



Another day, another school shooting. Don't get me wrong; I'm NOT one who sounds the alarm over how alarmingly common these events are. I don't believe they're "common" at all... clearly they are NOT common, but actually extremely rare (though not at all as rare as they should be). We humans are just very poor assessors of actual threat. Anyway, this isn't a post about school shootings in general, but about one specific shooting — the recent one in Georgia by 14 y.o. Colt Gray, and more specifically still, about the young shooter's father.

I've made no ~~secret of~~ ^{secret of} my disdain for charging parents after their kids do something illegal, murder included. Like the outrage committed against Ethan Crumbley's parents (See "School Shooters and Snowflakes", May 2024). In this current massacre, it's clear to me that ~~Colt's~~ ^{Colt's} father, Colin Gray, should not be charged; his son shot people, not him, nor did he encourage the shooting (at least not directly). However, it's also clear to me, CRYSTAL clear, that this man, Colin Gray, father of a teenaged quadruple murderer, is an absolute, unmitigated fucking douchebag, too. A real turd. IF I felt more generous I'd look harder at the "why" of Colin Gray over the "what", and no doubt I'd soon be filled with empathy and kindness toward him as well. That's probably true of all people, but for now my revulsion at his apparent character runs freely. He's a bastard. From what I've heard, he treated his family, Colt included, horrendously, and for that alone I condemn him. His awfulness surely caused his son to become a murderer, so Colt is a victim of Colin's failings as a father and a human being. Still, none of that makes it right to punish the man for his son's wrongs.

As for Colt himself, I have nothing but sympathy and sadness, and not just because we seem to share a haircut. In a way, he reminds me of my friend Brian, who was a really great person (as most are in our first 10-15 years of life). His abusive father and toxic mother warped his perceptions and, consequently, also his character, such that he too committed murder, along with developing a host of other regrettable proclivities. I love Brian; he's proven to be a true friend, and where he's fallen short, it really wasn't his choice. He's a product of his circumstances, as we all are. As Colt Gray is. And yes, no doubt, as Colin Gray is too, as well as Brian's parents and everyone else who's ever contributed to the making of so-called "monsters". We're all just human, no more and no less. We play the hands we're dealt. Compassion is mandatory.