It is early morning on April 20, 1999. America would shake from the events about to unfold. At 11:19 a.m., two armed students enter Columbine High School and massacre thirteen people, injure many more, and then take their own lives. This event was one of the first of what has become an epidemic of rampage suicide killings to plague America.

Since then, the shooters, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, became infamous. On the fateful day this string of killings took place, news crews arrived at the scene quickly to televise the events, like vultures swarming a carcass. The shooters’ faces were spread across the nation on television sets and commentators spent months analyzing the event and the motivation for the killings. Many intellectuals and politicians proposed a variety of factors that may have contributed to the motivation the killers had, but one that is often ignored is the immortality they desired to gain from their actions.

The mainstream media was more than happy to satisfy this desire. The attention and fame that rampage killers receive from the media plays a role in encouraging more rampage killings, and the mainstream media has to be mindful about what they broadcast because of the possible repercussions of their actions. Through conducting research in peer-reviewed journal articles, interviews with professionals, and books on the sociological and psychological factors influencing rampage killers, I believe that the best way to prevent future tragedies like Columbine is to promote a self-regulating, responsible media.