

Analyzing the Darkness of American Society through “Joker”

- Class Conflict, Isolation, and Social Neglect - TEAM: HAPPY FACE

Research Question

What social issues in American society led him to become an antihero, and how do these issues continue to exist in contemporary America?

Arthur’s Life Course

TEA (Trajectory Equifinality Approach)

EFP → Equifinality Point
P-EFP → Polarized Equifinality Point
BFP → Bifurcation Point
SG → Social Guidance
(SD → Social Direction)

SG

Violence

Signboard stolen and destroyed by teenagers

Cold-shouldered by passengers on bus

Society’s lack of understanding toward mental patients

Was not believed by his boss that the sign was stolen

Social disdain toward marginalized groups

Refuse to receive a gun

Get a gun and drops his gun at his workplace and gets fired

Gun Society + Social disdain toward marginalized groups

Get harassed because of his illness

Didn’t kill them

Kills all three of them

Class Conflict + [Violence toward society’s marginalized + Social disdain toward marginalized groups]

Thomas Wayne’s opinion against the weak

Class inequality & conflict

Government’s withdrawal of welfare support

Lack of support and understanding for mental illness patients

Loses access to counseling support

Insufficient support for mental patients

“The society doesn’t care about people like you, Arthur”

The marginalized position of society’s vulnerable groups

Participates in a show

Police officers mock Arthur’s medical condition

Class conflict + Social condescension towards mental patients

Murray (his idol) makes fun of his comedy act on TV

Media+Making fun of

Riot from the clown troupe

Distrust towards political system and class conflict

Discovers his origin at the hospital
The reality of being an adopted child who suffered abuse

Neglect + Betrayal from mother

Didn’t murder his mother

Murders his mother

BFP③

Murders his coworker

Ridicule directed at individuals with disabilities

Appears on Murray’s TV show

“ If it was me dying on the sidewalk, you’d walk right over me”

Didn’t murder Murray

Murders Murray

BFP④

Being publicly ridiculed through the media

Escalation of the Riot

Thomas Wayne murdered

Class conflict

Not become an Anti-Hero

Birth of an Anti-Hero

Conclusion

It can be said that violence and abuse toward the socially vulnerable, the gun-centered culture, the lack of support and understanding for people with mental illnesses, and the deep class disparities all led to his isolation and transformation into an antihero. In addition, it has become clear that these issues are deeply rooted in American society. Therefore, the United States needs to build greater support and understanding for the socially vulnerable.

Violence and Gun Society

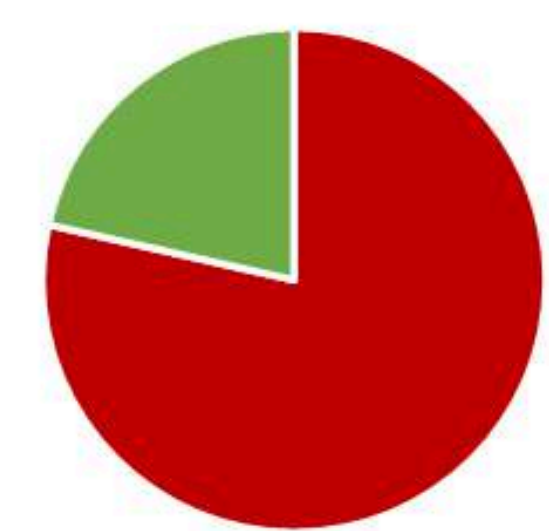
• United Health Care CEO Brian Thompson was shot and killed in 2024.

The culprit was regarded as a hero by many people.



From BBC NYPD, Reuters

Rate of firearm homicides among all homicides



78.5%

■ Firearm homicides ■ Homicides except firearm

• In 2023, there were 546,159 victims of child abuse and neglect. The victim rate is **7.4 victims per 1,000 children** in the population.

Lack of Support and Understanding of Mental Illness

• Arizona’s massive cuts to the Mental health budget (2009-2011)

More than **10,000 patients lost support**.

Many people were unable to receive treatments, leading to an increase in homelessness, emergency transports, and arrests.

• In the 2026 budget proposal, the funding for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) was **cut by 21%**.

E.g., the elimination of programs providing community-based intensive care for people with severe mental illnesses.



Class Disparities and Conflict

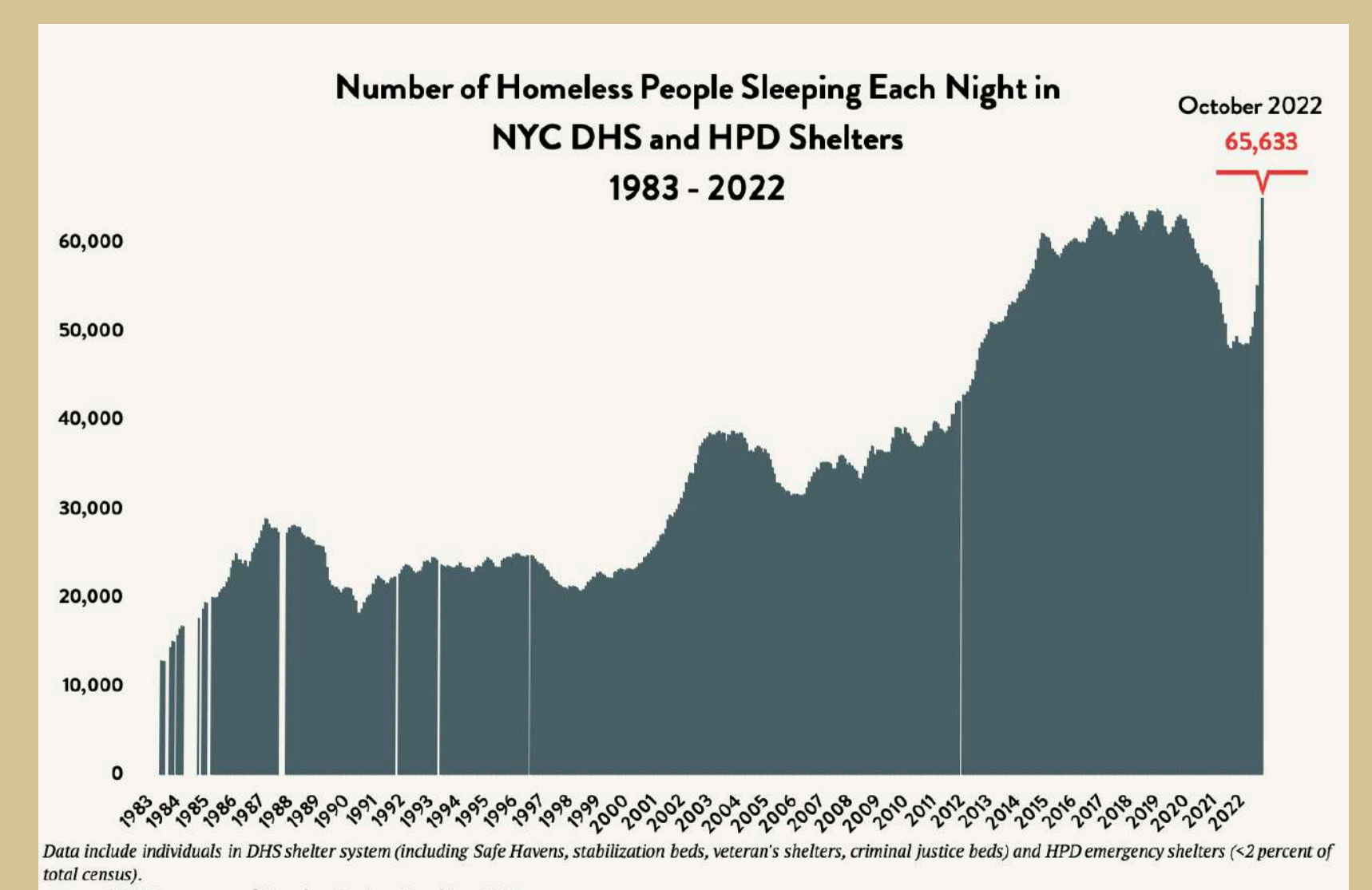
“ • Reaganomics” (1980s)

1. Reduced Government Spending 2.

Reduced Taxes 3. Less Regulation 4.

Slowdown of money supply growth to control inflation

• CEOs of S&P 500 companies made \$17.7 million on average in 2023, **more than 268 times their median worker’s income**



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