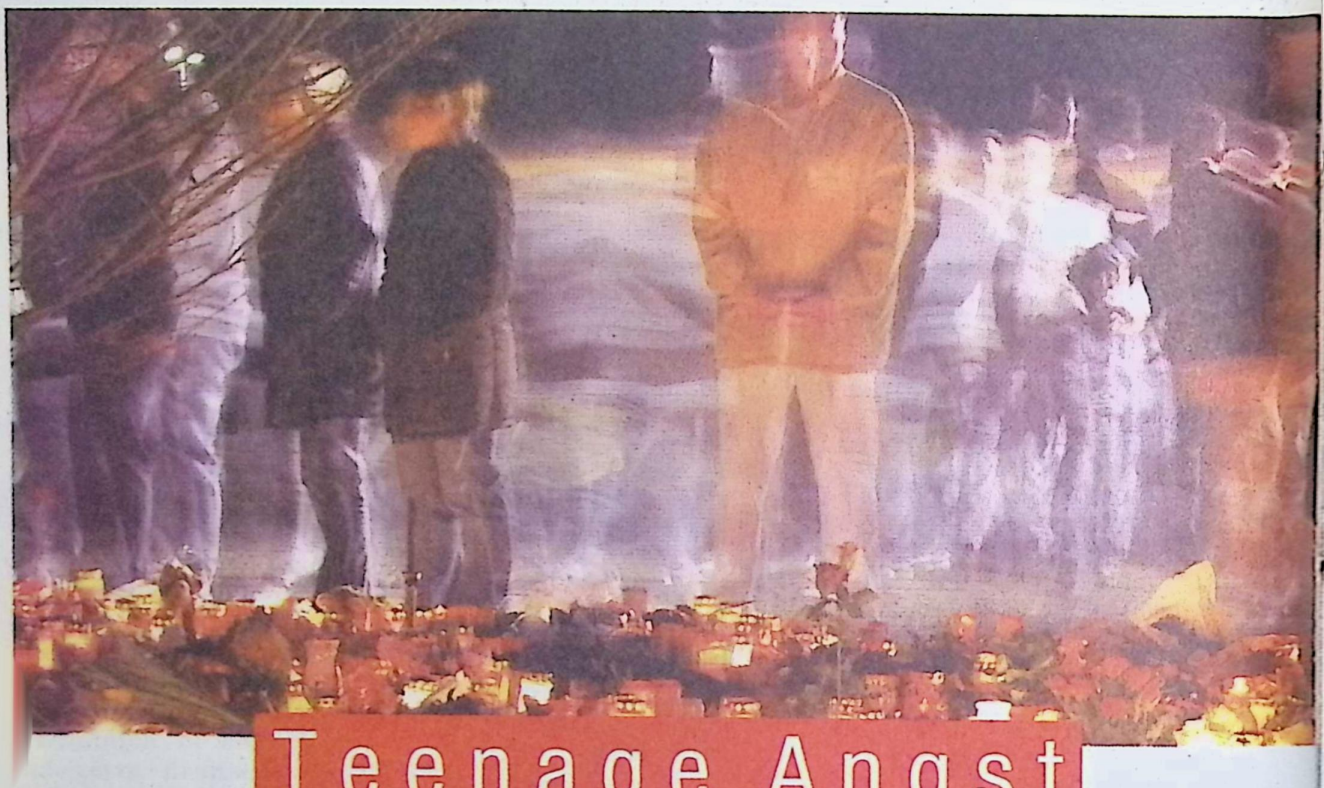


Teenage Angst

Take it More Seriously

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I just saw a picture of Tim Kretschmer and from the photograph he looks like your average kid next door. However, this seventeen year old was flung into the media spot light when he went on a rampage at his former secondary school Albertville in Stuttgart Germany, and shot dead 15 people and then took his own life. I suppose it was foolish of me but no matter how hard I looked at the photograph of this boy I could not find anything in his face or his eyes to indicate the turmoil that must have been raging through him to carry out an act of such barbarity. Maybe it was because it was a picture taken a couple of years ago I told myself --- maybe it was because his eyes were hidden by his spectacles...Maybe I was just not looking properly.

Prior to the bloodbath, Tim also sent a message to a chat room friend describing his feelings and declaring his intentions, which at the time his friend thought to be a joke. Sadly, it was only when he heard about the massacre at the Albertville School that his friend notified his parents who in turn called the police."Bernd, I've had it, I'm sick of this life it's always the same old stuff. Everyone laughs at me, nobody recognises my potential. I'm serious Bernd - I have a weapon here. Early tomorrow morning, I will go to my former school and really toast them. Maybe I'll go too. Keep your ears open, Bernd, you will hear from me tomorrow, remember the name of a place called Winnenden. No reports to the police now, don worry. I'm just baiting you". With hindsight it seems s obvious that the author of this message must have bee very disturbed and in great distress.

To be honest, it is tragic that nobody even realised tha Tim Kretschmer was suffering from such feelings o intense anger and rejection. It appears that the teenage may have been uncomfortable with women as som reports suggest that he had a phobia about women afte being continually called a failure by a female teache whom he ended up despising as she had allegedly tol him that he would "end up as a dustman" if his perfor mance at school did not improve. He was also said t have been rejected by a girl who he liked. According t the papers, eight out of Kretschmer's fifteen victims wer teenage girls between the ages of 14-16. However, offi cials dealing with the shootings declined to confirm thi theory suggesting instead the gender imbalance coul have been due to positioning in the classroom.

Being the parent of two teenagers, this just makes m feel sick to the stomach. Little did these poor childre know of the horrific fate awaiting them that day and I ca hardly bring myself to think about the sense of anguis and pain the parents must be going through. It is just to