

On Monsters

I believe we do our children and the world a major disservice when we fail to recognize one salient point about the evildoers that haunt society: before they were monsters, they were victims. It is an extremely rare person who becomes a monster without a personal history of abuse and trauma. For the vast majority, being victimized in childhood was the first step in a long walk toward destruction. Take one of the worst monsters in history, Adolf Hitler. Did you know that he, like many children in Germany at that time, was severely beaten often by his father? He was forced by his need to cope to stop crying, to feel nothing, and to count the number of blows he received (32, to be exact), burying the pain as deep as he could. Listening to the Serial Killer podcast likewise proves that the world's worst monsters were the recipients of the worst kind of abuses, as children and young people. This knowledge is not meant to excuse evildoers (from dictators to rapists to terrorists), but rather, to understand them *better*. More importantly, to make us reconsider our often disrespectful and violent (yet totally unnecessary) parenting practices. And that's today's two cents.