victim, using psychological thrillers as the foundation is the most fitting.

The screenplay that I will make will tell the story about two brothers, Theo and Owen. one of them, Owen, later will be involved in a viral sex crime and put behind bar when his victims come to the light. Because of that incident, one of the netizens found Theo's private social media account and spread the information. Being the brother of an offender, Theo then got cyberbullied by everyone online. This event will later spread to real life where everyone in his society starts to isolate, reject, and humiliate him. Because of the chain of events he had to endure, Theo's mental will be wounded, he will become a depressed and paranoid person. He will feel useless as an older brother, and blame everything on Owen, he also started to see everyone being a threat to him. By the end of the story, Theo will get murdered in an internet cafe by the hands of one of Owen's victims' father while working on an order from his design account to save himself.

On a personal level, I really care about this cyberbullying issue because I feel angered by how easily people talk ill about each other on social media without any regards to their feelings. With many deaths and bad things that clearly happened because of this unlawful act, there are still no law and dire punishment for the perpetrators, worse, they do not even see their actions as crime. All of this should be stopped.

OUTLINE OF CREATIVE WORK

2.3.1 Premise & Design Principle

The premise of this work is "When an innocent teenager is mistakenly bullied, he would do anything to survive." The design principle is that in my creative work, I will show the pain of being a cyberbully victim by putting Theo as an wrongly accused person that had to go through tormenting events, and showing what he will do on the verge of losing himself even more.

2.3.2. Pitch

The pitch of the work is:

1. Theo left all his youth to work because he wants to provide for the only family he had left, Owen, his brother, who harbors a dark secret.

2. When the dark secret is finally revealed and goes viral, everyone online starts to target Theo as they cannot touch Owen who is behind bars, while everyone in town also starts to take notice of his presence.
3. In the last effort to save himself, a mentally wounded Theo took a job with a payment that will allow him to leave his life behind.

2.3.2.2 Synopsis

Since the death of their parents, Theo only has two purposes in his life. He wants him and his brother, Owen, to live a sufficient life, and to see his brother graduate. In the morning, Theo will deliver newspapers, in the afternoon, he will work in a cafe, and at night, he usually works at a supermarket. All of that, and Theo also gains his money from repairing his friends' phone software, and working on designs anonymously under his other social media account named: 'Mabiru'. He got help from Pak Mamat, the owner of an internet cafe near his boarding house that usually gives him a cheaper hourly price if he is busy working on a design. One day, Owen got involved in a viral sexual crime and was put behind bars. Soon, netizens find Theo's social media account and spread it across cyberspace, leading to Theo being a target of cyberbullying. After his information as brother to an offender known by his society, Theo gets isolated, rejected and humiliated by everyone, including Pak Mamat. In the midst of cyberbully, Theo develops depression and paranoia that worsen his condition. All of this ultimately lead to Theo being murdered at Pak Mamat's internet cafe by one of Owen's victims' father while working on a design to escape his miserable life. The news of Theo's murder become a trending topic on internet, but most netizen only scroll the news away, they do not even read it. They move on to their next victim.

2.3.2.3 Step Outline

1. THEO is delivering newspapers at dawn.
2. When he is almost done, he delivers the newspaper to one luxurious house, where he overheard people inside it talking about university, making Theo think of what his future could be. He dismissed those thoughts, and continued to work.
3. Theo got home just in time when his brother, OWEN, wanted to go to university, he noticed his brother's usual good and tidy look.
4. His brother asked him about borrowing the newspaper delivery motorcycle to drive him to university so that he did not have to walk. Theo told him that he failed to borrow it, and promised him that one day they will have a motorcycle of their own.
5. Owen then went to school.
6. Theo went to his next job, but stopped when he saw PAK MAMAT that just opened his internet cafe. Theo asked Pak Mamat about how many people came to the internet cafe yesterday, and if he tells them about his design account. Pak Mamat then curiously asks Theo about his anonymous account.
7. Theo told him about his low confidence in his design, because he thinks that it is not yet really good.
8. At campus, Owen is busy cleaning a brown spot in his shirt, and fixing his looks. He then went to class while sniffing his shirt. When in class, two girls who were sitting a little bit far from Owen started to steal glances at him.
9. It is revealed that one of the girls had the same brown spot on her shirt as Owen, but a lot more. She shudders, and her friend next to her gives her a jacket.
10. At the cafe, Theo is serving all the high-class customers really well.
11. One of his co-worker came to him and asked him about the software error on his phone. Theo does not know him because of his unwillingness to speak too much to people, but helps him anyway for a price.
12. At night, he works at a supermarket, he is also silent, only speaks a few words to his co-workers, his main focus is on work. One of his co-workers, ANDRE, who also usually asks him about software stuff, asks him for his contact number, telling him that one of his family members may need his help. Theo agreed, and gave him the phone number.

13. Late at night, when they are all about to go home, Theo's boss asks him in. The boss told Theo that he never saw someone so disciplined and hardworking. The boss decided to give Theo an amount of money for everything he has done.
14. Andre and other co-workers notice this.
15. Theo stops at a Pecel Lele roadside stall, where he notices an ojek driver gets suspended because of a single bad comment.
16. Theo got home only to find his brother distracted with something in his mind. Theo asked, but Owen hesitated to answer. Theo concluded that it was a mere 'girl problem' and told Owen that he got extra money to buy his favourite but expensive food to cheer him up tomorrow. Owen agreed.
17. The next day, Theo stops at his brother's favourite meal restaurant, he happily waits in line. Theo only buys one, only for his brother.
18. Theo went home, but found out that his boarding house is now full of people from his area, including Pak Mamat, and a police car.
19. Theo panics, sensing something is not right. He then squeezed through people there. Theo sees his brother being handcuffed and taken out from their room. Theo could not believe his eyes that time. He then screams, asking for an explanation, telling people that his brother is not a bad guy. Pak Mamat held Theo.
20. The police refuse to tell Theo anything, Owen was taken away.
21. Later, Theo found out that his brother was captured because of the girl at school before talks about his sexual offenders, and went viral with another Owen's victim coming out to light.
22. Refused to believe any of it, Theo rushes to the police station on foot.
23. There, he sees Owen in one of the interrogation rooms. Theo slips in, starting to scream and yell, angry. He asks for an explanation. Owen stays silent, poker face.
24. The police had to separate them, they brought Theo outside. Theo went home in shock.
25. Theo spends the night as a hurtful brother, he can not sleep, thinking about why his brother is capable of such a crime.
26. The next day, Theo wakes up early, begging his vendor to let him deliver the newspaper sooner. As soon as he was done, he went to jail again. There, he asked to see Owen.
27. Owen went out with the police, now in a typical jail suit, but after seeing Theo, he refuses to see him. Theo quickly apologizes, telling his brother that he is sorry. Owen accepts.
28. Owen told Theo about everything he had done.
29. Theo told Owen that he will do everything in his power to look for more money, that he will find a way for them to move out from the city, to leave this life behind. Theo promised that soon enough, Owen will be able to eat his favourite meal that he missed on the other night. Owen happily accepted his brother's idea, even when he still looked guilty.
30. At the cafe, Theo overheard two people talk about Owen, calling him names, they also talked about bad comments in his social media.
31. Determined to delete the account, Theo went home that night to find a way to access his brother's account. He searched on the internet for several ways, downloaded password crackers from the app store but could not find one that is working properly.
32. Tomorrow morning, Theo decided to visit his brother again in jail, to ask him about the password.
33. While talking to his brother, one of the police overheard them, and suddenly slammed Theo to the table. Owen screams, this time he is the one that is trying to convince the police that Theo did not do anything wrong. Theo assured Owen that everything will be okay.
34. The police bring Theo to the other side of the station, in charge of obstruction of justice. There, Theo got questioned.
35. Theo stated his intention, that he only wants to delete his brother's account because he feels bad listening to people keep attacking Owen's social media even when he can not see it. Theo begged to meet with cyber police to talk about this.

36. The police feel like it is a little bit out of hand, they are just too lazy and the system is too corrupted to combat cyberbully. Then, they made a promise to Theo to let him go, with one condition. He had to stop talking about cyberbullying, since it is not possible for them to handle it.
37. Theo stated that he heard about several cases that were solved, mostly with important persons or celebrities.
38. The police attacked him by saying that his brother was a criminal, and justice cannot side with him. They forced Theo out.
39. Theo got home, he gathered his courage to view his brother's account.
40. He opened up his social media, only to find one of the netizens already knew of his account and left a nasty comment. In panic, Theo messaged the account, stating that he knew nothing and that he was sorry for everything Owen had done. Tired, Theo fell asleep, he forgot to charge his phone.
41. The next morning, Theo was late for his duty of delivering newspapers. When he got there he was fired without any reason. Theo begs, saying that he is sorry for being late, and that he needs this job.
42. The owner would not listen to him, and locked his door for him.
43. Theo remembers what happened yesterday night, he rushes home to charge his phone. He found out that his message was ignored, and that his account had already gone viral. Multiple bad comments, death threats, etc flooded his phone.
44. Terrified, Theo deleted his account.
45. Theo got to Pak Mamat to told him about his problems, Pak Mamat dismissed him.
46. He gathered himself together, and went to his second work. There, he also got humiliated by several people who later will whisper about him. The customers also treated him badly when he served them. All of the things that happened that one day led him to be fired with disrespect from that cafe.
47. Theo went to his next job, at night. Their boss was not there that night.
48. Andre and several others lured him to the back of the supermarket. There, Andre let out his hatred for Theo. With all of his friends, Andre kicked, punched, and humiliated Theo, simply because he is now a brother of a sex offender.
49. Theo screams, and keeps telling his attackers that he is not the suspect. Nobody listens, they keep on going until Theo is barely strong enough to move.
50. Andre and his friends then left, full of mocking from their mouths.
51. Theo physically and mentally wounded, he keeps muttering that he is not the suspect. Theo forced himself to go home with that condition.
52. Pak Mamat saw him, and decided to help him. While treating his wounds, Pak Mamat apologizes and tells him about the condition of his business. Pak Mamat then brought Theo home.
53. The next day, while recovering, someone threw a rock at his boarding house window. Knowing that he is no longer safe because his location is known, Theo decided to move out before he got kicked out.
54. Theo now travels everywhere with a cover on his face and a hoodie, paranoid of people seeing him. Theo spent a day walking around looking for a place despite his wounds.
55. Theo found a smaller and cheaper boarding house that still wanted to accept him. After settling down, Theo visits Owen again.
56. Owen shows concern about Theo's condition. Theo notices that Owen is healthy, without bruises or wounds.
57. As Theo walks back to his new boarding house, he becomes super panicked when he forgot to close his identity. He also starts to see everyone as a threat. Feeling like everyone is talking about him.
58. In the supermarket, Andre shares Theo's phone number, and the cyberbully moved.
59. Theo got multiple death threats, bad mouthing, etc on his phone again. Theo loses himself, trying so hard to put out his SIM card, destroying his phone in the process. Theo is now completely destroyed, he is no longer the man he used to be. Theo only lay in his boarding room, looking at his family photo when they were still together.
60. Pak Mamat then found where he lived. Pak Mamat tells Theo that only he knew about his whereabouts. He also told him the reason he tried to find him was that someone offered a big money for his design as Mabiru. After hearing the amount, Theo feels relieved, but he is no longer caring

about his brother. He told Pak Mamat that the money will be enough for him to escape the city. Theo decides that he will take the job.

61. Theo went out, all covered, walking to Pak Mamat's internet cafe.
62. On the internet cafe, while he was working, someone snapped a picture of him, shared it on social media with a bad comment.
63. At noon, someone went inside the internet cafe. After sometime, that person rushed to Theo, stabbed him multiple times with a knife on his back.
64. The man was taken away by Pak Mamat, everyone panics, screams are everywhere. Pak Mamat tries to save Theo. Theo finally dies on the table, drenched in blood.
65. It was later revealed that the man was one of Owen's victim's parents. The victim die of suicide.
66. One of the police went to Owen's cell, inaudible telling him the news.
67. Owen's voice can be heard, screaming in tormenting sadness.
68. Later, one of the netizens can be seen looking at their phone. There was news about Theo's death. The netizen scrolled it away.

2.3.3 Characters and Supporting Characters

1. Theo
 25 year-old

Theo is the oldest brother of two. The protector and provider for his brother since his family passed. He is good looking but did not really care, thin but not skinny, tall, and had short dark black hair. He is very hardworking, calm, and well mannered. Theo is an introvert who keeps all of his feelings to himself, loves to tease his brother. His boundaries are too hard to go through because he only want to provide and live. He is a little bit mature beyond his age, but still daydreams about his good days. Theo excels, even when not too much, in any stuff regarding software. He is also capable of fixing most things with his hands. Theo also had medium skill regarding design, but very shy about it since he knew his design was not really good.

2. Owen
 22 year-old

Owen is the youngest brother. A minor provider in the family. He is more good looking than Theo and aware of it, making him really care about his look. He is only a little bit shorter than Theo. He is also an introvert, but really good at making friends. He loves to be on time. Owen thinks every actions must have a reasons, he took a part time job after college. He is also smart in planning things, but not really good at hiding his feelings, it will be written all over his face. A sharp thinker, but not a really good executor. Owen is a little bit on the edge when it comes to woman because he already lost a mother's love since a very young age, making him crave for it.

3. Pak Mamat
 50 year-old

Pak Mamat is the owner of the internet cafe Theo always goes to for design. He is skinny, a father figure for the brothers, but knows how to keep boundaries and to not meddle to much in their life. A really good old man, a trusted friend. He gives Theo some discount or even cheaper price. He can not live with guilt, and always tries to do his best to avoid it. He values his business so much because it is his only source of living. He smokes. He loves to sit by his internet cafe waiting for the opening hours by looking at the street. He lives a modest and far from troubled life.

4. Andre
26 year-old

Andre was one of Theo's co-workers at the supermarket. A cunning man despite his normal look. Envious, always driving people around for his cause. Though not really smart, he is so good at talking and convincing people. He is an extrovert, and talks a lot. He also had a hard life, but not as hard as Theo. Growing up in an environment full of abusive behaviors, he became one deep inside. Even when his abusive side was not really shown in his daily life, he could use it without thinking twice to get revenge.

2.3.4 Conflict

The conflict that will happen in my creative work is Man vs. Self and Man vs. Man. The first type, which is Man vs. Self is the conflict that happened between the major character with his own mind. This conflict usually happens inside the character's mind, debating about what the character should do or think (Hidayah, 2018). The second type, Man vs. Man conflict is a conflict that may have struggled from moral, religious, or social differences. It can be emotional, verbal, or physical conflicts (Hidayah, 2018). Both of the conflict types will present in my creative work in an almost equal portion. Man vs. Man conflict will exist in order to complement Man vs. Self conflict and to push it further

CONCLUSION

This creative work was intended to address cyberbullying from the point of view of the victims, with the hope that the readers or audiences of this creative work can prevent themselves from the act of cyberbullying, or stop doing it if they were the perpetrators. To understand the impact of cyberbullying actions on the victims, the way the victims behave because of words or threats in social media need to be forwarded. From my screenplay, readers or audiences can see my main character, Theo, suffering while he goes through severe cyberbully inflections. For example, Theo's social media account was found by one of the netizens. Being a brother to a sex offender, this particular netizen then spreads his account information throughout cyberspace, starting a chain of cyberbully that will eventually mess his life up.

While showing how cyberbullying is able to create a bad reputation to someone that will lead to changes of people's behaviour around the victim, I mainly want to highlight the mental state of the victim. My focus is on how the victims developed anomalies inside their brain, especially depression and paranoia, two of many negative disorders caused by cyberbullying, and how it will greatly affect their behaviour. Therefore, in the creative work, being intensely cyberbullied, Theo will slowly dive into the darkest place of his mind, seeing dangers that are not there, developing great depression, and ultimately, trying to leave behind the only family he had, brother that he truly ever loved. In the end, the acts of cyberbullying and his information on social media will lead to Theo's death.

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