

*Is Nikolas Cruz Really Mentally Ill, Or Is It Just a Game?*

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### Abstract (From Presentation)

Nikolas Cruz is a 23-year-old male born in Margate, Florida. He was known by classmates to have anger management issues and had a huge interest in guns. He was also on the varsity air rifle team. Nikolas Cruz on February 14, 2018 entered Stoneman Douglas High School walking towards “Building 12.” Carrying an AR-15 entered a hallway and began shooting at students and teachers. He in total, murdered 17 individuals and wounded 17 others. Nikolas Cruz committed the worse mass school shooting in US history, surpassing the Columbine School Shooting in 1999. Nikolas Cruz reportedly had behavioral issues since middle school. He was transferred six times between schools to solve these issues. He also made threats against other students. He returned to MGSS two years later but was expelled in 2017 due to disciplinary reasons.

In 2013, psychiatrists recommended that Cruz be involuntarily admitted to a residential treatment facility.

In 2016, he was investigated after Snapchat posts stated he was going to buy a gun and he cut his arms. A school resource officer wanted Cruz to undergo an involuntary psychological assessment under the Baker Act, however, a mental institution did not agree with this decision from the SRO.

Cruz’s online social media profiles were seen as “very disturbing” with guns and weapons. He held extremist views, according to police. There were YouTube comments of him stating “I

wanna die fighting killing shit ton of people.” He also intended to replicate the University of Texas tower shooting.

The items that police recovered were magazines with swastikas carved into them. On Cruz’s backpack, a swastika was drawn with the words “I hate niggers” on it. Cruz stated he “hated jews, niggers and immigrants” these statements were made in a private group chat on Instagram.

Cruz received mental health therapy, however, “it was brief and there was no follow up.” If Cruz continued his treatment “it’s more than likely” that the school shooting “would have never happened. “ Depression does not make someone carry out an event such as a school shooting. There’s usually a trigger. Cruz was shunned romantically and was expelled from school.

In reviewing the three-hour confession video of Nikolas Cruz, it is clear that Nikolas is trying to play the insanity defense. He makes multiple references to voices in his head and “demons”, “bad demons” telling him to kill people and that he heard these voices the day before the shooting, when he was on shift at the Dollar Tree. Why did Nikolas kill 17 people? There is a video that Nikolas posted before the shooting that states “I am going to be the next school shooter of 2018” with a “goal of 20 people” at “Stoneman Douglas.”

In these videos, Nikolas seems calm, but makes disturbing remarks. He makes no references to voices or demons in these videos. However, as Nikolas is arrested after the shooting, he goes into a lunacy fit making references to “voices” and “demons.”

He also asks the arresting officers “What happened...?” where he is then told by the officers to “Shut up.” It seems that Nikolas Cruz is trying to claim that these voices and demons commenced the shooting, not himself and he had no idea what had just occurred. Based on the narrative of the video extracted from his cell phone, and the narrative post-shooting, the shooting seems entirely planned and not the cause of “demons” and “voices”

In the confession video, Nikolas Cruz answers the questions, what, when, why, who and how in relation to the shooting. He confesses that he committed the murders on Feb 14, 2018 at Stoneman Douglas High School and that he used an AR-15 to do it.

The big question is why:

In the longer interrogation video, you can see that Nikolas Cruz puts a finger gun to his head and seems to be recollecting the attack, but gaining gratification from doing so.

### **Is Nikolas Cruz Really Mentally Ill?**

Why would Nikolas Cruz after committing a school shooting go immediately to Subway and place an order, after murdering seventeen individuals. Cruz was obsessed with weapons. In a document published by the State of Florida titled “Unreported Information Showing Nikolas Cruz’s Troubling Behaviour” we see many disturbing instances showing aggression and mental illness.

The February 14<sup>th</sup> school shooting isn't the only time Nikolas Cruz brought a gun to school.

Unreported statements by the State of Florida state that, according to a witness "Cruz 'may' have shown him a firearm at school... I have like a false memory that he one time brought a gun to school." It is also stated that Cruz brought deceased animals to school "with their heads removed."

In an interview with this student, the student stated that "he showed me the gun but like I was I didn't want to do anything with them cause but my personal safety year I didn't want to like have anything with him. So I told him like I tried to like talk him out of the this like bro stop bringing to school this stuff you can get expelled you can get in trouble. Some like he kind of listen to me but from inside he just doing whatever he wanted."

### **Did Cruz Make Threats and Did These Show He Was Mentally Ill?**

Numerous threats were made by Cruz over the years. These threats were not "simplistic" they were frightening and serious. However, no one took these threats seriously as most of these threats were never reported.

During lunch one day, Cruz was with a group of students and said to them that he "would like to shoot up the school" and said that "he wouldn't shoot them because he liked them." Cruz was also heavily purported to be racist. An 11<sup>th</sup> grade student advised that "Cruz told him that he did not like black people and that he wanted to shoot them." Witnesses stated that Cruz had Instagram or Snapchat posts that stated that "Cruz was going to get a gun and shoot up the school." Other threats were made such as "I'm so tired of everyone being mean to me, I just

can't take it, I want to shoot up the school." Nikolas was also physically violent towards his mother, Lynda Cruz telling his mother to go "fuck herself" and wishing she was dead.

### **Nikolas Cruz Search History – Premeditated Murders**

In the Nikolas Cruz sentencing trial of July 28, 2022, disturbing details were presented by the prosecution to the judge in terms of the search history obtained by the linked account, "lyndacruz1949@gmail.com" on the Nikolas Cruz Gmail account consisting of search terms such as: "stoneman douglas", "Marjory stoneman douglas", "I wanna kill people", "massacre", "massacre killing", "killing people", "stoneman douglas", "smith and Wesson mnp1350 sport firing pin", "school shooting books", "school shooter test", "how to become a school shooter", "aurora shooting victims", "aurora massacre", "school shooting", "Marjory stoneman douglas school hours", "stoneman douglas school map", "soft guitar case", "school shooters", "school shooters youtube", "how long does it take for a cop to show up at a school shooting."

Yet, Nikolas Cruz stated after the school shootings that the voices told him to do it. However, this doesn't seem to be the case based on the search history and other factors.

### **Nikolas Cruz – Obsession with Child Pornography**

One interesting bit about the analysis of Nikolas Cruz that in addition to his obsession with weapons and school shootings, was his searches of child pornography. In reviewing the document containing his search history, terms come up such as "little teen pirn" (porn), five days prior to the shooting. We also see based on 2017 searches that Cruz had a rape interest, with

searches for “rape caught on video.” It is said that users that view child pornography are said to be just one portion of a criminal and/or “antisocial lifestyle.”

Pedophilia is often equated to child molestation. An indicator of Pedophilic Disorder in the DSM-5 states that the individual would have to have “acted on” their sexual urges. However, this could also mean that they have “masturbated to pedophilic fantasies,” similar to the fantasies that Cruz had about school shootings. Individuals who view child pornography, such as Cruz, are mentally ill.

### **Nikolas Cruz’s Personality**

The conditions Nikolas Cruz was diagnosed with are autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), obsessive-compulsive disorder, and depression. Unlike Cruz, several studies have shown that school shooters have less of a past with psychological and/or mental health concerns, but do have depression, anti-social and narcissistic behaviours. On several occasions, Cruz put a weapon to the heads of both Lynda Cruz and Zachary Cruz.

### **Conclusion**

Individuals did notice Cruz’s odd and violent behaviour prior to the shooting, including his desire to commit a school shooting. Nikolas had an addiction to pornography, even child pornography which is often seen in individuals with mental illness. Cruz brought dead animals to school with him, ones that he would behead as well. “The FBI has identified cruelty to animals as a warning sign of more violence to come, and many school shooters and serial killers have a history of abusing animals.” There is unfortunately a known connection between animal killers

and school shooters, so why wasn't Nikolas's disturbing behaviour brought to light, especially with his comments about committing a school shooting? There are many behaviours that were analyzed that was an immediate red flag that Nikolas Cruz should be watched as he was severely mentally ill. Overall, yes, Nikolas Cruz is mentally ill, but mental illness isn't what caused him to commit the school shooting.

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