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The Question of "Why?" People Become Lone-Gunmen

A Literary Research on the Motivation of Lone-Gunmen

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2. Abstract

In 1996, 2011, and 2012, three atrocities have been committed that ended in the combined deaths of 124 people and the injuring of 412 people. These three separate killings were all committed by what is known as “lone-gunmen”. These lone-gunmen typically go into a – seemingly randomly selected – public place, pull out a gun or multiple guns, and start shooting. Often times there isn’t a specific target these lone-gunmen were after in these places and the act appears senseless and without any purpose. The seemingly senselessness of these acts is what this thesis will research. More specifically this thesis will research the motivation of these lone-gunmen and what kind of predictors we can find from three separate cases. The cases are that of Martin Bryant, Anders Behring Breivik, and that of James Eagan Holmes.

3. Introduction

In the past decades, the number of killings by lone-gunmen has increased significantly. Especially in the United States, there have been more than 200 mass killings since 2006 (USA Today, 2013). This problem continues to frighten nations, and creates terror in people when walking through crowded places; it can even create a moral panic (Burns, Crawford, 2000). However, these shootings aren't just limited to the United States. Over the past decades, these instances of lone-gunman shootings have also occurred in Australia, Europe, and every other continent. The fact that the numbers in Northern America are higher than in any other continents is speculatively because the gun laws are less strict in this area and the acquisition of guns is easier (Ludwig, Cook, 2003).

The fascinating question surrounding these shootings is "why?". According to Baumeister (2000), there are several ways to answer this question. Baumeister states that one way to answer this is to "describe a reasoned or intentional purpose that evil actions serve, on the assumption that the actions are taken to serve this purpose. Another is to explain them in moral terms. Yet another is to explain their causes" (2000, 2). The latter is what will be researched in this thesis. In order to answer the pressing question of "why" would someone commit these atrocities, this thesis will look into the motivation of lone-gunmen. Therefore the first research question is:

"What motivates or drives people to mass-shooting sprees?"

In order to examine this question of 'why' people commit mass murder, this thesis will focus on three cases. These cases are chosen because they are spread across the globe, differ in situation and victims, and all the men committing these shootings have different backgrounds.

Therefore this will provide a broader insight in motivations. The three lone-gunmen that have been chosen are; Martin Bryant, Australia; Anders Behring Breivik, Norway; and James Eagan Holmes, the United States of America.

To be able to answer the overall concept of motivation, we will research the specific cases in detail. What is important is the idea of what kind of human being is able to do such a thing. Therefore, our next research question is:

"What kind of person attempts a mass murder?"

To further examine these cases, we will look into the way that the justice system deals with these situations. Our third research question therefore is:

"How does the Justice System deal with these lone-gunmen cases?"

When considering the type of people that commit these crimes, the motivation, and the reaction of the justice system, we can also examine predictors of lone-gunman from literature that would provide us with more insight in further cases? Do concepts such as personality traits, upbringing, or the way that the justice system deals with lone-gunman matter? Research has proven that there are certain similarities in these lone-gunman cases (Bogaerts, Okur, Willems, & van der Knaap, 2012), and researching these predictors will provide more insight in what kind of person is actually capable of becoming a lone-gunman shooter. The final research question therefore is:

"What kind of predictors can be found from these lone-gunmen cases?"

In answering these research questions, a tentative answer will be formulated in why and what kind of people will be driven to become lone-gunmen. This will then create an answer surrounding the bigger 'why?' question as stated by Baumeister (2000).

4. Method

A literary review is conducted. In order to answer the four research questions, this study researched three separate case studies. For this literature study there was a search for scholarly articles and online news articles regarding lone-gunman shootings. The focus was on the three cases that had been chosen to research. We also refer to several books regarding the nature of evil.

For the background information surrounding the actual situations during the shooting, this research has searched for news articles from around the globe. Because the cases are spread globally, the Australian press, Norwegian press, and American press were consulted. The press often receives witness accounts, and can be present in the court room where witnesses tell their stories.

When considering the question of how the justice system deals with lone-gunmen, a thorough search for transcripts of the court cases was done. For the Breivik case, the transcripts are available in Norwegian, and translated to English by a special google database. This database also contains the psychiatric evaluations of Breivik. The Holmes trials are unfortunately delayed so there will only be a discussion surrounding the insanity plea. For the Breivik case the book "Born or Bred?" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009) contains analyses and parts of transcripts.

For the history of the suspects we had again consulted news agencies from around the world, since these have exclusives with the family and friends. For the Breivik case, the Google

database was consulted and for the Bryant case the same book (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009) will be discussed since these include descriptions of the medical examination and an interview with the psychiatrist.

This study has examined empirical reports regarding lone-gunmen and has also studied literary researches that study lone-gunman shooters. Books and articles available on the nature of evil and the nature of mass murderers have also been taken into consideration when conducting this literary study. This was done using content analysis. By reading and reviewing the information available, conclusions were made based on content.

Therefore this research has examined what exactly happened during the shootings, how the criminal proceedings followed, and what kind of upbringing or childhood the shooters had, and finally will discuss the motivation. The importance of someone's history and background is such that it is taken into account when considering predictors and motivations.

Some limitations regarding this literary review can be that some information necessary to answer the main research questions might not be available to the public. As is the situation in the Holmes case, where very little information is made public, and in the case of Breivik, where too much information is available and it is unknown how much is based on reality. Therefore there can be a gap in reliable information, which means that the reader must take this into account. However, the research and information that is available will provide with what this research assumes as adequate information to create tentative answers to our research questions.

5. Martin Bryant

In 1996 Martin Bryant went to Port Arthur, a Tasmanian tourist attraction, and killed 35 people. Among these 35 victims were two young children and two people that Bryant knew before the

massacre, and purposefully targeted. When asked why Martin Bryant chose Port Arthur to start shooting he answered, “A lot of violence has happened there. It must be the most violent place in Australia. It seemed the right place” (Tumarkin, 2009, 197-198).

5.1 The Situation

During the afternoon of April 28th 1996, Martin Bryant enters the ‘Broad Arrow Café’ of the Tasmanian attraction Port Arthur. Port Arthur is a former prison, and the first prison on Tasmanian soil. In the early 19th century England used to send their inmates to work and live in this prison (Coulehan, 2000). Because of its rich history and beautiful location and architecture, Port Arthur has become quite the tourist attraction. This day was no different. The historical site was filled with locals having lunch, and tourists enjoying a day out. Martin Bryant himself was a local and knew the area well since he has grown up around the area (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009).

Before Bryant descended to the former Tasmanian prison, he first paid a visit to an old acquaintance’s house. Sally and David Martin were his first victims on this day. It is said that he went over to their guesthouse ‘Seascape’ and shot the couple before continuing his drive towards Port Arthur. The guesthouse was only a short drive from the Port Arthur site and it wasn’t long after that Bryant entered the Broad Arrow Café where his massacre would soon commence (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009).

In the café, a couple from Melbourne notices him immediately. He is “jittery, eating quickly with fast hand movements and glancing back and forth between the door to the café and the car park” (Wainwright& Totaro, 2009, 271). The witness reports are from testimonies given by the people that survived the massacre and by recovered footage of visitors that managed to

film the massacre. Bryant commences his mass murder by first shooting an Asian couple that he was overheard complaining about earlier. Within 15 seconds, Bryant has killed 12 people and fired 17 shots of his gun (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009). Witnesses report seeing Bryant, "laughing to himself as he walks from table to table killing" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 272). After Bryant empties his 30-shot magazine – killing 20 people and injuring a similar amount – he finally leaves the café (Bellamy, n.d.). The time Bryant spent in the café from the start of the shooting was between 90 and 120 seconds.

An especially tragic twist are the stories of the victims that went *towards* the gunfire because they believed they were missing a re-enactment of sorts. Since this was a tourist attraction and a former prison, this concept is not unheard of. One story of a woman who was being shot at and still believed it was a re-enactment is one that is tragic and makes the atrocities that Martin Bryant committed even more disturbing. He found a historic location where people would not initially run from the sound of gunfire and thus increased the number of victims and targets to shoot at (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009).

Outside the café, Bryant has reloaded his gun and is now aiming for moving targets. People are running away and towards the busses standing near the water's edge. Bryant follows the people running towards the busses and continues his shooting spree. When his gun runs out of ammunition he walks back towards his car, seemingly contemplating driving away or continuing his shooting spree. He decides on the latter. He walks back to the coaches and kills the people hiding inside and behind the busses. When one man manages to avoid getting shot by Bryant and flees, Bryant utters his first words since the shooting spree began. While he fires he says to the man; "No one gets away from me" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 280). The man lives,

despite his injuries, however his wife dies in his arms. Following this incident Bryant gets into his car a second time and drives off, firing blindly behind him.

However Bryant wasn't done yet. As he drives towards the tollbooth he encounters a woman with her two children. Thinking they have found safety, the family moves towards the car, pleading the driver to take them with him. It is only after Bryant gets out of the car with another military weapon that the mother realizes her mistake and orders her children to run. Bryant orders the mother to get on her knees, "his voice is calm, in control" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 283) according to witnesses. The woman pleads with the young man not to hurt her children. He shoots her in the head. He finds the first child and shoots her twice; he then continues to find the second child hiding behind a tree only a few meters away but misses twice. Bryant appears especially cruel when he pushes his gun into the side of the child's neck and kills her. The children were three and six years old (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009).

Bryant continues his drive towards the toll gate again and kills several more people on his drive there. He encounters a BMW, kills the people sitting in it and starts transferring the belongings of his Volvo towards the BMW which he then decides to use as his vehicle of choice. Bryant drives towards the service station where several people that escaped are warning drivers to not continue towards Port Arthur. He stops a Corolla and finds a hostage, killing the other passenger. He continues his drive towards Seascape, where his murderous spree started earlier in the morning. On his way there he keeps shooting at cars coming along on the Port Arthur highway and injures several more people. When he gets to Seascape where the bodies of his morning murders still lie in their bed, he takes the hostage out of the boot and locks himself in the house. Direct assault on the seascape house was ruled out by the police, because of the hostages in the house and the lack of cover (Bellamy, n.d.).

In recorded telephone calls with a police officer one can read about Bryant's demands, which include a helicopter ride and nothing else. Bryant claims that all people in the house are still alive, but as the police learn later, all are long dead. During the phone calls, Bryant gives the impression of a petulant child, demanding the helicopter and insisting on hiding his identity, but shortly after happily telling the police his passport number. Bryant is eventually chased out of the house because of a fire he set himself. Early the next morning the police sees smoke and flames inside the house and Bryant comes running out with his clothes under the fire. Bryant strips off his clothes and the police arrests him naked with horrible burns covering his body. Bryant was later admitted to the same hospital as where his victims were fighting for their lives (Bellamy, n.d.)

5.2 The Criminal Proceedings

The Martin Bryant case is interesting since there was no trial. Bryant pleaded guilty for the 35 murders and the 23 injured and was sent to prison for 1035 years without parole. There are many conspiracies surrounding the Bryant's case, and the lack of a trial is one of the reasons that these conspiracies exist (Holden, 2005). Around the time that the Port Arthur massacre occurred, there was a spiraling debate in Australia about stricter gun laws. After the massacre these laws were accepted (National Firearms Program Implementation Act 1996). This is why many people believe the government or someone involved with the government was behind this massacre (Wernerhoff, 2006). However we will focus on the criminal proceedings that followed the Port Arthur massacre, assuming that the conviction of Bryant was a just one.

During the hostage negotiations with Bryant, who claimed his name was 'Jamie' during these phone calls; Bryant gave away his passport number. He also gave a description of his

appearance saying; "[…] I've got blond hair and they'll know me, if you don't know how much of a character I am. I'm, I'm 28 years old. […] Yeah, and I've got blond hair and I'm slim. […] I'm well, always well dressed and they'll know… if you can get in touch with them you can get all information on who I am and where I live" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 27). Bryant doesn't appear to be hiding in particular, but also doesn't seem to want to state his name bluntly. The telephone calls that 'Jamie' made are only the beginning of the evidence that the police collected. "It seems he can't decide if he is hiding from his crime or wants to be known, lauded for it" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 26).

Another important aspect that – if the case ever went to trial – would have led to the conviction of Martin Bryant are the videos taken by several bystanders. Some of these videos are cut short by a gunshot near the camera and some because the camera man was shot while recording. However all show clear images of Bryant shooting and killing the people in the Broad Arrow Café and around the coaches. The people that survived the massacre would have been witnesses in the trial. Another piece of evidence that the police have is when Martin Bryant was being interviewed by the police, he pointed to himself whilst discussing who the killer could be. In the transcript we read; "'Yeah… Mmm. I'm not signing anything. Not until me lawyer sees me. I'm sure you'll find the person who caused all this. Me. The bastard sits back in his chair and points to himself" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 146). Bryant afterwards says that the police should have recorded that, the officer responds by saying that it was still recording. At this point Bryant realizes his mistake and the interview is ended shortly afterwards.

All this evidence would have made for a blatantly obvious case against Bryant; however the case never went to trial. This is mostly thanks to Bryant's lawyer John Avery. From the recorded meetings that Avery had with Bryant, we can recover quite some interesting facts about

Bryant's psyche. After the massacre, the whole of Australia was shocked and ashamed that a tragedy of this magnitude had happened on their soil (Coulehan, 2000). Avery wanted to keep the public, and especially the victims, from having to relive this tragedy. This is why Avery had to try to make Bryant plead guilty, but he couldn't *force* Bryant to plead guilty, he wanted it to come from Bryant himself.

Bryant's first lawyer David Gunson, withdrew from the case for ethical reasons. Many speculate this is because Bryant had confessed to him but wanted to plead 'not guilty' in court. John Avery accepted the case with much resistance from his colleges. From the descriptions and the transcripts of the conversations between Avery and Bryant we perceive a very childish man who seems eager on going to court. Bryant seems to want to hear what people say about him, and he wants to hear all his 'accomplishments' again. During this mass murder Bryant felt powerful; his day in court would make him feel powerful again.

Bryant was diagnosed to be clinically sane, even though he admits to trying to pretend he heard voices, none of the psychiatrists fell for this (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009). Avery eventually manages to convince Bryant that it is in his best interest, and the community's best interest, to plead guilty. Before this persuasion, Bryant had always insisted on not even being in Port Arthur that April day, even though his car was found there and many witnesses placed him on the scene. After Avery convinced him to plead guilty, Bryant changed his story. However because of the absence of a complete trial many conspiracy theorists jumped to different conclusions. These conspiracies range from an evil government, to a terrorist group, to Bryant being the fall guy for other gunmen. However these conspiracies say more about the human tendency to believe in the good in people than it does about Bryant. People who are close to

someone who have committed such an atrocity cannot understand it and try to find a different solution (Arendt, 1963). Bryant is eventually sentenced to 35 life sentences without parole.

5.3 The Study of a Person

Martin Bryant is an intrinsically complex person from whom we fortunately have a lot of information of. A prison doctor diagnosed him with Asperger's syndrome, and Martin was transferred to the psychiatric ward in the prison – to the dismay of the public – and this diagnosis served as an explanation to Bryant's mother Carleen (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009). However, many people still argue against this diagnosis and it seems an unsatisfactory explanation for his behavior and the murders, since he was declared criminally responsible for the murders.

Carleen, Bryant's mother, describes him as a happy little boy (Bryant, 2010). However the lack of physical affection and rejection of breast-feeding by Bryant may paint a different picture. There were several other issues with Bryant growing up as well. He didn't only lack any desire of physical affection, he also had a delayed speech development, his fine motor skills weren't properly developed and he did not appear to maturing (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009). However, Carleen remains stoic about all this and for her the diagnosis of Asperger's explains this behavior. And indeed, it does explain aspects of his behavior; however it does not explain why Bryant started killing people.

Bryant is also described as having a 'blank stare' and people felt the need to stay clear of him. When he was younger Bryant appeared to have a never-ending amount of energy and a constant desire to be appreciated and accepted by people. These aren't typical symptoms of Asperger's. However according to Wilson and Norris (2011), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and aggression are strong independent predictors of adolescent violence, when

combined with conduct disorder. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th ed., text rev.; DSM-IV-TR; American Psychiatric Association , 2000), conduct disorder is described as "a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated" (p. 93). Bryant was never diagnosed or examined for conduct disorder; however he appears to consequently show certain symptoms of this disorder. This might be a predictor for his violent behavior.

Bryant also showed early signs of egotism and sadism (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009). According to Baumeister (2000), sadism can be described as the pleasurable experience that one gets from hurting someone, and wanting this feeling of pleasure repeatedly. One teacher of Bryant writes "'Aggressive, destructive, kicks, spits and has been known to urinate over other children'" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 65). After an incident with firework where Bryant ended up in hospital, Bryant showed no intellectual progress and even seemed interested in playing with firework again. This may show a lack of perception of pain. During adolescence, he once purposefully set fire to himself at a beach party and was saved by others rolling him in the sand. "He seemed impervious to emotion, physical discomfort – or pain – often swimming in the dead of winter with snow on the ground" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 103-104). These are relevant symptoms of Asperger's syndrome or conduct disorder. Bryant shows his tendency towards sadism when he enjoys the thought of going to court and telling the world in detail what he had done, even grinning whilst discussing this with his lawyer and laughing in court when others are talking about his atrocities.

Cruelty towards animals was another aspect of sadism that Bryant portrayed. He once tried to pull apart a cat with his bare hands and killed a parrot with his air rifle, when the animal dropped he continued to shoot slugs into its head (Avery, 1996). The air rifle was a gift from his

father, and initiated Martin's obsession with fire arms. However his obsession with hurting people and things, and finding enjoyment in these actions seemed to long precede the air rifle. Animal abuse has become a more common indicator of future violence. Indeed Wilson and Norris (2011) discuss the fact that animal cruelty indicates future violent tendencies. According to them there is a causal link between juvenile animal abuse and adult violent behavior.

During his whole life, his speech has often been described as unintelligible and he appears easily distracted and attention-seeking in several instances (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009). This attention-seeking behavior is revealed after the murders when Bryant initially insists on wanting to have a trial and hear what people say about him. He appears fascinated by other people and their perception of him. During the interviews with his lawyer he insists on wanting to hear what people say about him and seemingly wanting to relive his rampage (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009). He also spend days in his cell reading through the witness accounts, this could appear as an obsession with his accomplishments and reading what people say about him.

His intelligence was well below average throughout his entire life, with an IQ of 66, and his emotional development was stinted –estimated to be similar to that of an 11 year old according to Ian Joblin, a forensic psychologist ("Shedding light on Port Arthur killer", 2006). Joblin, who examined Bryant after the murders, also concluded that he was borderline as well as intellectually disabled ("Shedding light on Port Arthur killer", 2006). Because of the lack of social skills, and the weird 'vibe' that Martin gave off, he was singled out and bullied during his school experiences. He was also sent to a special school in order to work around his impaired learning abilities (Bryant, 2010). Being singled-out like this most likely had a very disturbing effect on Bryant, since everything he ever wanted was to fit in. Bryant became more introverted and manipulative. When asked about his school experiences, Bryant spoke of "fear and

loneliness" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 99). Indeed his schoolmates used to refer to him as 'silly Marty', which Bryant recalls during one of the interviews with a psychiatrist.

During police interviews, Bryant appears to have knowledge of his wrongdoings. He also appears to be sympathetic with the killings, of course this is all before he pleads guilty and Bryant is still trying to convince the officers that he wasn't at Port Arthur that dreadful day. Bryant appears to be admitting to one crime – such as stealing the BMW and taking the man hostage – but then denying the shooting spree at Port Arthur. In a later interview with his lawyer he says he wants to plead guilty to those dead, but not those injured, because he did not see any injured. He claims that no one got injured during his shooting spree, only killed. In the police interviews Bryant also appears childishly naïve when asking if he can have his mother's cooking, or if he will be able to live a normal life outside of prison, asking how many *months* he will get (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009).

At one point in his life, Bryant becomes friends with an older woman named Helen. Whether there was a sexual relationship as well is still speculated. Bryant was later known to chase after much younger girls, and he has confessed to using prostitutes during his time with Helen. He felt a certain kinship with this woman – she was equally erratic and energetic – and his violent behavior slowed. The relationship with another human being, the concept of being accepted and liked, was something that made Bryant improves significantly in his behavior. However this didn't last long. Before long Bryant became more erratic, unpredictable and furious. Having now turned into a young man his behavior couldn't be justified anymore as a socially inept teenager (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009). After a psychological evaluation, the doctor said; "Martin tells me he would like to go around shooting people. It would be unsafe to allow Martin out of his parents' control" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009,160).

Bryant's supportive social network at this point in time consisted of Helen, his father Maurice, and in a lesser amount, his mother Carleen. Helen died relatively shortly before the massacre, and his father committed suicide around the same time. The only two people in the world that understood him had now left him to live in solitude. The removal of Bryant's support system might have been the trigger that pushed Bryant over the edge. He inherited a lot of money from his father as well as from Helen, and started travelling, just because the people next to him on the plane were forced to talk to him during the hour long flights. This desperate need for human contact and acceptance shows just how much Bryant has been rejected throughout his entire life. Such experiences would be traumatic to anyone, but it doesn't turn everyone into a murderer.

When Helen and his father died, Bryant reacted in an odd manner. When Helen died he turned his attention to much younger children, seeking company in his time of solitude. When his father was found dead Martin was casually mowing the lawn and working in the garden, seemingly pleased with himself, not showing any outward signs of distress. His father had killed himself using Martin's weights that he took diving, and yet Martin didn't show any outwards signs of distress, in fact showing the exact opposite – laughing and joking around while the police was recovering his father's body. This emotional stiltedness is also demonstrated in court when Bryant giggles during court sessions when his charges are called out. The neighbors suspected something wrong with this man long before the shootings happened. At times Bryant would appear as a "silly kid, and yet there are other times when he exudes a manipulative superiority" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 193).

One of the problems that Bryant might have struggled with his entire life is his looks. He was an attractive man with long blonde hair, good facial structures, and an athletic build. Indeed

during the ‘Jamie’ phone calls he talks of his own ‘striking appearance’ and others recall Bryant by this appearance as well. He looked like the Australian surfer boy stereotype. However these good, easy-going looks, created a problem for Bryant because “to those who met him, when he opened his mouth, the reality did not meet the expectation. He read the disappointment as rejection, even revulsion” (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 123). His good looks worked against him when trying to be accepted by others. The contradiction of his good looking appearance and his socially awkward behavior made it more difficult for people to understand him.

According to the police negotiator during the ‘Jamie’ phone calls he writes that “This man hates himself” (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 22). These phone calls also mention that it was like “dealing with a scatty teenager” (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 26). ‘Jamie’ also says during the phone calls, seemingly threatening his hostages that; ‘It’s not only, um, dying, it’s the pain that people can inflict” (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 28). These words seem not only to reflect on what he has done to the people on this dreadful day. It also seems to resonate in Bryant himself, and how he has felt like a victim of the world his entire life. How the pain that people inflict can be more painful than dying, you die at once, pain lasts a lifetime. The police officer perceived this notion as a threat, as it may well be meant, however one can also read Bryant’s own psyche and pain coming through in this statement.

Bryant felt victimized his entire life, never fitting in, even being bullied in school. He seemed to be “misunderstood by the world” (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 243). During adolescence this resulted in him alienating himself from the outside world, preferring to spend time under the water scuba diving, than spending it above the surface with other people. After his incarceration Bryant attempted suicide at least six times (“Razor blade used in second Bryant suicide attempt”, 2007).

5.4 The Suspected Motivation

Bryant has never given a clear-cut answer to the question "Why did you do it?" However he has talked about several different concepts that eventually led him to the mass murder. In interviews with his lawyer and interviews with the police Bryant let loose pieces of his motivation from which we might be able to create a bigger picture.

When his lawyer asks Bryant what his intention was the morning of the 28th of April Bryant answers, "My intention was to kill the Martins…" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 196). This seems clear enough. The Martins, to Bryant, were the source of a lot of his misery and they needed to suffer the way he had suffered his entire life. So how did he get from killing these two people, the source of his anger, to killing 33 other people in Port Arthur?

A bizarre and cruel answer comes from Bryant in another interview with his lawyer. Bryant says that he would have gotten life in prison for killing the Martin's anyways. He says; "And I thought, well, if I kill a lot of people, it won't really make much of a difference" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009,198). Bryant figured that he would be imprisoned the rest of his life anyway, so he seemed to want to take down as many people as he could with him; cruel, calculating and showing a clear lack of empathy.

The day that Bryant had chosen held no particular significance. The only thing that might be meaningful is the fact that David Martin turned 72 on this day. However Bryant never mentions this and it can only be considered a speculative answer to why Bryant chose this particular date. The only thing that Bryant ever mentions about choosing this particular day was, "It was a nice day," (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 223). Bryant had circled the date in his calendar and even set an alarm that morning, which was unusual for him according to his

relatives. This day wasn't chosen out of a spontaneous impulse however, it was a planned and calculated event. It seems clear though that his massacre would not have happened, had his support system – Helen, and his father Maurice – not fallen away. Bryant simply "wanted attention" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 202). After this support system had fallen away Bryant had seemingly decided that he didn't want to live anymore. And indeed he had confessed to his psychiatrist that he had planned on dying that day, however when the Seascape house burned down he got scared because it was too hot and he ran out.

His girlfriend at that time, Petra, said that Bryant might just have been bored and wanting attention. Something that he craved his entire life was attention from others and to be acknowledged and appreciated. Petra also said that Bryant told here the week before the massacrethat, "Nobody ever wants to listen to me or go with me. I'm getting fed up with this. I'll think of something and everybody will remember me" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 218). This statement clearly shows his craving for attention and his sick desire to be remembered and revered. He wanted to be powerful and influential. Even with his girlfriend, finally having "the human connection he had craved for so long," (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 222) he still felt unfulfilled.

Another aspect that can be related to the mass murder could have been the previous murders that happened shortly before his own massacre. Bryant confessed to be fascinated by the Hoddle Street massacre, Milat, and Dunblane. The first massacre Bryant proclaimed to be worse than his own because he killed children. However he appeared to be sympathetic with the murderers, saying that "I actually thought he'd had a sad sort of life and things went wrong with him," (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 215). Paul Mullen, a well-renowned psychiatrist, talks about the concept of 'copycat killings' (Mullen, 2004). After one massacre had occurred, several more

followed. People start seeing the idea of murdering a lot of people and finally getting all the attention that they craved, as an attractive way to leave their mark on the world. To show the world the injustice that it had done to them, by doing the world an injustice. Indeed Mullen states that Bryant initially had planned to commit suicide, but the Dunblane massacre inspired him to start planning his own massacre ("Shedding light on Port Arthur killer", 2006).

During his own mass murder, Bryant speaks of the 'thrill' of killing people. He wasn't meticulous or focused on detail; he just cared for the power and the excitement that the action gave him. After killing the Martin's he didn't feel fulfilled. He took a shower, saying that he felt 'refreshed', and continued his killing spree, choosing this day to go out with a bang. He confessed to his lawyer that he had even wished he would have done more. His lawyer also asks him if Bryant wanted to become famous, Bryant replies with; "No, I just thought I'd kill a lot of people" (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009, 235). He is narcissistic and sadistic, one moment craving the attention, and the other just caring about how much pain he can inflict.

On his drive towards the Martin's and Port Arthur Bryant even makes a few stops, seemingly wanting someone to stop him. He appears to be giving the world one last chance, to prove itself to be just and treat him right. However the people that he tries to engage in conversation at the gas stops are quickly put off by Bryant's strange behavior and creepy stare. Bryant sees it as the world that has driven him to this, and the circumstances of his life have made this possible. Paired with the rigidity of Bryant's personality, and the contrasting impulsivity, Bryant appears to have suffered from environmental circumstances, combined with an innate difference in his personality.

Bryant's motivation might never become clear, and from what has been said so far, there doesn't appear to be a clear motivation. There is no simple answer as to why Bryant did what he did. It is a combined effort of circumstances, upbringing, and genes. Bryant was born with an intellectual and emotional ineptness and was made an outsider his whole life because of this. When the two people who understood him and were his support system fell away, he spiraled out of control. Combine this with the fact that several massacres had occurred shortly before, Bryant suddenly found a way to not live in solitude anymore. He first attacked his source of anger, and then decided to want glory and fame, initially wanting to die with his victims; doing the world the injustice that has always been done to him. The Port Arthur massacre is a sad story that might have been different if only one of the many circumstances in Bryant's life had changed even the slightest.

6 Anders Behring Breivik

On July 22nd 2011, Anders Breivik blew up a car in the heart of Norway and made his way to the island Utøya. At the end of this Friday, Breivik will have killed 77 people and injured at least 319 others. Breivik wrote a manuscript about his motivations and appears to be completely politically and ethnically motivated.

6.1 The Situation

On the fifth day of Breivik's court case, he is asked to tell the story how he came to kill these people. Breivik's lawyer asked him to spare the families by not providing detailed descriptions of the murders; however Breivik was very insistent and eventually got his time in the spotlight. He warns people not to listen because "it's going to be gruesome depictions" (Breivik, 2011).

His voice is described as calm and blank, when describing how he gunned down several children and adults (Pidd, 2012). He killed 67 people directly, two others died trying to get away.

The Oslo bombing is the first part of Breivik's plan, and is indeed where he came from that fateful day. It is not part of his lone-gunman actions, but it is part of his 'lone wolf' actions. The Oslo bombing killed 8 and injured at least 209 people. Breivik stated that he hoped that the car bomb in Oslo would kill the entire government (Breivik 'hoped attacks would kill hundreds', 2012). Before he put his plan in action he wanted to create three separate bombs to destroy the government. However this plan quickly fell through when he realized how difficult it is to create a bomb. Indeed in his creation of the bomb there were some security flag alerts when he tried to obtain certain substances online (Pantucci, 2011).

Breivik got onto the island by impersonating a police officer. After the car bomb went off in Oslo, he drove over to Utøya Island and demanded he be taken with the ferry to the island. He pretended this was part of routine procedure, to explain the situation to the people on the island. He convinced the security guard and skipper of the boat, to take him to the other side. Breivik was expecting security and guards standing on the other side that he would have to take out, or "die trying" (Breivik, 2011). He commenced his shooting when he was being taken from the boat to the main house of the island. He started by shooting what he thought were his main threats, namely the guards and police officers. Breivik states that he was in a state of shock, and claims to only remember ten minutes since the shooting began. Breivik also claims to feel remorse and doubt before pulling the trigger the first time. However his belief in his ideology made him continue on the mission he set out to do. It is also the same belief in his ideology that made him not kill himself after the police surrounded him and he was bound to be arrested. Breivik says he

thought “you are obliged to fight and if you are unable to fulfill a mission you should let yourself be arrested and fight for your cause through the judicial procedure or prison” (Pidd, 2012).

Breivik followed the main stream of people running away to a café building. He says; “I did not run, I walked quickly but quietly” (Breivik, 2011). When he got to the café, some people walked up to him asking him where the gunshots came from, since Breivik was still dressed as a policeman people were inclined to trust him. When someone yelled that he was the one that shot the others, Breivik continued to shoot everyone in and around the café.

Breivik appears to make a distinction between people that were members of the labor party, or children of these members, and ‘normal’ people. He is quoted saying “it was not certain that they were affiliated with labor at all, or AUF, so it may be in fact they are civilians” (Breivik, 2011), as a defense for not killing some people. Breivik also says that he didn’t kill a young boy because he seemed too young, pleading for his life and crying. However his youngest victim was a 14-year old girl.

Breivik uses several military terms in his testimony in court, proving that he is at least somewhat familiar with military language. He is reported saying that he took ‘follow-up shots’ to the people that lay on the ground. Making sure the people injured were actually dead, and that the people who were faking being dead actually were killed. Breivik talks about being shocked that some children were so paralyzed in fear that they just stood there as Breivik reloaded his gun and shot them (Pidd, 2012). He also uses the term ‘forward operational base’ to refer to a building on the island. This is where he had his ammunition placed and was where he would return when ammunition was needed (Pidd, 2012).

Breivik continued his search on the island, looking for the places where "I would naturally try to hide" (Pidd, 2012), and shooting the people he found there. When he got to a cliff face on one side of the island, he killed a large group of people hiding there, who had nowhere to run.

There were 564 people on the island at the time of the shooting, and Breivik admitted to wanting to kill all of them. He says; "The main goal was to use the water as a mass destruction method. It's hard to swim if you have death anxiety," (Pidd, 2012). Indeed one boy drowned trying to get away, but the disaster that he created was mostly through the direct use of his weapon. He also convinced some people who were hiding to come out, by saying that he was a police man. Survivors also report that "he at times was laughing and shouting while shooting" (Melle, 2013, 16). Breivik tried lacing his bullets with nicotine poison, however the effectiveness of this is unknown (Pantucci, 2011).

When Breivik heard the Delta team coming for him, he considered turning the gun on himself. However his belief in his ideology and the fact that he was fighting against multiculturalism made him stay alive. He was committed to his cause and believed opting out by killing himself would be cheating his own beliefs. Breivik also stated that because of his beliefs, he was able to commit these murders that he himself calls atrocities. He says that through meditation, Christian prayer and a Japanese Bushido Warrior Codex (Pidd, 2012) he got himself in the right mindset, that he could distance himself from any empathy he might feel, and would be able to commit fully to his cause.

After this dreadful day Breivik was arrested from Utøya Island and was taken into custody until his trial in 2012.

6.2 The Criminal Proceedings

Breivik states that what he did was horrible and "against human nature in many ways" (Breivik 'hoped attacks would kill hundreds', 2012). However, as shown before, he also considered people that were part of the liberal party were not 'civilians' and that their children are an unfortunate side-effect. However, it had to be done in the fight against multiculturalism.

Since Breivik never denied committing any of the acts he was accused of, the main focus of the trial was deciding whether Breivik was clinically sane or not. Breivik went through two separate evaluations. The first happened soon after the massacre, the second quite some time after. The first concluded that Breivik had a psychotic disorder – making him legally unaccountable – however the second concluded that Breivik had a personality disorder making him legally accountable (Melle, 2013). Breivik insisted on being held legally accountable, stating that he would not avoid trial or evade responsibility (Melle, 2013).

During the criminal proceedings, Breivik even stated that "I stand for Utøya and what I did, and would do it again," (Breivik 'hoped attacks would kill hundreds, 2012). However, being declared clinically sane was very important to Breivik, since he wanted his cause to be believable and not come from a mad man. This was mostly important to him because he wanted to spread his beliefs (Pidd, 2012). However, Breivik denied criminal responsibility stating that he was protecting his country from multiculturalism (Breivik 'hoped attacks would kill hundreds, 2012). Breivik used the courtroom as a stage to be able to promote his cause, and in his eyes be the 'hero of Europe' (van Gerven Oei, 2011).

Legal unaccountability states that a person "is not criminally accountable if psychotic, unconscious, or severely mentally retarded at the time of the crime" (Melle, 2013, 17). After the

first psychological evaluation of Breivik he was declared as being psychotic while planning and while implementing his acts and during the evaluation (Melle, 2013). The reason that they came to this conclusion was based on several thoughts of Breivik. He believed he was part of a mythical organization – namely the Knights Templars organization – and that he would be the Norwegian regent (Bortolotti, Broome, Mameli, 2013). He had grandiose delusions, thinking that he was part of the start of a nuclear third world war, that he would make illnesses extinct and reduce the divorce rate, he also thought that he could read other people's minds (Melle, 2013). The psychiatrists did not, as Breivik accused them of, "consider him psychotic by mistaking this extremist, racist, right-wing views as delusional, but because they thought he had grandiose delusions regarding *his own role* in his extremist universe" (Melle, 2013, 18). Breivik was diagnosed with schizophrenia, the paranoid type.

The defense in the case of Breivik was that he should be considered as sane, but be acquitted as his actions were in self-defense (Melle, 2013). The prosecution wanted Breivik to be confined to psychiatric care. Eventually Breivik was sentenced to 21 years in prison, with a minimum time of 10 years considering good behavior. In Norwegian court, there is a maximum prison sentence of 21 years, regardless of the number of people one might have killed. However after this sentence is served, the suspect can be held in prison longer regarding 'additional protective detention' (Melle, 2013).

6.3 The Study of a Person

Anders Behring Breivik is a Norwegian born and bred citizen. He grew up with his mother and half-sister and only occasionally held contact with his father (Melle, 2013). His friends from former school described Breivik as shy, but sociable and loyal. "As a teenager he

was preoccupied with his physical appearance, worked out frequently, used anabolic steroid and had cosmetic nose surgery in his early twenties. Albeit intelligent, he dropped out of high school before final exams" (Melle, 2013, 16). Before Breivik killed 77 people, he wrote a 1500 page manifesto entitled: "2083; A European Declaration of Independence" that he published to explain his acts (Berwick, 2011)

Breivik appears to be obsessed with a patriarchal society in his manifesto and expresses a sense of revulsion for his mother. He describes his childhood as a popular one; however friends of his have denied any of Breivik's claims. He had some early clashes with the police because of graffiti incidents; however he got out of this by informing on his friends (Pantucci, 2011). Breivik also recalls several incidents with Muslims where things became violent according to him. Breivik held an early fascination with politics, joining the Progress Party Youth organization at 16, whose position involved anti-immigration (Pantucci, 2011). However in 2000 he lost interest in political parties, saying that the "democratic struggle against the Islamisation of Europe, European multiculturalism was lost" (Berwick, as quoted in Pantucci, 2011, 28). At age 15, Breivik was baptized and confirmed into the Christian church. Also, "in 1983 Breivik was examined by the Child Psychiatric Services. They evaluated his rearing situation as so problematic that he was in danger of developing more severe psychopathology and recommended foster care" (Melle, 2013, 16).

In his manifesto, Breivik said that the government's involvement in the attacks on Serbia, namely the NATO bombings in 1999 'tipped the scales' for him (Pantucci, 2011). Breiviki emphasized "the wider victimization of Serbia within Europe as a fundamental part of Europe's surrender to Islam" (Pantucci, 2011, 31). He did remain involved in politics and even claims to have been a candidate for the Oslo City Council. Breivik states that in the early 2000's he has

solidified his ideological standpoints and starts raising money for it. He claims to have started a company which made him his first million and was forced to file for bankruptcy after the economic recession hit in 2005. However, he lost a lot of money playing on the stock market between 2005 and 2008 (Pantucci, 2011).

Breivik continued to play World of Warcraft in all these years part time, and at some point even took a year off to play this fantasy game. Around 2009, his mother starts seeing obsessive and paranoid behavior regarding politics and history. This is the start of the reclusive and paranoid behavior that led up to the attacks (Pantucci, 2011). His mother also states that Breivik started wearing an anti-septic mask around the house, finding her 'unclean'. These appear as the acts of a sociopath (Pantucci, 2011).

Breivik used the internet to obtain much information for his manuscript and used it to spread his ideas into the world. It is clear that the internet influenced Breivik a lot. He used it to locate weapons and material for the bomb as well. His first business, which he claims made a million Norwegian Krone, was also an e-commerce one. Besides this he also played an online game for a year straight. Clearly he was very familiar with internet skills and masking activities to hide his online searches (Pantucci, 2011).

When he was first evaluated after the shootings, Breivik was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. However some people argue that, because Breivik was taking anabolic steroids over a long period of time, including the day of the shootings, combined with caffeine and aspirin, these could have exacerbated the psychological symptoms. However they could not have caused the symptoms (Melle, 2013). Other critics said that Breivik was too organized and lacked auditory hallucinations in order to be diagnosed (Traufetter, 2011).

The second evaluation was taken six months after the first. The results from this evaluation may have been heavily influenced by the fact that Breivik was seeing a psychiatrist on a weekly basis while in prison. He was also no longer isolated from the public's opinion of him and had access to the first evaluation. He might have even been able to prepare for this second evaluation, saying the things needed to say to be declared legally sane (Melle, 2013). The second pair of psychiatrists did not find any signs of disorganization or auditory hallucinations – symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia – things that were missing from the first evaluation as well. In the second evaluation he made the Knights Templar Organization seem less important and explained how earlier he had exaggerated his role. The social withdrawal previous to the attacks was considered only natural when planning an attack according to the psychiatrists and was not considered a negative symptom of schizophrenia (Melle, 2013). He was finally diagnosed with severe narcissistic personality disorder, combined with pathological lying. Breivik got what he wanted; he was legally accountable, and sane.

Breivik's earlier diagnosed grandiose delusions were disregarded, as experts believed that right-wing ideologies should have been considered when naming the perceptions as grandeur or implausible (Melle, 2013). During the first interview Breivik was also using strange words in weird context according to the evaluators. However, this was explained by his excessive use of online games and fantasy worlds that Breivik frequented in (Pantucci, 2011).

In the end Breivik can be seen to have both 'normal' racist beliefs and additional idiosyncratic beliefs where he thought he was the leader in a kind of cleansing project (Bortolotti, Broome, Mameli 2013). However, Breivik doesn't consider himself as a racist but sees himself as someone who is only defending the European Identity, and protecting it from the overwhelming Muslim masses (Pantucci, 2011). He is therefore not someone who dislikes

anyone that is not like him, however he is protecting his national culture. Breivik said that he was appalled by his acts; however they were for a necessary cause. This suggests a deep lack of empathy, even though he did spare a few lives of people that begged for it at Utøya (Pantucci, 2011). He also demonstrated a high level of narcissism in his manifesto, stating that he could easily get girls because of his good looks and being obsessed with his physique from an early age (Pantucci, 2011). It is unfortunate that about 40% of the Norwegian public shares Breivik's idea that immigration is a threat to Norwegian values (Berntzen, Sandberg, 2014).

Breivik didn't appear to have any suicidal thoughts. He accepted the fact that dying in the course of his action was a possibility, however he doesn't appear to desire this ending (Pantucci, 2011).

6.4 The Suspected Motivation

Breivik was driven to carry out his lone-gunman attack because of a rationale that was dictated by an extremist ideology (Pantucci, 2011). When this obsession of Breivik starts with anti-Islamic thoughts is unclear. However, Breivik describes himself being friends with a Muslim earlier in life; however they grew apart because of differing cultures. Breivik also describes some incidents in which his friends are robbed by Muslims and how the Muslim community has committed a lot of atrocities according to Breivik (Pantucci, 2011). It is clear that Breivik's attack was not a random one, and was one that was planned at least a year in advance, and considered at least a decade in advance. It is therefore not a typical lone-gunman case.

Breivik showed no remorse for his acts. Breivik states that the people that he killed were not innocent children, but "young people who worked to actively uphold multicultural values"

(Pidd, 2012). This was his reason for seeing these children as legitimate targets, and the main motivation behind his attacks.

In his manifesto, Breivik focuses on the concept of "solo martyr cells", or how others call it, the Lone Warrior. Breivik recognizes the need for secrecy and describes his process of getting ready for the act in his manifesto. He states the importance of believing in the case on a daily basis and the struggles he sometimes went through maintaining his beliefs (Pantucci, 2011).

The idea of a leaderless resistance wasn't one that was revolutionary of Breivik. The racist leader Louis Beam already published about this in the early 1980's (Gruenewald, Chermak, Freilich, 2013). Lone cell operations are less easy to find by the police and creates for less civil liability of the group that one might be part of. Lone wolves also make it more difficult for police to infiltrate a terrorist or extremist organization (Gruenewald, Chermak, Freilich, 2013). However, loners only still account for 1.28% of terrorist incidents (Berntzen, Sandberg, 2014).

Breivik's case isn't a typical lone-gunman case, because one can also argue for the case that this was a terrorist attack; an indirect hate crime towards Muslims, by killing native Norwegian children. Twisted logic appears to have been at work in the mind of Breivik, and he seems to have brainwashed himself. Knowing that what he was doing was wrong, but obtaining his desired end using any means possible, the means being killing people.

7. James Eagan Holmes

On July 20th, during the premiere of the much anticipated new Batman film, a masked man entered a cinema theater in Colorado. He appeared to be wearing a gas mask, and was wearing what looked like a military style outfit. In head-to-toe black, James Eagan Holmes killed 12 people, and injured 70 more in an unsuspecting cinema crowd (Elliot, 2013).

7.1 The Situation

Holmes had his hair dyed a pinkish orange, in order to imitate the famous Batman villain 'The Joker'. For the premiere of the Batman movie, many people were dressed up, so he didn't stand out at first. Holmes bought a ticket for the movie, and shortly after opened the fire escape door and slipped out, to later make his entrance again through the same door (Brown, 2012). Holmes stood beside the screen holding guns, body shields, and looking generally dressed up as an "assassin ready for war" ('Batman premiere gunman looked like 'assassin ready for war', 2012). When the police arrived, some mistook Holmes for a SWAT officer, until one policeman saw something odd in his body armor (FFahrenthold, Heath, & Achenbach, 2012). What this oddity was is never revealed to the public.

When Holmes first entered the theatre, some people thought it was part of a stunt for the premiere of the movie. Others assumed that the gun noises were just part of a film, until they saw people hunched over running away ('Batman premiere gunman looked like 'assassin ready for war', 2012). Holmes released gas canisters into the cinema, which stung people's eyes, and made them crawling for the exit, some dragging bodies with them (Brown, 2012). As people tried to walk away, Holmes shot at them, blocking their exit. He also walked randomly down the theatre aisles, shooting in the hope to hit as many people as possible (Pilkington, Williams, 2012).

Witness reports describe Holmes' behavior as calm and quiet. Some describe it like he was using this as target practice, like a scene in a movie or a video game (Brown, 2012). The police say that it was lucky one of Holmes' guns jammed, otherwise they suspect even more people would have been killed (Parker, 2012).

During one of the first interviews with the police, Holmes mentioned his apartment being booby-trapped. And indeed, when the police went over to Holmes' residence, they found the apartment filled with wired explosives (Leonnig, Achenbach, 2012). They quickly evacuated the neighboring buildings and continued to remove the explosives (Fahrenthold, Heath, & Achenbach, 2012). The police suspect that Holmes wanted one of the neighbors to set off the explosives by coming to check on the blaring techno music that Holmes turned on (Elliot, 2013).

When the police realized who Holmes was, he was arrested without a hitch, and taken into custody. He would be charged for 116 accounts of first-degree murder, attempted murder, and weapons charges ('Dark Knight' Shooting: Judge Allows Insanity Plea for James Holmes, 2013).

7.2 The Criminal Proceedings

When Holmes was first brought to trial he pleaded not guilty. Later on, a judge allowed him to change his plea to 'not guilty by reason of insanity' ('Dark Knight' Shooting: Judge Allows Insanity Plea for James Holmes, 2013). In Colorado this means that the prosecution has the burden of "proving the offender's sanity" (Bantley, Koski, 2013, 155).

If Holmes would be considered not guilty by reason of insanity, he would be committed to the state mental hospital indefinitely. If he is found guilty, he will either face the death penalty or be imprisoned his entire life ('Dark Knight' Shooting: Judge Allows Insanity Plea for James Holmes, 2013).

The prosecution successfully was allowed to bring in the evidence of Holmes' dating profiles made months before the attacks. With these profiles they will try to prove that Holmes is not insane, because both of the profiles have the statement 'Will you visit me in prison?', months

before the attack (Curry, 2013). This shows that Holmes did not suffer from a psychotic episode, as the defense is arguing for, but planned it months in advance (Sandell, 2014).

After the first psychiatric evaluation, the judge decided that it was done inadequately and ordered another evaluation. The trial was first scheduled for February 2014 but is now on hold until October 2014. Holmes' defense attorneys have tried to make the death penalty barred; however none of these attempts have worked so far (Judge Denies Attempts to Bar Holmes' Execution, 2014).

In order to be declared insane, it has to be established that Holmes was "under such a defect of reason, from disease of the mind, as not to know the nature and quality of the act he was doing, or as not to know what he was doing was wrong" (M'naghten's Case, as quoted in Bantley, Koski, 2013, 162). Whether this was the case is yet to be determined by the second psychiatric evaluation, however evidence is pointing towards Holmes being aware of the consequences of his actions. Even though he claimed to be the 'Joker' and was incoherent during and after his arrest. The verdict of this case still awaits trial.

Holmes has fans who call themselves the "Holmies" online (Curry, 2013), and are supporting the claim of his innocence or insanity.

7.3 The Study of a Person

According to reports of Holmes' childhood friends, he was withdrawn and shy. (Elliot, 2012). Friends from high school describe Holmes as a generally shy kid, who seemed not very extraordinary, and certainly not capable of doing anything like this (Leonnig & Achenbach, 2012). Holmes graduated from college with honors, receiving a diploma in neuroscience (Leonnig, Achenbach, 2012).

However there are reports that four months before the shootings he has said that he would like to kill people, and how he would do so when his life was over (Elliot, 2012). His university psychiatrist also said that he threatened her during one of his sessions. The reason to see a psychiatrist a few months before the shooting is unknown to the public (Elliot, 2012).

Holmes had spent months preparing for the attack; buying guns, ammunition, and materials for explosives (Fahrenthold, Heath, & Achenbach, 2012). During these months, his academic progress had started to decline. The University of Colorado released a statement saying that Holmes was quitting the graduate program in neuroscience soon (Brown, 2012).

Holmes never appeared suicidal, and there are no reports of him attempting suicide in prison or before being arrested.

7.4 The Suspected Motivation

Little information about Holmes' life has been released to the public. And since the trials are yet to happen, there is little information available yet. However some have started quoting the Batman movies saying that "Some men aren't looking for anything logical, like money. They can't be bought, bullied, reasoned, or negotiated with. Some men just want to watch the world burn" (Brown, 2012).

This is what the general public's thinking is currently about the Holmes' case. He is a generally bad person who wanted to do a bad act, just for the sake of being bad. However since the concept of mental illness has been brought into this trial, this case is very controversial. The insanity claim is a very controversial one in the United States and complicated the Holmes case immensely (Bantley, Koski, 2013).

The statements that Holmes made a few months before the attack might provide somewhat of a motivation and intention. Holmes' declining academic progress and his future being jeopardized might have been what sent him over the edge. He felt like his life was crashing down, so he started spiraling out of control and might have indeed suffered from a psychotic episode. The reasoning behind this attack are seen as chaotic and random, and until more information is released to the public, it will stay like this.

What can be argued for is the fact that Holmes was always a quiet person, someone that didn't demand anyone's attention. His few months long run of out of the blue insanity – such as dyeing his hair orange, and threatening people – might have been the result of a mental break down. However since there is limited information on this case, this is only a tentative conclusion.

8. Discussion

During the discussion of these three mass murderers, several different aspects have been discussed. The most important factor that has been discussed is the concept of motivation. However since these cases differ geographically, demographically, and generally, can we find a common denominator?

8.1 How are these cases alike?

Forensic psychiatrist Michael Welner has stated that mass shootings like these are done by people who are highly paranoid and desire notoriety. He continues this by stating that these people fail to achieve a romantic attachment, and thus replace their sense of masculinity by a fascination to destroy, since the two appear closely connected in our society (Leonnig, Achenbach, 2012). Jeffrey Swanson disagrees and states that most of the mass shootings happen by young, socially isolated males. And since many young men fit this description, one should not

assume that they will all be violent, and that we can't generalize people who do this kind of thing. (Leonnig, Achenbach, 2012).

What we find in the particular cases that have been examined is that all men have been described as 'shy and quiet' during their youth. Bryant and Breivik had difficult relationships with their mothers. Bryant did not think very highly of his mother, and Breivik even wore an antiseptic mask around the house because he thought her to be 'unclean' (Pantucci, 2011 & Wainwright & Totaro, 2009).

Breivik and Bryant also appear to have chosen locations that held a significant meaning to them. And some of the people they killed were part of the source of their anger. Bryant killing the two people that he thought tortured him in his childhood, and Breivik killing the children who were to enforce multiculturalism, the source of his anger.

Breivik and Bryant both had early encounters with the police. Both were seen as quiet and shy people when they were kids, and both had early encounters with social workers, who stated that the home situation was not a healthy environment. Both had difficult relationships with their fathers, and strained home situations; Bryant feeling inferior to his sister, and Breivik disliking his mother and not talking to his father. All three cases also bring in the fact of mental illness. Breivik is eventually declared clinically sane, and Bryant is only later diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. Holmes is not declared sane or insane yet, however the question about his sanity raises issues regarding mental illness.

All three cases though, appear to want to prove something. Bryant circles the date on his calendar, Breivik planned his date months in advance, and Holmes booked the ticket in advance. All appear to want to prove something to the world, and say so beforehand; Breivik in his

manuscript, Bryant to his girlfriend, and Holmes to his psychiatrist. All planned the attack in advance, in such a way that required them to buy weapons and other preparatory material – such as Breivik acquiring the police uniform, and Holmes getting the gas canisters.

Holmes and Breivik both took a liking towards video games, and both played them regularly during their lives. However Bryant was most likely too young to be involved in the video game scene, so the comparison is difficult to find here. Finding a direct connection with violence and video games is difficult.

8.2 How are these cases different?

However Bryant appeared to have been intellectually and emotionally stinted his entire life. Breivik only started thinking cruel thoughts towards people of other nationalities when he got into his teens. Holmes appears to have only started thinking negatively of people 6 months before his attack. The planning and time that went into all these attacks differ immensely. Breivik starting 1 year before, Holmes buying weapons 6 months before, and Bryant circling the date only 2 weeks beforehand (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009).

When comparing these cases, the odd one out appears to be Holmes. Holmes had a, from what evidence we have currently, happy and quiet childhood. Never had any early encounters with the police, and didn't appear a violent person. Breivik and Bryant both had violent tendencies and thoughts. Bryant tortured animals as a kid, and Breivik had violent thoughts towards Muslims, since age 16 when he joined a political party.

8.3 What motivations can we find?

When we look at Breivik, we see that his anger was directed towards the people that supported multiculturalism. He even states that he saw the supporters of this idea as 'not-

civilians' (Breivik, 2011). Bryant, when talking about the source of his anger, focuses on Sally and David Martin. The other people that he killed were additional objects of his anger (Wainwright & Totaro, 2009). When considering Holmes, what this research has tried to see as his motivation is his declining academic progress, and general deterioration. The timing wasn't coincidental, since he was about to quit the university program, however the location always seemed coincidental. But maybe Batman used to provide Holmes with a certain sense of happiness, and since this was taken away from him, he wanted to attack the people that still were happy. He saw the people in the cinema as targets to shoot at like a video game, as witnesses described (Brown, 2012).

What we can see in the three lone-gunmen cases is that the anger was directed *at* something. And this 'something' was no longer seen as subject; they were seen as object. Bryant considered the Martin's to be so evil that he didn't see them as subjective people anymore. Breivik thought that the supporters of multiculturalism, and people from the Islam themselves were objects. Holmes saw the victims in the theatre as target practice. None seem to have seen the victims as people. As Baumeister says, "many violent people believe that their actions were justified by the offensive acts of the person who became their victim" (2000, 45).

It is difficult to find one single motivator. According to Daniel Greenfield (2014), mass murderers don't have a proper motivation. They want fame, and awe, and they achieve this by committing these murders. Videos of people the likes of Osama bin Laden, and Elliot Rodgers, are according to him a "studied pose like everything else about them" (Greenfield, 2014). He states that men who make these manifestos want the world to believe that they were pushed too far, when in fact they pushed themselves to where they wanted to be (Greenfield, 2014).

According to Baumeister (2000), there are four major root causes of evil. These causes are: a desire for material gain, threatened egotism, idealism, and sadistic pleasure. In the cases that we have examined Bryant would be threatened egotism; he was ridiculed and separated from normal human interaction his entire life. Breivik's source of evil would be idealism. And Holmes' motivation could be sadistic pleasure, or threatened egotism. Because he was failing the graduate program, he might have felt emasculated and felt the need to lash out. He might also have gotten some kind of sadistic pleasure from it. However from the witness reports the people laughing during the killings were Breivik and Bryant. Witnesses never reported Holmes to be laughing during the shootings. This might also prove that Breivik and Bryant also acted out of an aspect of sadistic pleasure, besides their original motivation.

8.4 What predictors can we find?

It is difficult to say anything about predictors, because one often ends up generalizing people too much. The fact that most of the shooters enjoyed video games – such as Breivik, Holmes – could be coincidental. The fact that almost all had a difficult familial relationship could have been circumstantial. None of the shooters appeared to be able to sustain a longer healthy relationship as well. However, as discussed earlier, when comparing how the cases are similar, some appear to be more significant, "[…] the single most robust predictor is prior violence and in particular, a history of multiple offences." (Wilson, Norris, 2011, 240).

9 Conclusions

In order to address the central theme that this thesis was to discuss, namely "The Question of 'Why?' people become lone-gunmen", several research questions were created. In order to create a conclusion, these questions will be discussed in-depth.

What kind of person attempts a mass murder?

This question is the first one that we asked. In the examination of the history of the three case studies, there are some similarities. For instance, some liked to play video games, and some had early encounters with the police. All had a troubled home situation, and all were described by childhood friends as 'quiet and shy'. Two of the three also had early evaluations by child care, who stated that the home situation wasn't a healthy one. From what evidence we have gathered, we can state that a mass murderer isn't necessarily loud. Rather he's submissive, quiet, and might feel inferior in his daily life, not being able to hold a job or finish their education. Bryant never found satisfying relationships, Breivik felt that he needed to make a grand gesture in order to make himself heard, and Holmes perhaps acted out of a sense of sadistic pleasure, or threatened egotism.

How does the justice system deal with these lone-gunmen cases?

All three cases were committed in different jurisdictions, and different justice systems. The case of Martin Bryant was concluded with the people feeling properly avenged. Bryant is in prison for the rest of his life, with no way out. However, in the Breivik case the insanity question was raised. And even though people are happy he is not in a mental hospital, by having him declared sane, his ideology is also declared sane. Holmes is still pending trial, however there as well the insanity plea is an interesting one. This is another case where people are split on the opinion whether he should be declared insane or not. People want justice by having the suspect be criminally responsible; however being declared insane means you never get rid of the mental hospital and you will have life-long checkups.

In all three cases, the justice system dealt with it differently. In some states the people were left feeling avenged, in others they left feeling somewhat ambiguous. There is no way that the justice system can make up for the lives that were lost by these men, but making sure that they never walk around as free men seems to be an important aspect for the families.

During the trials it appears important to Bryant, Breivik, and Holmes that they are heard. Bryant wants to tell his story and hear what others say, Breivik eventually did get the chance to tell his story, and Holmes wants people to acknowledge his insanity plea. They all appear to have a fascination for their day in court, and hearing and saying who they are and what they did.

What kind of predictor can be found from these lone-gunmen cases?

Again the same scenario is at work here. There are some overlapping aspects in life course. From what we found in these three cases is that a troubled relationship with the parents is a predictor. Another predictor can be an extreme fascination with video games. Early encounters with the law and animal cruelty appear to be important predictors for future violence.

What motivates or drives people to mass-shooting sprees?

The three cases that were chosen differ so much that it is difficult to find a common denominator in motivation. Breivik was politically and ethnically motivated, Bryant was motivated by revenge and the feeling of retribution, Holmes was motivated by – what his lawyers are claiming – insanity. All three however did decide not to kill themselves afterwards. This shows that all wanted to claim some kind of responsibility for their acts. They wanted to be acknowledged, and see what their acts did to the world. How the people would see them and how their acts would be perceived by the outside world, “many perpetrators see themselves as people who have been unjustly treated and hence deserve sympathy, support, and extra tolerance for any

wrongs they have committed" (Baumeister, 2000, 48). There is the strong need for connection, recognition, and acceptance in all cases; Bryant with the plane incidents, and Breivik with his cosmetic surgery and steroids.

So is the common denominator the fact that they were motivated by some recognition of the outside world? Maybe they all just wanted to feel acknowledged by the world. They wanted to feel part of something, and be part of something bigger. They wanted the world to know their name, and hear what they thought and felt. Perhaps the need for recognition is the most important common denominator that all these cases have. All wanted to be heard and seen, and all eventually got their wish.

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Appendix 1: Remembering the Victims

Aurora Massacre

John Thomas Larimer, 27,

Rebecca Wingo, 32

Alexander Sullivan, 27

Alexander J. ("A.J.") Boik, 18,

Veronica Moser-Sullivan, 6,

Jessica Ghawi, 24,

Gordon Cowden, 51,

Micayla Medek, 23,

Matthew McQuinn, 27,

Jonathan Blunk, 26,

Jesse Childress**,** 29,

Alexander Teves, 24,

Port Arthur Massacre

Winifred Joyce Aplin, 58

Walter John Bennett, 66

Nicole Louise Burgess, 17

Sou Leng Chung, 32

Elva Rhonda Gaylard, 48

Zoe Anne Hall, 28

Elizabeth Jayne Howard, 26

Mary Elizabeth Howard, 57

Mervyn John Howard, 55

Ronald Noel Jary, 71

Tony Vadivelu Kistan, 51

Leslie Dennis Lever, 53

Sarah Kate Loughton, 15

David Martin, 72

Noelene Joyce Martin, 69

Pauline Virjeana Masters, 49

Alannah Louise Mikac, 6

Madeline Grace Mikac, 3

Nanette Patricia Mikac, 36

Andrew Bruce Mills, 49

Peter Brenton Nash, 32

Gwenda Joan Neander, 67

Moh Yee Willing Ng, 48

Anthony Nightingale, 44

Mary Rose Nixon, 60

Glen Roy Pears, 35

Russell James Pollard, 72

Janette Kathleen Quin, 50

Helene Maria Salzmann, 50

Robert Graham Salzmann, 57

Kate Elizabeth Scott, 21

Kevin Vincent Sharp, 68

Raymond John Sharp, 67

Royce William Thompson, 59

Jason Bernard Winter, 29

Oslo Bombing and Utøya Massacre

Hanna Endresen, 61

Tove Ashill Knutsen, 56

Kai Hauge, 32

Jon Vegard Lervag, 32

Ida Marie Hill, 34

Hanne Ekroll Loevlie, 30

Anne Lise Holter, 51

Kjersti Berg Sand, 26

Mona Abdinur, 18

Maria Maageroe Johannesen, 17

Ismail Haji Ahmed, 19

Ronja Soettar Johansen, 17

Thomas Margido Antonsen, 16

Sondre Kjoeren, 17

Porntip Ardam, 21

Margrethe Boeyum Kloeven, 16

Modupe Ellen Awoyemi, 15

Syvert Knudsen, 17

Lene Maria Bergum, 19

Anders Kristiansen, 18

Kevin Daae Berland, 15

Elisabeth Troennes Lie, 16

Trond Berntsen, 51

Gunnar Linaker, 23

Sverre Flate Bjoerkavag, 28

Tamta Lipartelliani, 23

Torjus Jakobsen Blattmann, 17

Eva Kathinka Lutken, 17

Monica Boesei, 45

Even Flugstad Malmedal, 18

Carina Borgund, 18

Tarald Kuven Mjelde, 18

Johannes Buoe, 14

Ruth Benedicte Vatndal Nilsen, 15

Asta Sofie Helland Dahl, 16

Hakon Oedegaard, 17

Sondre Furseth Dale, 17

Emil Okkenhaug, 15

Monica Iselin Didriksen, 18

Diderik Aamodt Olsen, 19

Gizem Dogan, 17

Henrik Pedersen, 27

Andreas Edvardsen, 18

Rolf Christopher Johansen Perreau, 25

Tore Eikeland, 21

Karar Mustafa Qasim, 19

Bendik Rosnaes Ellingsen, 18

Bano Abobakar Rashid, 18

Aleksander Aas Eriksen, 16

Henrik Rasmussen, 18

Andrine Bakkene Espeland, 16

Synne Roeyneland, 18

Hanne Balch Fjalestad, 43

Ida Beathe Rogne, 17

Silje Merete Fjellbu, 17

Simon Saebo, 18

Hanne Kristine Fridtun, 19

Marianne Sandvik, 16

Andreas Dalby Groennesby, 17

Fredrik Lund Schjetne, 18

Snorre Haller, 30

Lejla Selaci, 17

Rune Havdal, 43

Birgitte Smetbak, 15

Guro Vartdal Havoll , 18

Isabel Victoria Green Sogn, 17

Ingrid Berg Heggelund, 18

Silje Stamneshagen, 18

Karin Elena Holst, 15

Victoria Stenberg, 17

Eivind Hovden, 15

Tina Sukuvara, 18

Jamil Rafal Mohamad Jamil, 20

Sharidyn Svebakk-Boehn, 14

Steinar Jessen, 16

Havard Vederhus, 21

Espen Joergensen, 17