

INTV WITH
BILL REID
ROLL.34

Intv:- Just explain to me the background of getting involved.
How did you get involved in this case?

Bill:- 15.07.33 I got a call erm, some year and a half after the shootings
erm, from representatives of the state of Colorado saying
that they were considering other people erm, people other
than they had been working with to be the judges expert. I
learned that my name had been submitted erm, by a, a
colleague in New York and they apparently vetted me, took
a look at things, interviewed me and erm, that's how it
happened, it was very unexciting I suppose.

Intv:- And what is your background that made you qualified for
this sort of role?

Bill:- 15.08.11 Basically I'm a physician and a psychiatrist, for the last
several decades a lot of my psychiatric practice has been
forensic psychiatry, that is the interface of psychiatry and
law. In both criminal matters and civil matters. Erm, I've
worked with a number of cases, written, taught and of
course interviewed lots and lots of people erm, I'm not
unusual in that but that's my background.

Intv:-

Now this was a, a pretty big case, feelings running very high as well certainly in, in Colorado, did you have any hesitation about getting involved?

Bill:- 15.08.44

There was a bit, a bit of hesitation and erm, a couple of colleagues suggested that I'd be aware of how much time it was going to take, we considered that carefully, my wife and I considered that carefully erm, and decided that first of all it was an interesting thing to do, second I hoped that I could help the process for the judge, I've worked with judges before although most of the time people like me worked with a lawyer on one side or the other, it's quite a luxury to work with a judge and that was another reason that I was interested in doing it was that I knew that I'd have every opportunity to erm, get everything as straight as I could.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:-

How unusual was this case in the sense that you actually had a live defendant?

Bill:- 15.09.56

This matter was very unusual erm, first of all erm, shootings and killings of this magnitude are unusual per say erm, it's also important that this was a situation in which the perpetrator survived the event, in so many situations the perpetrator is killed or commits suicide. In other situations the case is over fairly quickly because some sort of deal is made or erm, justice erm, moves quickly. In this case erm, the perpetrator survived and it was 3 years erm, before the trial, 3 years in which Mr Holmes could be studied scrupulously and the evidence on both sides could be investigated very very carefully.

Intv:-

So how much time did you spend with him?

Bill:- 15.10.45

I, I spent a total of about 23 or 24 hours with him over 9 interviews erm, that, that's what I spent.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:-

How much time did you spend with him and how did you find him?

Bill:- 15.11.06

I spent about 23 hours interviewing Holmes over 9 erm, interview sessions, they took place for several days in one month and a month or so later several days. Erm, he was initially transported at my request to a secure hospital so that I could interview him outside of a jail. The second set of interviews was done in a jail. Erm, I found him cooperative erm, interested in the process of being interviewed, he'd been interviewed many times before by both psychiatrists and other people erm, he was I thought pretty straightforward although one never knows that I can't read minds erm. And erm, he was not a person who appeared to be psychotic or not with it, he understood everything that I was doing erm, I explained my role and my tasks and he understood those clearly and no doubt understood his lawyers instructions on how to act when he was with me although I believe he acted quite honestly.

Intv:-

So you believe what he was saying to you in those interviews?

Bill:- 15.12.19

I don't believe it per say because as I say people can fool me just as they can fool other people but he seemed earnest and not of a mind to mangle or shade the truth. No truth is different from accuracy so the things that he perceived as

the truth or memories may or may not have been accurate.
But I think he was trying to be accurate.

Intv:-

You videotaped all of these interviews so we can all see what his demeanour was like, he seemed rather unusual, very flat, quite unresponsive a lot of the time?

Bill:- 15.12.57

When you say flat that's a good word, that is his face didn't reveal very much emotion, he wasn't completely flat as one can see in, in the videos erm, he expressed various emotions, a range of emotions but not as much as you and I might erm, we call a blunted kind of effect.

Intv:-

And why was he like that do you think?

Bill:- 15.13.23

May have been a couple of reasons erm, one is erm, his general psychological make up is one in which he's been withdrawn, he has not very socially adept erm, another reason is that he had been on medication for well over a year erm, by the time I saw him first. The medication that he was on for some people not all causes them to be a bit subdued, a bit flat although I must say that in his case the medication was quite a low dose and one would not have expected that his appearance had very much to do with his medications.

Intv:-

Did you think it was unusual that he seemed so emotionless about talking about something so awful?

Bill:- 15.14.14

It didn't seem unusual to me, I think to the average viewer er, it would seem unusual erm, because knowing something about his history having read different reports of interviews and, and having interviewed lots and lots of people about him erm, he didn't have much feeling about what he was

going to do or what he did erm, nor about the people that were involved so I wasn't surprised about that although other people might be.

Intv:-

Would you say it was a result of mental illness that that's what he's like or is that simply his character?

Bill:- 15.14.54

For me as a psychiatrist it was a result of mental illness erm, that's also a part of his character because part of his character is one that is a disordered character, a personality disorder if you will that's not like the character of most people.

Intv:-

I think most people would, would watch his Responses and find it utterly remarkable that he seems to lack any emotional response to, to even the most detailed questions about talking about killing people, killing children, doing one of the most unimaginable acts.

Bill:- 15.15.35

It seems to be an emotionless response erm, there is certainly less emotion than most people have, one doesn't know what's going on inside him so that maybe there's an emotion inside that's not reaching the surface but I think in general you're correct. He is very defended against feeling emotion, he had to be in order to carry these things out erm, he didn't, he killed one child, he didn't I believe intend to kill a child but he did erm, and the lack of empathy if you will and lack of sympathy for the victims is a striking thing about him.

Intv:-

Thinking about him overall how well do you think he, he fits the profile of mass shooters in general?

Bill:- 15.16.27

I don't know that there is a profile, I think everybody looks for one and people talk about them and write about profiles erm, but there are different things that underlie mass shootings and, and killings in general.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:-

How does he fit with the profile of other mass shooters?

Bill:- 15.17.12

You ask about a profile of other mass shooters or mass murders, I don't know that there is a profile, each situation is different a great many of the mass killings erm, that we know about involve severe mental illness but some of them involve revenge or purported reasons erm, his is in my experience quite different from other mass shootings.

Intv:-

In what way?

Bill:- 15.17.43

First of all he doesn't seem to have a good reason for it. Now people with severe mental illness often don't have a good reason, he doesn't even have a good reason for one who's mentally ill in my view. We can talk about the reasons if you like.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:-

Why do you think he's unusual?

Bill:- 15.18.21

He's mentally ill but in my view when he did these things he wasn't what most people would call crazy. He didn't have a good reason for doing it like anger at the world, the reasons erm, were ones that were idiosyncratic to him. And I think that's the best answer I can give you. He didn't have what the police often see as a criminal reason to

do things, to make money or to erm, exact revenge and things like that. It was something within him.

Intv:-

So quite unusual in that regard?

Bill:- 15.19.02

In my experience yes. And of course the, the experience of mass shooting of the event of a mass shooting is unusual in itself, we don't have very many to go by.

Intv:-

So we'll, we'll break it down erm, as the interview goes on but just overall. Why do you think James Holmes did what he did?

Bill:- 15.19.28

I wish I knew and I wish I could answer your question of why did he do it? Erm, it would make for a much better interview. But the fact is I don't know and I don't believe anyone knows why he did it and I don't know that the circumstances under which he did it can ever be reconstructed erm, or will ever be reconstructed in someone else.

Intv:-

When do you think the first real signs emerged that he was mentally ill?

Bill:- 15.19.57

The first signs of his mental illness erm, probably appeared when he was a relatively young boy, around 11, 12, 13, 14. I'm not saying that those are the signs that he was going to kill people or that he was going to be seriously ill. But we know from a number of reports that in certain social situations as a child he was a bit unusual not very unusual but a bit unusual and he reports that he was having odd thoughts, thoughts of people being killed or thoughts of a nuclear wasteland. One should say that the only evidence

we have of those thoughts is his adult memory after the shootings. But that's what he says.

Intv:- He never told anyone about these thoughts at the time?

Bill:- 15.20.48 That's correct.

Intv:- And how serious do you regard these sorts of thoughts?
Does that mean he was actually just always obsessed with just killing people?

Bill:- 15.20.58 No it doesn't mean that he was always obsessed with killing people. Children and erm, adolescents have all kinds of fantasies, they do all kinds of things in their minds to adjust to their environment, to adjust to their anxieties about growing up and different things that children experience. One would be surprised at the oddness of the fantasies that children have but usually they don't remember those as they grow up, usually they don't continue as they grow up.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:- So given what we know about what he did, when you look back does that mean you're able to pinpoint these childhood thoughts as something that was always in him? It was always in him that he might kill lots of people?

Bill:- 15.21.58 No one cannot say that it was always in him that he might kill people erm. Millions and millions of children look like James Holmes did when he was 5 or 10 or 15 erm, years old. 10s or 100s or 1000s of people look like he looked when he was 20 and 22 years old. It's like everyone who

becomes addicted to heroin and drank milk at some point but not all the milk drinkers become heroin addicts.

Intv:-

In his interview with you he described that childhood teenage erm, hatred of mankind a little like hating broccoli. Was that an explanation you think that, that held water?

Bill:- 15.22.47

I think it was as far as he's concerned, he believed he was telling the truth and I think he may be pretty accurate in that regard. When he talks about a hatred of mankind and we don't know exactly when that developed, different people have different opinions about it erm, he wasn't talking about a vengeful hatred erm, he was talking about an aversion to mankind, being around much of mankind was uncomfortable to him and it wasn't very rewarding to him so he wanted to avoid it, even though he couldn't avoid it.

Intv:-

So in the same way as he might try and avoid eating broccoli coz he's not keen on it, he, he wanted to avoid being around people?

Bill:- 15.23.31

I think that's a good way of putting it or at least that's the way he put it. Now it becomes much more serious when you're talking about whole civilisations and societies erm. In terms of whether that was a piece of his mission what he called his mission to kill people, it was a small piece according to him and I believe that's correct that the aversion or hatred if you will of people was only a small piece of what he thought the reasoning was. The reasoning wasn't logical but a small piece of what he thought the reasoning was.

Intv:-

At what point then did it change from just trying to avoid mankind people because he found that difficult to actually having really serious specific thoughts about killing real people?

Bill:- 15.24.23

Those thoughts did evolve over time, it was not until late adolescence as I recall that the thoughts of his killing people not just people dying but his killing the people began to enter a, his consciousness. That doesn't mean he had an impulse to do it but he thought about it at some times. One of the times that he thought about it was when he encountered any kind of confrontation with someone else, it may have been an imagined confrontation someone who was disagreeing or made him uncomfortable in some way. He did what he called freezing so that he wasn't able to respond or at least not respond very well and images was, would come into his mind of things like saws and erm, things of violence and those images eventually I think in late adolescence became situations in which the saws would cut off heads or cut off arms.

15.25.25:-

He believed that the saws were independent, the saw was cutting off a head, it wasn't that I was sawing off a head, it was that the saw was cutting off a head. There's some psychological mishmash in there but that's the way he erm, perceived it early on.

Intv:-

Would that be an unusual thought for somebody who was as socially anxious as James Holmes?

Bill:- 15.25.47

It's not so unusual and you ask an interesting question of whether it's unusual or not. It is not so unusual that people in uncomfortable situations very normal people but also mentally ill people fantasise ways to es, escape from those, from those situations. Do I run away? Do I eradicate the

person in front of me? Erm, so that killing the person in front of you may be there in one's fantasy and it may be a frightening fantasy but it's not all that unusual erm, in people.

Intv:-

And it doesn't necessarily pinpoint you as a, a future killer?

Bill:- 15.26.27

Absolutely not and, erm future killers may have that but the vast majority of people who think boy I'd like to kill the guy who cut me off in traffic or erm, argued with me in the bar, the vast majority erm, are never going to kill anyone.

Intv:-

How significant then in, in all of this, in the timeline of what happened do you think is the development of his human capital theory?

Bill:- 15.26.53

The development of his human capital theory is quite significant. And I'm not sure when it started, he began to talk about it fairly late. But the idea that. Excuse me.

15.27.09:-

But the idea that each person has a point, has one point, each person is worth one point. Erm, if you're alive you have the point, if you're dead you don't have the point, if I kill you I get your point. If I kill you accidentally I don't get your point. Erm. He believes or believed as he told me at any rate that that was give or take 45% of the reason that he wanted and needed and was driven to kill other people because he wanted to amass points.

Intv:-

In all the reviewing of the evidence and interviewing of James Holmes that you did, did you find any evidence that he actually believed in that idea before he articulated it to his, his former girlfriend?

Bill:- 15.28.04

I recall he told me that it existed well before he articulated it. I'm not remembering just now when that was erm. And by the way one may think of that as I will be worth more if I have the points, my self-worth will increase. As I asked him carefully what do you mean you'll be worth more? He really didn't have anything to say about that, he wouldn't be stronger, he wouldn't live longer, he wouldn't be powerful or any smarter, he would just have more points.

Intv:-

There seemed to be some.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:-

The g-mail chat with his former girlfriend seems to have been the first time he ever spoke openly about the human capital idea, do you think that was significant that when he spoke openly about it he felt then he was committed?

Bill:- 15.30.05

I don't know how he felt when he first told erm, Miss Data, Gargi Data about the human capital idea. But it no doubt made it a bit more real, so far as we know he had never mentioned it to anyone else, he'd never written it down erm. Other than that I'm not, I'm not sure whether that was a, a watershed event for him.

Intv:-

That g-mail chat started. That g-mail chat happened 4 days after James Holmes was started on ... do you think there could have been any connection at all between the two things?

Bill:- 15.30.49

If there was a connection er, it was that he was improving, however ... or ... takes a while to take effect, it doesn't take effect right away or most of its effects don't occur right away.

Intv:- But you can have side effects in the first few days?

Bill:- 15.31.08 Side effects can certainly occur erm, sooner I don't think it was a result of any side effects that he bought it up erm. The thought was no doubt there before and he was simply expressing it to someone, to the person who he was closest too in Colorado.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:- The g-mail chat was 4 days after he started on ... do you think there could have been any link between those two things?

Bill:- 15.32.02 No.

Intv:- Why not?

Bill:- 15.32.05 First of all ... takes a while to take effect. So that the, the therapeutic effects are unlikely to show themselves within 4 days, there are a few therapeutic effects and anxiety effects that that may occur earlier. Second there's no indication that anything in the chat with Gargi was related to side effects or adverse effects which may appear erm, sooner than the therapeutic.

Intv:- But we know there's evidence isn't there that the side effects in the first few days are when doses change can include things like unusual thoughts, hostility?

Bill:- 15.32.46 Not particularly in, in the vast majority of patients, ... is not associated with particular hostility in patients erm, with any regularity that I know of.

- Intv:- It can be erm, a rare side effect I mean Health Canada warns of unusual feelings, of agitation, hostility, disturbing thoughts that you know, maybe people will be inclined to self-harm or to harm others, that's a Canadian warning on the drug.
- Bill:- 15.33.15 I'm not aware of the Canadian warning, I'm aware that the US warning does not refer at all to self-harm. Irritability is quite different from harming one's self or harming other people, I just don't buy the idea that the ... had anything to do with the shootings.
- Intv:- This is not something you've ever witnessed in your own practice when patients have taken SSRI's that they had unusual thoughts. Strange behaviour in the first few days of taking a drug. Has that never happened?
- Bill:- 15.33.45 I've not seen it happen in any of my patients erm, there are I suppose reports from here or there but so far as I know there is no scientific evidence or no clin, evidence in the clinical literature the accepted clinical literature of anything related to suicide or, or homicide. Now the warning ref, in the US the warning refers to watching patients particularly younger patients, children, young adults suicidal behaviour.
- Intv:- And James Holmes was a young adult.
- Bill:- 15.34.24 He was a young adult. First of all the suicidal behaviour is quite different from what we're talking about in terms of the homicides. Second the warning pointing does not say because there's absolutely no accepted pro, professional accepted at, evidence that the medication effect is one of increasing suicidality.

Intv:- But there is a black box warning about watching out for suicidality in young people up to the age of 24, James Holmes was 24.

Bill:- 15.34.59 And that, that black box warning refers to watching for suicidality one would assume and I assume because I know the medication moderately well. That it refers to as patients are improving from depression they frequently become more able to attempt suicide because they become more active, their, their brains are better if you will. The second is that a, many patients who are erm, prescribed ..., I'm sorry.

15.35.32:- The second thing is that many patients who are prescribed ... are anxious and depressed anyway and thinking about suicide so that this is automatically a group of people that one wants to watch carefully for suicide.

Intv:- So you feel quite confident that even in the initial days on the drug there couldn't have been detrimental effect on his thinking, his behaviour.

Bill:- 15.35.55 There's no evidence at all there was any detrimental effect, there is indication I'm not sure it's evidence that he was a bit improved during the weeks that he was taking it and one assumes, that's if one assumes one was, he was.

15.36.11:- That's if one assumes that he was taking it erm, one doesn't know whether he was taking it or taking it as prescribed or not.

Intv:- Well he did keep picking up his prescriptions, there was no evidence that he wasn't adhering to the medication.

Bill:- 15.36.25

There's no evidence either way except as you point out he was picking up the medications at the pharmacy.

Intv:-

So that's some evidence is it not that it looked like, if he keeps going back for his prescriptions that he might want to keep taking the medication?

Bill:- 15.36.41

It's a suggestion that he was taking it and that he was interested in taking it and that he was interested in feeling better.

Intv:-

One of the other indications perhaps that he was you know, one of the people who these drugs don't suit when he was in jail in December 2012 he was given another SSRI and it was reported that he had a while look in his eyes and he was put on suicide watch. So that was 5 days after he'd been put on this SSRI.

Bill:- 15.37.12

My memory is that in jail he didn't receive any psychiatric medications until he had what was commonly known as a psychotic break for one reason or another, at that point he was prescribed among other things an anti-psychotic medication and an anti-depressant medication erm.

Intv:-

It's the point at which he was prescribed the SSRI though that it's noted that he had a wild look in his eyes and he was put on suicide watch, 5 days after he started taking it, just looking at the time line obviously when he started on ... 4 days later he starts talking about the human capital idea. Do, do you think these two things are simply a coincidence?

Bill:- 15.37.58

I think there are many many other explanations for what appears in time to be correlated, I won't say related but

correlated. The man was blatantly psychotic when these medications were prescribed. And people were observing him closely and trying to help him, I have no indication at all that the medication in either instance was acting to his detriment.

Intv:-

You think when he went for that first consultant with Doctor Fenton he was psychotic at that stage?

Bill:- 15.38.33

Probably not but I'm not certain because I wasn't there. He was certainly having thoughts about killing people and thoughts about as a matter of fact I think he was having thoughts about erm, about the human capital concept if I'm remembering correctly.

Intv:-

No there was no evidence from that consultant with Doctor Fenton, the initial consultant that he was, he had this human capital idea, the first evidence of him articulating it was 4 days after he started on ... when he had the g-mail chat with Miss Data.

Bill:- 15.39.07

There wouldn't be evidence perhaps in Doctor Fenton's records, I don't remember whether he told me anything like that or whether my conversation with Doctor Fenton revealed anything erm.

Intv:-

But you feel you can say with confidence that it's completely unrelated to the medication he was given.

Bill:- 15.39.25

Any detrimental effect having to do with the shootings, I can state with great confidence to myself and I think most psychiatrists almost all psychiatrists would say the same thing that it was completely unrelated to the medication and of course another reason to believe that is that he was as far

as anyone knows not under the effects of the medication at the time of the shootings.

Intv:-

Well, well we'll come on to that if you don't mind just going, going through it stage by stage. How important do you think Holmes' notebook was in understanding the progression of his mental state?

Bill:- 15.40.04

The so called notebook erm, 20, 30 pages of handwritten material is very interesting and one doesn't always know how to interpret it. Some parts are difficult to understand, some parts appear very clear some parts appear to be a planning process, other parts appear to be his talking about what he's feeling inside. It was also written over a period of time we're not sure exactly when different pages were written but it was written roughly over several weeks leading up to the shootings. So to look at the notebook, to look for reasons or understanding is interesting but not certain if you will, I'm not sure what is the correct word to use.

Intv:-

You don't find it reliable?

Bill:- 15.40.55

It's not reliable in and of itself.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:-

How important do you think James Holmes' notebook was in, in your own understanding of his mental progression?

Bill:- 15.41.13

The notebook, the several, 20 to 30 pages of handwritten material that he wrote erm, probably in late June and July before the shootings reflects lots of things we're not quite sure exactly what it reflects. Some of the parts are

psychotic, difficult to understand, other parts appear very clear and very concise. So that it adds interesting material to consider but in and of itself it doesn't diagnose him or tell us specifically what he was thinking at any particular time.

Intv:-

He wrote in the notebook first appearance of mania occurs on the SSRI no more fear of failure, no fear of consequences. What do you make of that?

Bill:- 15.42.06

About all I make of it is that's what he wrote and that that maybe what he was perceiving when he wrote it. He used the word mania, we don't know quite what he meant by mania, I may have asked him that in the interviews erm. All I can say is that's what he wrote and that that would be put with the other things that we know or think we know to try to piece together how he was thinking at the time.

Intv:-

What about his self-reporting of, of losing the fear, losing the fear of consequences, perhaps the thing that was holding him back from carrying out this awful act?

Bill:- 15.42.46

He did mention losing the fear of consequences, I don't know that that was lost at that particular time but over time the mission if you will, his mission got more important, consequences of the mission and other things in his life became less important. Erm. I'm not sure what he was thinking the day that he wrote that.

Intv:-

Could medication have played a part in that? In reducing the fear of consequences?

Bill:- 15.43.17

I don't think of it as reducing the fear of consequences at all. To the extent that he was taking the medication at the

time one would expect him to be having less anxiety generally but not becoming more focused on a, on a erm, terrible task or a potentially psychotic task, that doesn't occur to me as a psychiatrist.

Intv:-

He told you in, in his interview that he thought ... helped reduce the anxiety of the fear. Do you find that compelling?

Bill:- 15.43.52

... in general is often prescribed for anxiety and other things. It's reasonable to me that he was feeling less anxious and let me interpret that, more comfortable erm, I don't find it compelling about the ... made it possible for me to do it at all. Now if he thinks about that as a reason or if he's looking for a reason to explain something pretty much in explicable erm, that's one possibility of the way he was thinking about it.

Intv:-

But you don't think it could have any basis in fact? I mean he, he wrote in the notebook on ... hatred unchecked, he talks about starting to buy the weapons and then he uses the word committed.

Bill:- 15.44.47

He wrote lots of things in the notebook and as I've said I'm not buying that the ... made me do it. Sometimes people are looking for reasons, sometimes they're looking for reasons and sometimes they're looking for excuses or explanations. They're not always accurate and the way people are thinking about things is not always accurate particularly when they are so severely mentally ill.

Intv:-

So he's having these, these new and very specific thoughts of killing just days after starting 50 milligrams a day of ... then it's up to 100 milligrams and then quite quickly again

to 150 milligrams that's all within the space of a month.
You don't think there's any connection at all?

Bill:- 15.45.31

I'm not buying any of what you're saying about a connection between starting the ... or increasing the ... over the course of a month. I don't see anything unusual about that. Erm. In terms of the psychiatric practice and I don't see anything causative about it in terms of, of any of his erm, behaviour related to the shootings.

Intv:-

During that period there's a, a dramatic increase in his spending, he used to be a very frugal guy by all accounts, a dramatic use of, of dating sites, porn sites, approaching Hilary Allen with flirty texts, all of this is happening in the same time frame.

Bill:- 15.46.14

Let me express one, one thing that is a little bit consistent with what you're saying. In patients or people who are depressed but have a propensity to have bipolar disorder, sometimes the anti-depressant medication causes them to move through normal up into manic or close to manic that is very active etc. We don't have much evidence at all that that's what happened with James Holmes erm, you've said that he is spending lots of money and was formerly a frugal fellow, he'd been spending money on the weapons for well I'm not, I can't remember exactly when the medication was, was prescribed.

Intv:-

He didn't buy any weapons until after he started on the medication.

Bill:- 15.47.11

I still don't associate the medication with buying any weapons or spending more, he wasn't so far as we know spending money on anything except the mission, the

weapons, the material for the mission so that he wasn't doing spending as manic people if you will, bipolar people sometimes do in terms of buying lots of things they don't need or have no purpose. He was buying things that for him had purpose consistent with things that were in his mind for a long long time.

Intv:-

But here was a guy who 6 months previously had, had shied away from even handling a gun, he'd never had any interest in weaponry, in, he'd never by all accounts shown any indications of violence or aggression, this is really out of character for him to suddenly start doing this.

Bill:- 15.48.05

The purchase of the guns is a little out of character but not out of character with his evolving attitude and his evolving erm, mission if you will, his evolving erm, feelings about other people dying and then feelings about killing other people so that I would disagree with you, that this happened so suddenly. Erm, he, the first time so far as we know that he ever handled a handgun was indeed with a friend and he appeared to be a bit uncomfortable at least that's the way people described it, a bit uncomfortable handling it, he wasn't a violent guy, he wasn't a violent guy up until the night of the shootings.

Intv:-

So this accumulation of weaponry, of ammunition, of all sorts of paraphernalia to try and carry out his mission that the dating sites, the porn sites, the approaching Hilary Allen in a way he'd never approached women before, this all happens within the time frame of the medication, you, you think you can say with confidence that there's absolutely no connection?

Bill:- 15.49.17

It all happens within the time frame of lots of things, it all happens within the time frame of him seeking help most of it happens within the time frame of his dropping out of school. The, the point of every, the fact that everything is coming to fruition doesn't suggest to me that it's coming to fruition is caused by any medication that was prescribed to try to help him.

Intv:-

What about stopping 150 milligrams of ... abruptly? That could cause problems couldn't it?

Bill:- 15.49.53

Not usually stopping the medication at those dose of ... doesn't usually cause significant problems or lasting problems.

Intv:-

Really if you stop abruptly, if you just stop one day, stop taking it?

Bill:- 15.50.06

Patient stops ... all the time erm, without major problems.

Intv:-

But could it cause problems?

Bill:- 15.50.13

I think the best thing to do is ask somebody that's more of an expert in ... and psych... than I. I'm not aware of it causing any problems related to what happened at the Century 16 erm, and I'm aware of ... experts comments in reports that said it is not related.

Intv:-

The warnings in the British National ... Health Canada are that side effects are worse around dose changes and 150 milligrams to zero is a massive change. You don't think that might have played any part in James Holmes' state of mind at that time?

Bill:- 15.50.58

I don't know what the warnings are in the National Health Service erm, documents and things like that erm. When he stopped it whatever effects there were and by the way no-one was particularly observing him around this time, we have his statements and some comments in his notebook. Whatever effects there were were well gone by the time the detailed planning and preparation was taking place and finally the shootings themselves.

Intv:-

There was one interesting piece of evidence about 10 days after it appears that he stopped ... abruptly, he sent texts to Hilary Allen saying the flood gates are open, described himself as bad news bears. Is that an insight into how he was feeling at that stage?

Bill:- 15.51.50

It's an insight into how he was feeling erm, it is not a complete insight and I don't see anything related to the medication in a brief series of texts to somebody that he briefly dated.

Intv:-

She, she has spoken to us. Hilary Allen has spoken to us and noticed a change in him, she, she started off in the same class in August and, and by July that's when she really felt he, he wasn't able to do his oral presentations but actually up until that period he, he'd managed okay in school. He'd also been a guy you know, used to look at the ground when he walked past her even though he knew her and then suddenly he's texting her, talking about her shorts you know, just being really forward in a way with girls that he's never been before, do, do you find that compelling evidence?

Bill:- 15.52.47

I don't find any of what you're saying compelling evidence because I wouldn't use the phrase compelling evidence.

It's interesting talking with a girl that he didn't know very well, he knew her but he didn't know her very well. Erm, is a little out of character for him erm, I don't know what to make of it but it would be a wild stretch to say that all this was because of the medicine.

Intv:-

She's quite well placed in a way though just even thinking about his academic performance, she's one of the few people who consistently saw him from august all the way through to July and she basically says you know, he did okay in his work and he seemed like a smart guy and actually the, the only time that he seemed to do really badly in his oral presentation was, was the final one.

Bill:- 15.53.42

If that's what she says that what she's says, I don't know how much window she had on his behaviour in class and exams in, in labs erm, she has said that she was surprised that he didn't pass the pre lims that's in those texts that you're describing.

Intv:-

In his interview with you he, you asked him whether he was basically saying there was a possibility the shootings wouldn't have happened without the ..., he said.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:-

He told you there was a possibility the shootings might not have happened without the medication, do you simply not buy that?

Bill:- 15.54.26

I don't remember his saying that, if you're saying that's in the interviews then I'm perfectly willing to accept, accept that. When someone does something terrible or does something er, that's very uncomfortable for them or

unusual erm, they try very hard to find a reason for it. He searched hard for reasons that the mission was going on, for reasons that he did what he did erm, for explanations for the way he was feeling for the last several years, he searched hard for those reasons, that may well have been why he went into neuroscience in the first place. So if that was one of the things he considered or even one of the things he believed so be it. That doesn't make it so in my view.

15.55.13:-

I believe pretty firmly that had he continued to take the ... the probability that he would have had the, that the shootings would have happened as they did would have been considerably less. Had he continued to take the ...

Intv:-

Why do you think that?

Bill:- 15.55.32

Because the ... would have had opportunity to work on both his depression and his anxiety, it, let me qualify that just, just a little bit.

Intv:-

Well he'd been on it a few months.

Bill:- 15.55.43

Let me modify that just a little bit erm.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:-

Why? Why do you think that?

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:-

Is there a possibility that the shootings might not have happened.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:- James Holmes suggested to you that the shootings might not have happened if he hadn't been on ... do you think that that's a possibility?

Bill:- 15.56.51 I don't think that's a possibility, I think it's more likely that if he had cooperated better in treatment erm, and for example accepted a prescription of an anti-psychotic medication that the, that Doctor Fenton was considering er, that that would have decreased.

15.57.10:- That that would have decreased the probability of the shootings, had he continued the ... rather than stopping it that may have also have decreased the probability of the killings.

Intv:- Why do you think that because he'd already been on the ... for a, for a few months?

Bill:- 15.57.28 To the extent that he stopped the treatment that was designed to help with depression or anxiety it seems just logical to me that's that's not a statement of fact, it's a statement of speculation, it seem logical to me that continuing treatment is better than stopping treatment.

Intv:- Surely the one thing though that we can say out of all of this about the ... with some confidence is it didn't really seem to be helping him.

Bill:- 15.57.58 I disagree, I don't think we know at all that the ... was not helping him.

Intv:- So but, but in this window of taking the ... his plan gets real, it escalates, it actually becomes an active plan so in what way was the ... helping him?

Bill:- 15.58.17

The ... was designed to help with depression and or anxiety. It seems logical to me that it was very likely to be helping with anxiety and probably helping with depression, I don't know that. But let me go back to your premise. That there was a window in which he was taking the ... and the implication is that's the same window in which he was doing important planning.

Intv:-

But well it was.

Bill:- 15.58.48

Temporarily speaking that is with regard to time that's true. With regard to some cause and effect I think the evidence is skimpy at best. Now.

Intv:-

And I get that you don't accept the premise so what I'm saying is at the very least do you accept that the ... over that period of time wasn't helping, it wasn't helping prevent him put this plan into action, it wasn't stopping his crazy human capital delusion.

Bill:- 15.59.20

We'll never know what would have happened had he not taken it but it does not appear to have stopped the progression if you will that started many months before toward the erm, the carrying out of the shootings.

Intv:-

One of the things people will find hard to understand is why in his conversations with you a couple of years on, he still believes in the human capital delusion, why, why do you think that is?

Bill:- 15.59.50

I think that's because his basic psychological make up is not changed, assuming that what he said was truthful that he still believes in the human capital concepts. Erm,

medication doesn't change one's personality and part of his disordered personality has to do with that concept, whether it's a delusional concept or a philosophical concept, different psychiatrists and different people think different ways about it. Erm, the medication is designed to bring him closer to reality to make him less psychotic to the extent that he has been psychotic. It doesn't change our personality and it seems to me that these ideas were very deeply entrenched for a long long time. Erm, rather than something on the surface as a break with reality.

Intv:-

But were you surprised to find in those long conversations that he still held on to the idea?

Bill:- 16.00.53

Wasn't surprised erm, nor not surprised, it was simply erm, simply there.

Intv:-

Is that what you would normally expect from somebody who, who has suffered delusions, that even a couple of years later, even you know after the consequences of what he's done I mean it's hard to imagine something so awful but he's in prison serving life without parole and he still thinks that he did the right thing.

Bill:- 16.01.20

At the time of course he wasn't in prison but he was anticipating that erm, and you said would I normally expect that? This is a way non-normal situation. But let me say that people with deep philosophies or delusional systems erm, they're very difficult to change. People with a delusional disorder for example which he may have had and may still have erm, the delusion, the deep down delusion is the last thing to go if it ever goes.

Intv:-

What lessons do you think then can be learned from this case?

Bill:- 16.02.01

I wish there were good lessons to be learned from this case erm, we would like for there to be lessons to be learned from this case. I think there are fewer than people hope, I don't think there's a lesson about better access to treatment for mental, mental illness because he had access to treatment. I don't think there's a lesson to be learned about putting security guards at theatres because that's silly, it's a very rare event erm, an idiosyncratic event. There may be a lesson related to availability of, of weapons erm, guns and handguns er, I don't think there's a big lesson there either because of the erm, the way he did the planning erm. And the many ways that someone can carry out killing if they want to erm. We have a fair amount of violence here in the United States as, as you know erm, but there's violence elsewhere in the world as well. We have a lot of firearm violence in the United States but there's lots of other kind of violence everywhere in the world as well and there are lots of firearms available to folks who want to get them. I'm not here to talk about gun control or anything like that pro or con. I wish there were lessons to be learned because I wish we could understand better and I wish we could prevent things such as this from happening. I don't think we can fortunately they are very rare.

16.02.58:-

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:-

When you looked at James Holmes' childhood did you find anything unusual about his upbringing?

Bill:- 16.04.20

No I did not erm. His upbringing was not just typical but it was very good compared with the upbringing of many

many children, he was in a two parent home, both parents loved him, both parents loved each other. Erm, he had little and big traumas like all kids do but not that many of them. We need traumas as children to grow up to be confident grown-ups so we know how to handle adult trauma. There was nothing in the childhood that would suggest anything like the killings and nothing in his parenting erm, or observable behaviour that would suggest this at all.

Intv:-

When you spoke to him in prison you must have developed some kind of rapport with him I mean how, how did you find him? Did you like him?

Bill:- 16.05.10

He was not a dislikeable person, he didn't appear mean, he wasn't particularly sarcastic with me erm, if one forgot what he had done erm, he was a reasonable and interesting person to talk with.

Intv:-

Is that unusual when you, you interview people like him in prison?

Bill:- 16.05.31

It's a bit unusual when one interviews a person in jail erm, pre-trial or, or post-trial. The truly anti-social person may sound erm, cold and mean and erm, surprisingly erm, unsympathetic, another group of people who commit pretty heinous sounding acts in the course of a severe mental illness get that mental illness treated and suddenly are very remorseful, oh my god what have I done. Neither of those applied to James Holmes.

Intv:-

Did James Holmes express any remorse to you?

Bill:- 16.06.14

What I recall his expressing was sometimes regret, I'm sorry I did that, I'm sorry I'm where I am now. I don't recall his expressing to me or showing any feeling of true remorse, of empathy for the victims. The victims were in his words erm, collateral damage on the way to doing what at the time he thought he needed to do, he was pressed hard to do and still believes that he was pressed hard to do.

Intv:-

So even after all that time thinking about what he'd done he didn't seem to have any empathy for the victims?

Bill:- 16.06.54

I think it's fair to say that he didn't have at least not significant empathy for the victims. He was concerned that a child had died, he didn't want to kill a child, I believe him when he says that. But still considers things collateral damage not much empathy there and by the way the child who was killed is one of the points that he got.

Intv:-

And he still maintains that that was a point.

Bill:- 16.07.21

Yes he does.

Intv:-

Why do you think he behaved the way he did in jail a few months after he was arrested in November 2012?

Bill:- 16.07.35

One good theory about James Holmes erm, person in his mind is that he was either schizophrenic or had a schizophrenic like, schizophrenia like illness during all of these events. Or that he was pre-schizophrenic and had a kind of, of erm, fragile personality that was likely to develop into a schizophrenia and when I say schizophrenia I'm talking about a chronic illness that involves disconnection with reality at least part of the time. When he was in jail he was kept away from other prisoners, he

was in an isolated erm, cell not a bad cell but an isolated cell in the medical area of ... County Jail.

16.08.24:-

He had when other prisoners were in the area for example sweeping up in the hallway erm, they would cover the window to his cell so that the other prisoners couldn't see him. He was allowed out about an hour a day, he could either go outside or he could watch TV, he usually chose to watch TV. James Holmes like solitude, he got along fine with being with himself he had lots of ways to pass the time etc but I think that takes a toll on anyone. So that in November 2012 roughly 4 months after all the shootings happened he suddenly began to behave bizarrely and was recognised to be having a serious break with reality or psychotic episode.

16.09.14:-

The parts of that episode, the things that appear to have caused that are multi-faceted and we're not sure exactly which has the larger part. He was a bit paranoid by that time and was erm, concerned about eating and drinking and wasn't eating and drinking well so his dehydration was part of it. But he have been rapidly evolving into simply having a psychotic break and at that point it was recognised better, the staff of the jail was forced to treat him, he got relatively good treatment and became roughly the way he was 18 months later when I saw him.

Intv:-

When you consider right throughout his life these thoughts, these general thoughts about killing people right through to the, the human capital delusion that he did in fact act upon, can you say that one led to the other?

Bill:- 16.10.19

It's very tempting to say that one led to the other but it's not nearly so simply. Many many children have fantasies or thoughts and I'm talking 100s of 1000s or millions of children, have fantasies or thoughts similar to those that he

reports having when he was very young. So that there is a path from that to erm, July of 2012 but it would be a, a terrible mistake to say that we must watch every child that has fantasies like that because they may grow up to be erm, killers or something terrible. It would be a great mistake to think that.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:-

How do you think that James Holmes' physical illness, he had mono, what we call glandular fever of the, during the Christmas before this all happened, how do you think that affected him in the months afterwards?

Bill:- 16.11.28

I don't think there was much effect related to the shootings and we looked carefully at that. Erm, there's no indication in the clinical literature that glandular fever or mononucleosis is associated with violence or things like that. But we know that it causes fatigue and tiredness and can erm, interfere with your scholastic life for example. Erm, so far as we know Holmes' behaved about the same and did about the same in college months before he got the glandular fever and months after, even though it was apparently not immediately diagnosed in Colorado and not particularly treated once he got back to Colorado after the Christmas break.

Intv:-

So he carried on with his school work without skipping any classes or, or skipping the work even though he was quite physically ill?

Bill:- 16.12.20

So far as I know he continued to attend classes, I don't know how physically ill he was except that at the time he

had a bit of a sore throat, he had some fatigue things like that.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Intv:-

Do you think James Holmes could kill again?

Bill:- 16.12.46

That's a very interesting question, can he kill again? Would he kill again if he had the opportunity. He told me when I asked him exactly that question, he thought for a moment, he said if I had the opportunity I probably would. Because I would get more points, he did no indication that he had a plan to do that or that he had another mission to carry out. But he said that he might kill again if he had the opportunity followed with but I don't think anybody's going to give me that chance. He was not sounded cold or sadistic when he said that, it was just a matter of fact statement.

GENERAL CHAT ...

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Intv:-

When we think about what James Holmes went on to do, how significant was his family history of mental illness?

Bill:- 16.15.32

His family history of mental illness was significant for his development of mental illness but not causative or predictive of his violence. Erm, one.

16.15.46:-

His family history of mental illness would predict a much higher probability that he would have substantial mental illness erm, he doesn't.

GENERAL CHAT ...

Bill:- 16.15.59

His family history of mental illness er, created a greater probability in him for having mental illness, it didn't absolutely predict that he would have it but he had a greater probability, it did not predict and would not predict the violence that occurred related to his.

Intv:-

So you can't put it down to that?

Bill:- 16.16.18

I'm sorry?

Intv:-

You, you can't put it down to that, you can't put the, the terrible act that he went on to do down to the fact that he was mentally ill?

Bill:- 16.16.27

The, without the mental illness the terrible acts, the shootings would not have occurred. But the vast vast vast majority of people with severe and chronic mental illness don't do anything like this.

Intv:-

How significant do you think the breakup of his first serious relationship was?

Bill:- 16.16.50

The break up was significant to him like any break up is for, for a, a college or graduate school kid, I don't see it as the watershed event that some other people have erm, had opinions about. He had had difficulties with social situations before, he'd like Gargi, he believed he loved Gargi erm, but as a cause or a watershed event erm, in this whole series I, I don't believe that's the case.

Intv:-

What about doing badly at school?

Bill:- 16.17.26

He did well at school in some respects and badly in others, it depended on the environment, whether it was a book, a book learning exercise or a laboratory situation or a class room situation erm. We know that as the year progressed, toward the end of the, that year of graduate school he was not doing as well but he was still passing. Erm, I believe that's far more of a result of his deterioration than it is a cause of anything related to the shootings. Now might it have had a bit of stress? Perhaps so but I don't think he was very stressed about school. His view was that school was becoming less and less relevant because of his mental illness, school was becoming less and less relevant erm, and thus just didn't matter very much because the focus his whole life was the mission.

GENERAL CHAT ...

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