

## THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION RESPONSE

(Personal Communication from Presentation Notes, October, 2020)

By subpoena, the Federal Bureau of Investigation seized all of Betts' GPS data from cell phone providers, in addition to all computers and electronic data that had been in his possession. 125 interviews were conducted by the FBI across nine states. Records were obtained through ten federal search warrants and 31 additional sources of information, including social media, cell phones, and electronic devices. 400 hours of video footage were reviewed and 956 unique surveillance videos, all of which were collected and very well organized by the shooter. Those journals and notebooks found in Betts desk drawers in his family's home revealed that he planned to kill over and over again and that he was consumed with these thoughts. He was obsessed with torture and mass murder. On one occasion, he called the National Suicide Hotline Prevention Hotline, but hung up. His thought content was replete with suicidal and homicidal ideation, perceiving himself as evil. In his suicide note, "he spewed hatred, rage, that everything hurt, that he destroyed everything in his path, and that he didn't want to be around anymore (Danner and Raymond, 2019)."

There are two lingering questions that continue to torment the wounded, the families of the deceased, and the members of the Dayton Police Department, many of whom continue to grapple with the terrible aftermath of the Oregon District Mass Shooting 2019 Dayton Shooting).

- Why were the Betts' public-school records expunged?
- Why weren't Connor Betts' parents held accountable in any way and why do they continue to refuse to be interviewed by the FBI?

The final results of the FBI investigative report yielded little more in the way of concluding findings (FBI Media Release; November, 2021). In summary, they are as follows:

- The shooter, Connor Betts, was exclusively responsible for the deaths of all nine victims of the Oregon District Mass Shooting and the wounding of 28 additional victims (this includes 18 nonfatal gunshot wound victims and 10 flight injuries).
- He acted alone and not as a part of any organization or with any alignment to specific ideological or sociopolitical groups.
- The shooter lied about his history of substance abuse when purchasing a firearm in 2019. This was the firearm used in the mass shooting, therefore a likely violation of federal law. Additionally, he purchased parts for his firearm, a 100-round drum magazine, and body armor on open market sites.

Purchases of these items were conducted with the assistance of Ethan Kollie, who was arrested for illegal possession of specific firearms, including the one used in the mass shooting, and for lying on a federal firearms transaction record. For this, he pled guilty and was consequently sentenced to 32 months in prison in February of 2020.

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**The FBI Investigation** (2019 Dayton Shooting) (Personal Communication from Presentation Notes, October, 2020)

The FBI investigations into the Oregon District Mass Shooting concluded in November of 2021 (FBI Media Release; November, 2021). The delay in providing seemingly unanswerable questions remained an extremely painful ordeal for the families and friends of the deceased to date.

**The Shooter** (Personal Communication from Presentation Notes, October, 2020)

The FBI investigational report indicated that the shooter had to maintain an extreme state of focus and drive in order to enter Ned Pepper’s Bar and to begin his rampage. He fired 48 rounds, with an additional 41 rounds on hand. Betts was known to experience hallucinations, with voices telling him to do harm to people. He was anti-police, anti-government, and embraced an ideology of extremism (2019 Dayton

Shooting). He carried the weapon used in the Oregon District Mass Shooting at the Honorable Sacred Knights rally just two months beforehand (May of 2019). He apparently never openly revealed the depth and breadth of his deep-seated psychological issues to his counselor and instead, provided very superficial information (2019 Dayton Shooting). Two of his high school classmates from Bellbrook High School reported that he was suspended during his freshman year after creating a hit list of students that he wanted to kill and rape. He planned to shoot up the school because he had been bullied as a student. Apparently, he “hid everything from the world after he learned his lesson” (Danner and Raymond, 2019). The discovery of this list resulted in a police investigation. (To date, the Bellbrook, Ohio School District has refused to release his records.) Betts was known to have very dark sexual fantasies and satanic beliefs. He was unrestrained in his use of shock value statements, was socially uncomfortable and described as antisocial. He was regularly preoccupied with dark and violent thoughts. He was also obsessed with mass shootings, which he regularly researched, as well as the desire to kill his own mother. He was particularly consumed with videos of the New Zealand Mosque Massacre in March of 2019 and studied the El Paso Walmart shooting the very night before he became a mass shooter. Betts was often suicidal and had also entertained thoughts of suicide by cop.

Those stressors that Betts reportedly confronted in his life involved distancing and loss of his circle of friends from 2018 through 2019. His behavior at work was unpredictable and his boss had considered firing him for an extended period. He was kicked out of his “pornogrind” band as lead singer because of his violent tendencies. Apparently following his breakup with his girlfriend, he resumed illicit drug use. This and alcohol abuse were known factors resulting in the continuing deterioration of his psychological condition(s). Cocaine was found in his pocket at the time of his death.

Further analysis of Betts specified that a formal diagnosis of his psychological conditions was never rendered by any mental health professional. Though psychotropic medications had been prescribed for him by an unknown provider, he had

discontinued their use early on in his treatment. He was self-diagnosed as antisocial and schizoid. He believed that he had something wrong with his brain.

The FBI Response (Personal Communication from Presentation Notes, October, 2020)

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The FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit, at the request of the FBI's Cincinnati Field Office and the Dayton Police Department, assessed the shooter's motivation for the Oregon District Mass Shooting, after considerable evidence-gathering over the course of their 2.5 year investigation. Their key findings are as follows (FBI Media Release; November, 2021):

- The shooter maintained a longstanding fascination with mass violence. He was also unable to cope with a combination of factors that plagued him for much of this life, including a ten-year struggle with mental health issues and stressors, and the consecutive losses of "stabilizing anchors" that he faced prior to the date of the mass shooting (FBI Media Release; November, 2021). Not only did the shooter have a lengthy history of mental illness that included suicidal and violent fantasies and desires, but he fantasized about serial killings, mass shootings, and murder-suicides for at least ten years. Neither family members or friends were apparently aware of any specific details pertaining to these

forms of violence and killings.

- The shooter communicated no intentions to family or friends that a mass shooting was imminent. There were no obvious warnings that the shooter planned to commit any crimes.
- Much of what the FBI's BAU indicated is based on the Bystander Effect or Bystander Apathy. This effect is based upon socio-psychological theories regarding the likelihood that individuals will not react to assist victims in the presence of other individuals. In other words, observers are less likely to respond in situations that are ambiguous and due to the "inhibiting presence of multiple bystanders" (diffusion of responsibility) (American Psychological Association Bystander Intervention Tip Sheet, n.d.). In the case of Connor Betts, there is a strong probability that changes in his behaviors were also imperceptible; those specific behaviors that may have demonstrated his penchant for violence, an increase in perceived stressors, and/or suicidal intent.
- Lastly and with respect to interviews conducted with friends and peers, "Bystander Fatigue" may have been a significant factor in explaining why the shooter was never reported to law enforcement agencies or "the authorities" concerning his intent to commit violent acts. According to the FBI/BAU's investigative report, this describes "passivity, inaction, or inattention to concerning behaviors observed by individuals who have a close, interpersonal relationship to a person of concern due to their prolonged exposure to the person's erratic or otherwise troubling behavior over time." (FBI Media Release; November, 2021).

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