

Bowers exam notes

**Neurological, Psychiatric, and Medical Evaluation**

Sunday May 21<sup>st</sup>

9:15 AM – 11:40 AM

12:30 PM – 1:15 PM

Informed Consent

Mr. Bowers was informed about the nature of this evaluation. We discussed that we were not establishing a doctor-patient relationship, but that I was providing an evaluation and opinion regarding potential neuropsychiatric diseases and their consequences to the court. I advised him that I would not be treating him or recommending any treatments. We also discussed the limits of confidentiality, and that information we discussed could be shared with the lawyers, judge, and jury in the case in a written report or that I might be asked to testify about my findings. He repeated in his own words that I was working for the other side, and that what we were talking about could be used against him.

Developmental History

Mr. Bowers was unaware of any issues his mother may have had during pregnancy. He does not remember being told about any birth complications or developmental delays, and denies any learning disabilities, diagnosis of any neurodevelopmental disorders (ADHD, Autism, Tourette's, etc) or special education classes.

He described his mother as being unfit to take care of herself, let alone him. He viewed her as impulsive and irrational. He does not think she purposely did things to harm him, but certainly harmed him through her poor decision-making. He discussed moving frequently as a child, including a move to Florida, a period of time as a preschooler where he lived entirely with his grandparents and not his mother, and frequently moving back and forth between independent living with his mother and needing to live with his grandparents. While living just with his mother, he states that the house was cold and that he didn't have enough to eat. When living with his grandparents, he stated he had food and warmth, but that there were always verbal fights between his grandfather and his grandmother, who was frequently impaired from alcohol and prescription drug abuse. He denied witnessing any physical violence in the home. He states his grandmother was often injured, but he is unsure if this was due to falls while intoxicated or if his grandfather was ever violent towards her. Between 1983-1988 he had more housing stability, living in the same apartment with his mother and step-father Ray Bolt.

He denies significant issues with school. He states he was never the top of his class, but never the worst. He attended part of an airplane mechanics trade school but did not finish the degree. He completed a training course on how to operate semi-trucks.



Hobbies and Interests growing up included guns, computers, and cars. More recent interests revolve around his beliefs regarding Jews, Immigration, and Politics.

### History of Physical, Sexual, and Emotional Trauma

He reports significant emotional conflict and anger towards his mother throughout his life, but denies any other instances of physical, sexual, or emotional trauma.

### Occupational History

From 1986-1987 he worked filling in for a paper route for another boy when he was away. He had a couple of odd jobs at restaurants before working at Potomac Bakery from 1990-2004. He mostly worked 1 AM – 9 AM delivering orders to customers. He states he enjoyed the job because the hours allowed him to do a lot during the day. He was fired after stealing cash to support a prescription drug habit in 2004.

Between 2004-2008 he worked odd jobs including deliveries and construction and renovation projects. During the renovation work, he states he was exposed to chemicals like Xylene. He also thinks he was exposed to asbestos tearing out old walls and ducting. He states he wore masks during this work but is unsure how effective they were.

He worked as a truck driver intermittently between 2008-2017. He felt the schedule was so difficult he could only do the job for shorter periods of time, around 6-9 months at a time. He took a longer break from truck driving to care for his grandfather, and would sometimes work other part-time jobs during his breaks from truck-driving. He states his break from 2017-2018 was typical for him.

### Relationships with Family, Friends, Co-Workers, and Romantic Partners

**Mother:** he had a challenging relationship with his mother for most of his life. He does not think she was capable of taking care of him due to her poor judgement and decision-making. He gives the analogy that her judgement could be so poor that it wasn't  $2+2 = 5$ , but rather  $2+2 = \text{red}$ . When younger, he states on several occasions he became angry and aggressive towards her, leading to psychiatric hospitalizations. While their relationship has improved in recent years, he still harbors anger towards her.

**Father:** no relationship.

**Stepfathers:** He has no recollection of Bob Saiter. He states that his relationship with Ray Bolt, his current stepfather, is good.

**Paternal Grandfather:** Mr. Bowers states this was the person he was closest to growing up. His grandfather would take him to fireworks shows and on occasional trips. He states that he was happy to serve as his grandfather's caregiver for 5 years and that no amount of money could

replace that time with him, and that he felt a duty to help as his grandfather had helped him so much.

**Other family members:** he is close to both his aunts, although was closer to his aunt Trish growing up than his Aunt Cyndi. He continued to see them both frequently as an adult. He was not very close with his cousins.

**Friends:** he states he had no difficulty making friends growing up, and had friends in the various neighborhoods he lived in. Joe Sedley was his closest and longest friendship, being best friends from age 10-43 until Joe died of an overdose in 2016. He had another good childhood friend, Brandon Hart, in the a980's-1990's, but had a falling out when he started hanging out with "the wrong type of people." He stated he was friendly with other coworkers during his time at the bakery, particularly Bob Walters. As an adult, he found it harder to make new friends as his work as a truck driver was isolating. He met some new people through his friend Joe Sedley until he passed away. He also found it increasingly difficult to find people with his same traits and interests. He would chat frequently on message boards and chat rooms, although he did not consider any of these online persons friends, as "you have no idea who they really are."

**Romantic Partners:** He states he dated many people, particularly in the late 1980's through the 1990's, but most were short term. His longest relationship was with a woman named Dianna, whom he dated while working at the bakery for approximately 1 year in the early 1990's. His last relationship was with a woman he called Alex (named Tera) in 2004. He states his lifestyle made it challenging to find romantic partners after that time.

#### Church / Religious Organizations:

He states he went to church some growing up, but did not consider himself very religious. He states he started attending Church as an adult about 1 week after his friend Joe's death. However, he does not attribute his seeking out a church to Joe's death, but rather to increasing conservative and right wing beliefs, which drew him to Christianity due to its connections with right wing conservative politics. He said he chose the specific church (White Hall Church of Christ) because he had received a flier about it in the mail after he moved when his grandfather died. He stated he stopped going once he started truck driving again. He reported increasing religious focus during 2018, which he does not attribute to the church at all, but rather to his reading and becoming more knowledgeable about Christianity. He states he would occasionally watch congregations online.

#### Legal, Criminal, and Conduct History

He had a fight with a kid named Bobby Fisher in first grade. Fisher was bigger than Bowers at the time. In 10<sup>th</sup> grade he saw Fisher again, who hit him in the back of the head with a dodgeball. Bowers then punched him in the face and slammed his head against the locker several times to "settle it," and doesn't remember seeing him again.

Bowers does not remember getting into significant trouble or being suspended from school.

Other fights included one with Dianna's other boyfriend, and being hit by random persons without clear provocation on two occasions. He denies any significant head injuries during any of these altercations.

Growing up he states that he would set fires and build and detonate bombs with his friends. However, he states this was never directed at harming people or destroying property other than items he and his friends would find in a junkyard.

Bowers had a longstanding interest in guns, which began due to his friendship with Joe Sedley. They went hunting on occasion and frequently would shoot at shooting ranges together.

Other than stealing from the bakery to support a prescription opiate habit, Bowers denies any other history of theft. Mr. Bowers states he has never been arrested until the shooting.

#### Medications

He denies current medications and was on no medications at the time of the crime other than a daily multivitamin.

#### Family History

He vaguely recalls that his aunt Trish was told not to drive, but was unaware of the reason for this. His grandfather's sister had late onset dementia. He states his mom likely has mental health issues and his maternal aunt was addicted to alcohol and medications. He denies other history of neurological or psychiatric diseases in his family.

#### General Medical History

Ear tubes as a child due to frequent ear infections, broken leg while sledding at age 13, back pain he suffered due to an injury at the bakery, and a skin infection with possible abscess requiring treatment with IV antibiotics while incarcerated after the shooting. He also describes injuries from being shot by police that are now fully healed.

#### Substance Use

**Alcohol:** reports that he drank more heavily in the 1990's when he would go out to bars with friends. He probably blacked out a few times. He denied any history of withdrawal. He drank rarely from 2015-2018. He did not consume any alcohol at or around the time of the shooting.

**Tobacco:** He was a lifelong smoker until he came to prison. He is unsure how much as he would roll his own cigarettes to save money.

**Marijuana:** He smoked fairly regularly, maybe once per week through the 1990's until 2004.

**Prescription Opiates:** he had a back injury at work after a fall, at which point he was prescribed opiate medications. He began using more and more money to pay for these, which he bought online or off the street. He stopped using opiates after he was caught stealing money and fired from the bakery in 2004.

**Heroin:** He would occasionally snort heroin when he could not get prescription opiates.

**Hallucinogens:** experimented a few times with LSD in the 1990's.

**Cocaine:** he used cocaine rarely in the 1990's and early 2000's, typically when he was out at bars. He snorted or smoked it. He denied any instances of cocaine making him paranoid.

### Neurological History

#### **Traumatic Brain Injury:**

In elementary school sometimes in the early 1980's, he was tripped and hit his head on the bleachers, getting knocked unconscious. He does not recall going to the hospital, but he does remember his mother being instructed to wake him up overnight to ask him questions. He denies any cognitive, behavioral, or emotional changes following the injury.

While driving bakery delivery truck, he was hit by a truck, causing the racks in the van to hit the back of his head. He is unsure if he lost consciousness. He was dazed but recalls checking on the lights in the truck to make sure they were on, and needing to crawl out the back sliding door because the front and passenger doors would not open. He then does not remember anything until the ambulance arrived. He had a significant amount of bleeding from his head and went to the emergency room and got staples. He did not stay overnight. He denies any cognitive, behavioral, or emotional changes following the injury.

A few times has hit head on low ceiling and was momentarily dizzy for a few seconds before recovering.

He denied any history of anoxic brain injuries, respiratory depression from drug use, or cardiac arrest.

#### **Seizures:**

He denies any history of convulsions or motor automatisms, including eye widening, fixed stare, oral (lip smacking, chewing, grinding, swallowing), reactive (continue ongoing motor activity, semi-purposeful), stereotypies (eye / head / limb deviations, tonic / dystonic, fencing, hemiparesis).

He denies any episodic spells of memory loss, confusion, loss of consciousness, loss of responsiveness, déjà vu, jamais vu, depersonalization / derealization, hallucinations (olfactory,

gustatory, visual, auditory, somatic), intense emotions unconnected from experience (fear, sadness, anger, pleasure, etc), forced thinking, or body distortions

He recalls one episode around age 17 where he acutely developed unexplained shortness of breath. Otherwise, denies any evidence for autonomic auras, including abdominal rising / falling (roller-coaster), sweating / flushing, heart palpitations, respiratory rate, vomiting, urinary sensations.

**Motor Symptoms:**

One occasion noted hand tremor when getting handcuffed with wrist against barrier. Wasn't aware until he saw it. Has occasionally happened again. His middle toe on his left foot is numb, he thinks from jumping out of a FedEx truck he drove in 2011.

**Cognitive Symptoms:**

He reports some difficulty remembering names unless he sees them written down. On one occasion several years ago he reported missing a credit card payment, which was unusual and did not happen again. Otherwise, he denies problems with memory, judgment, decision-making, attention, concentration, focus, language, speech, swallowing, orientation, visuospatial functions, or functional independence.

**Socioemotional / Behavioral Symptoms:**

Denies apathy, loss of empathy / sympathy / compassion, hyperphagia, hyperorality, irritability, frustration, reactive aggression, rigidity, or perseverative behaviors. He states his impulse control is good and he could easily delay gratification. He denies loss of social norm adherence outside of comments in online forums and the shooting. He states he experiences a full range of emotions, can recognize emotions in others, and can regulate his own emotions. He may have some trouble "reading people" or putting himself in someone else's shoes, like a character in a movie (he states you would "just be guessing" what they are thinking).

Neuropsychiatric History

**Mood:**

He does not think he has been truly depressed (denies prolonged periods of sadness, tearfulness, hopelessness) but is often disappointed and frustrated by life. He states psychiatric hospitalizations when he was younger were for aggression and hostility towards his mother, and denies that he was depressed at those times once he didn't have to live with her.

He denies any current depression and denied any mood problems at the time of the shooting.

**Suicidal Behaviors:**

He states he has had one genuine suicide attempt, when he tried to overdose on either aspirin or Tylenol in 1989. He does not remember details of which hospital he was taken to.

He does not recall ever feeling suicidal at age 10 and threatening to jump off a bluff or cliff.

In 1989 that he was drinking grain alcohol and smoking a cigarette and accidentally light his arms on fire, causing scars to the left arm. He said he didn't care if he would have died at the time and was just drinking to "see where it goes." However, he denied that he was actually suicidal.

He states that in 2004 he was not actually suicidal. He was being fired from the bakery and evicted from his apartment, and stated he feigned suicide to be able to go to a hospital for a place to stay for a few days.

He denied any suicidal thoughts at the time of the shooting.

**Mania:**

He had an episode of increased energy and decreased need for sleep when taking stimulants in the 1990's, but denies any other episodes of mania

**Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms:**

He states that he likes to be organized, but denies obsessive or compulsive behaviors.

**Psychotic Symptoms:**

He denies any prior history of hallucinations, including no voices speaking to him or command hallucinations. He denies any feelings of paranoia, persecution, religious delusions, delusional misidentifications, thought insertion, or thought broadcasting.

When asked about specific reports of possible delusions in other records, he denies claims that he was paranoid about people being out to get him at the bakery and keeping a shotgun at the door (he gets upset at how stupid it would be to keep a shotgun by the door and not by your bed). He states he has concerns about world governments like the U.N., but feels it is extremely unlikely they would act as soldiers and certainly not that they would attack him specifically. He denied reports that he believed his mind could be uploaded by a computer by the government or altered. He denies reports that he believes there are messages in movies about future deaths.

When asked whether he believes in ghosts, he states he thinks this may have been related to when the lightbulb in his hallway went out every week for a period of time, and he made the comment that it might be ghosts. He does not believe this and thinks that it was probably an electrical wiring issue. He does state that he believes in spirits because these are discussed in the bible. He does not think he has any personal experience with spirits and that they exist in a different dimensional space. However, he stated a belief that this dimensional barrier may break down at some point, and that the spirits could be confused for alien beings by those who are not Christian. He states this would be at the end of days, but that he has no idea when that might be. He gives the analogy of a bike lock: even if signs line up for the first three numbers, it tells you nothing about when the fourth number is going to get in the right position.

When asked about his concerns with red dye leaking out onto his skin, he points to a tinge in his opaque wristband. He believes the dye gets onto his hands, but is unsure if it is absorbed into his body or is causing problems.

When asked about his beliefs regarding salt and his cognition, he states that he feels he is understanding things better now than ever before, beginning around 2021. Feels he can computationally understand things better. When trying to figure out why this may have happened, one potential explanation he gives is that he has increased his use of salt because of the bland prison food. He states other examples for where salt seemed to be associated with better health and cognition, such as when his mother was prescribed salt tablets in the hospital after a pituitary surgery, and that his grandfather had much less cognitive impairment than his maternal great-aunt, and that one main difference between the two is that his grandfather consumed a lot of salt. However, he states there are many other potential reasons for his improved cognition, such as his having less distractions and time spent on daily activities like laundry, cleaning, cooking, and keeping track of the finances.

### **Physical Examination**

#### **General Medical Examination:**

Body: no dysmorphic features.

Head, ear, eyes, nose, mouth, and throat: poor dentition.

Skin: no neurocutaneous signs. He has scars in his left shoulder and proximally from his left elbow from healed gunshot wounds. He has mild areas of white scarring on the left arm from prior burn injuries.

Cardiovascular: normal rate, regular rhythm, normal to auscultation.

Respiratory: normal to auscultation.

Gastrointestinal: normal liver size, no tenderness to palpation, normal bowel sounds.

#### **Psychiatric Examination:**

Appearance: clean, well groomed

Behavior: calm, cooperative. Becomes animated and passionate when talking about specific topics of interest related to his beliefs and politics, but can quickly regulate these emotions when switching to a different topic.

Speech: normal volume and tone

Mood: fine

Affect: normal

Thought process: linear, goal-directed. He occasionally provided tangential response to discuss his thoughts on Jews, Immigration, and politics (the topics he wanted to speak to me about), but he easily redirectable when asked.

Thought content: no suicidal ideations.

Perceptions: no hallucinations, does not appear to be responding to internal stimuli.

Insight: good insight regarding his legal issues and the nature of these evaluations. He continues to believe his actions were morally justified.



Judgement: normal

**Cognitive Examination:**

Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA): 28/30 (normal)

Frontal Assessment Battery (FAB): 18/18 (normal)

Orientation: oriented to person, place, and time other than being one day off for exact date (22<sup>nd</sup> instead of 21<sup>st</sup>)

Attention / working memory: normal digits forward, backwards, and sustained attention task.

Executive / Frontal Functions: normal set-shifting on trails part B. Normal motor sequencing on the Luria test. Normal response inhibition and cognitive control on the go / no-go and conflicting instructions tasks. Normal anti-saccade test. Normal finger sequencing. No perseveration on hand clapping or drawing alternating squares and triangles.

Memory: 5/5 immediate recall, 4/5 correct at 5-minute delayed recall. Gets missed item with multiple choice. He brings up asking about words again after 20 minutes, again getting 4/5 correct. Memory of recent events and recent and remote presidents intact.

Language: normal, fluent speech without speech articulatory problems. Normal naming, repetition, abstraction. Normal reading and writing. 17 F words in 1 minute.

Visuospatial: normal cube copying. Clock drawing normal. Normal flower drawing.

Higher Order Sensorimotor: No evidence of apraxia, alien limb, or higher order cortical sensory dysfunction.

**Neurological Examination:**

Cranial Nerves: normal smell on Quick Smell Identification Test. Pupils were equal and symmetric. Visual fields full to confrontation. Extra-ocular movements were normal. Facial sensations and movement were normal. No evidence of dysarthria. Normal hearing to finger-rub. Normal tongue movements.

Motor: normal bulk and tone. 5/5 strength throughout. No bradykinesia, dystonia, or myoclonus. He had a mild tremor in the right arm that was absent at rest and was present during certain positions, with mild end action tremor.

Sensory: mild reduction to vibration in feet. Abnormal positive / unusual sensation over area of burned skin on his left arm. Otherwise, normal and symmetric to light touch, pinprick, vibration.

Reflexes: no grasp, palmomental, rooting, snout, or Glabellar / Meyerson reflexes. Absent Babinski.

Cerebellar: normal finger-nose-finger, random alternating movements, heel-to-shin. No past-pointing or overshooting.

Gait: normal gait, easily able to get in and out of chair unassisted.

**Mental State and Behavior in Relation to the Criminal Offense**

Beliefs About Jews, Immigration, the Great Replacement, and the War Against White Nations

He states that he had always been right-wing and conservative leaning, but became much more focused on Jews beginning in 2017-2018. He states that as he was not driving trucks at the time, he could spend more time investigating claims he had been hearing for years about how “Jews are running the media” or “Jews are controlling the country.” He states these claims were becoming “louder” and more mainstream, prompting him to investigate further. He would find links under the comments section in Youtube, and increasingly became more and more convinced about the accuracy of such claims. He joined GAB, a far-right social media website, which further provided support and evidence for these beliefs. He states he became aware of Jewish controlled efforts to attack predominately white countries by encouraging immigration, a plan he referred to as the “Great Replacement.” He adamantly denies that these beliefs are false or delusional, stating the evidence is there if you look for it.

He states that the great replacement through immigration and other efforts are part of a war to destroy white nations, and that the Jews play a central role in orchestrating these efforts. Bowers sees himself as a soldier in this war to defend White Nations against the Jews and Immigrants. While he is Christian and believes in the end of days, he states that he has no idea when the end of days are coming, and that the current war against white nations is not directly connected to the end of days.

Mr. Bowers denied any feelings that Jews, immigrants, or anyone else involved in the war against white nations were directly targeting him, or that he was being watched, followed, tracked, or tricked in any way by these or any other groups. He also denied that he was being instructed or commanded by anyone regarding these beliefs.

#### Motivation and Planning for the Attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue

Mr. Bowers states he decided he needed to take definitive action and began planning an attack around April 2018. He spent “tons of time” investigating potential targets, including individual assassination attempts of members of the antidefamation league (ADL). He studied the terrorist attack by Anders Breivik in Norway, but stated he mostly had to figure out on his own how to plan an offensive attack.

Eventually, in September and October of 2018, he identified the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS) as a target. HIAS is a Jewish group Bowers believed to be aiding immigration and supporting the great replacement and the war against white nations. He considered targeting HIAS directly, but he concluded that their security was too strong and they were located out of state which would create logistical issues. He therefore decided to target groups supporting HIAS. He identified Dor Hadash, a local congregation supporting HIAS, as a target, as well as a secondary target that was a Jewish organization located behind the post office a few miles from the Tree of Life Synagogue (In reviewing Google maps it appears that this was the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh, located 0.6 miles from the Tree of Life next to a post office).

He states that the shooting at the Tree of Life was motivated, specific, and targeted three main goals:

- 1) Stop a group (Dor Hadash) supporting HIAS
- 2) Scare others that might support HIAS
- 3) Bring awareness to the Great Replacement

In preparation for the attack, Bowers research the Dor Hadash website's calendar to determine dates when events were occurring at the congregation. He noted they typically had events on Wednesdays and Saturdays. He used internet photos and Google maps to determine an approximate layout for the building, although he denies that he ever entered or visited the congregation beforehand. He remembers some confusion about the location because multiple congregations used the same space, but ultimately figured out that Dor Hadash did indeed use that building. He initially had decided to do the attack on October 20<sup>th</sup>, but delayed to the 27<sup>th</sup> for reasons he couldn't remember.

One the morning of the attack, he drove by the two targets he planned to hit (the Tree of Life Synagogue and the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh). He realized that there was a police station between the two targets, and reasoned it would be difficult for him to move from one target to the next without being apprehended. He considered the Synagogue to be the "higher yield" target that would make a bigger statement, so decided to focus on the Tree of Life as a single attack.

#### *Mental State at the Time of the Attack*

Mr. Bowers denied any depression, suicidal ideation, hallucinations, or agitation at the time of the attack. He denied any confusion and described himself before the attack as calm, focused, and goal-oriented. He states he knew there was a danger for him committing the attacks, but felt compelled to fight and to "get it done." He considered himself as a soldier in the war between white nations and Jewish controlled efforts to destroy white nations, and was willing to make a sacrifice if needed. He states that Law enforcement agents were not a target (they are white people), but that they were supporting the enemy so he was willing to attack them to complete his overall mission.

When he went towards the Synagogue he realizes now in retrospect he made a mistake by not bringing more ammo with him (his initial plan had been to leave some in the car for the second attack). He states that he was hypervigilant and focused during the attack, but now cannot remember the exact order of details for what happened. He also states he is surprised at how much he was able to do in such a small amount of time. He feels he was moving methodically and had plenty of time to react appropriately, although by the timelines he has received he states that he must have been moving very quickly. He does not recall all of the details of the building layout he has seen from the governments exhibits, but describes the interior of the building as very complex. He was surprised to learn that he had killed 11 people, as he only remembers killing about 5-6.

In the moment, he described the “targets” (victims) as appearing like featureless silhouettes, and did not perceived details of their face and hair as he was shooting. During breaks in shooting, when he would view the victims on the ground, he perceived all of their features in more detail. When he would stop shooting, he recalls the eerie quiet, and during these times he would become aware of the incredible adrenaline rush he was experiencing, with his heart racing and pounding. He stated the experience felt very real, and not like a dream, like he was an actor, or like he was outside of himself. He states he felt in full control and had full agency throughout the attack. He recalls feeling that he was “definitely in the war now.” He also states at the time he stopped shooting, and later after he was apprehended, he experienced a sense of awe upon realizing the magnitude of what he had just done, which he equates with how the Founders of the US constitution must have felt at the magnitude of their accomplishment. After he was apprehended he felt slightly dazed due to blood loss, and has a period of time during surgery at the hospital he does not remember, but otherwise he reports no changes to his cognition, no additional psychiatric symptoms, and no other alterations to his mental state.

#### Current Views on the Attack

If he could do again, he would have done more research on the target so that there could have been more victims. He gives an example of a recent Dor Hadash bike ride fundraiser to support a refugee family as evidence that his attack did not do enough to deter Jewish support of immigrants and refugees. He continues to maintain his beliefs about Jews, the great replacement, and the war against white nations.