

Will we always know if a criminal has been using marijuana?

by Peter Hitchens

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Last Sunday I suggested the likelihood that **Axel Rudakubana**, the Southport mass-killer had become insane after using marijuana, probably at school. I could not state it as a fact, because I did not know it to be. I thought and think it likely because Rudakubana's personality changed dramatically around the age of 12, a common experience among children who are introduced to marijuana in Britain's schools. This tends to happen round the age of 11, when secondary school begins, though I know of instances where marijuana has been found in primary schools. Rudakubana became moody, angry and unpredictable, and, as we all know, he turned from a normal-looking child into scowling blank-eyed grotesque.

The time was when, in similar instances, I just waited for the facts to come out and it would emerge that the person involved had some sort of drug arrest record. But, with the total collapse of law-enforcement in this area in recent years, this can no longer be relied on. So I theorised.

Numbers of people told me definitively that he could not have been a marijuana user. I cannot see how anyone but Rudakubana could state this, and his testimony on the subject would be tainted by many factors. Unless you had kept him under full-time secret surveillance since the age of 11, you could not possibly know. The use of this drug is now so normal that people don't notice it or regard it as worth reporting. Many don't even see it as a drug. When **Professor Sir Robin Murray**, the distinguished psychiatrist, interviews young patients in his South London hospital, he asks them if they take drugs. Often, they will say no, but, when he asks them if they smoke dope, they say that, yes, of course they do. They thought he meant drugs.

So now I will give you an instance of a case in which marijuana was present, but when media, er, failed to explore this issue. On May 24, 2022, at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, a teenage gunman shot 19 children and two teachers and injured 17 people, perpetrating what became the deadliest school shooting in Texas history.

I had my usual suspicions. Then, I gathered on *Twitter* (thanks to the hawk-like eyes of ex-*New York Times* reporter **Alex Berenson**) that the *New York Times* had initially, briefly, identified the shooter as a marijuana user. Then, the reference had disappeared from the online version. Then it did not appear in the printed version of the paper.

I published this on 29th May 2022:

'SOON after the school massacre in Uvalde, Texas, the mighty *New York Times* found a young woman called **Jocelyn Rodriguez** who had worked with the killer at Wendy's hamburger restaurant. She said the murderer had rowed with his mother and grandmother because they would not let him smoke marijuana. Just 24 hours later, this detail was cut out of the online report, without explanation. I have tried to get in touch with the *New York Times* to find out why, but have received no reply. I have long suspected that mind-altering drugs are a possible factor in crazed mass killings. Of course this idea is unwelcome to a modern establishment full of drug-takers, who applaud legalisation of marijuana. But would they actually suppress evidence that it may be the case? Surely not.'

I made sustained efforts to contact the *New York Times* (which campaigned for the legalising of marijuana in New York State) through all publicly available addresses, and even sought the help of the paper's London bureau chief, with no result.

But, having the great good fortune to work for a national newspaper with considerable resources, I then arranged for an independent U.S.-based freelance to see if the story had been retracted because it was in some way wrong. It was not.

On 12th June I wrote:

IN GEORGE ORWELL'S masterpiece about despotism, *1984*, the hero, Winston Smith, goes through old newspapers looking for stuff which no longer fits in with the official version of the truth, and destroys all trace of it.

This censoring of the past is no longer fiction. For instance, a document which says ‘We do not have an independent, valid test for ADHD, and there are no data to indicate that ADHD is due to a brain malfunction’ has been altered in the records of America’s National Institutes of Health.

These crucial words have been removed. Nobody can explain how, why, or who did it. But I have a copy of the undoctored original which miraculously survived.

Now there is controversy about a report of the recent massacre in Uvalde, Texas, in that great newspaper *The New York Times*, famous for its rectitude. In an early account, the newspaper quoted one of the shooter’s co-workers at the Wendy’s hamburger restaurant in Uvalde as saying she ‘recalled he would often talk about how much he despised his mother and grandmother, whom he told her did not let him smoke weed or do what he wanted’.

I am one of a growing number of people who believe — thanks to evidence of drug use among violent killers — that there may be a connection between marijuana use, mental illness and rampage killings.

This report was of great importance to us. So when it vanished from the *New York Times* website the next day, I tried repeatedly to get an explanation. The newspaper, normally very careful to explain any such changes, has not done so this time. Was the story perhaps wrong? No. *The Mail on Sunday* sent a reporter, **Barbara McMahon**, to Uvalde. She tracked down the woman at Wendy’s, **Jocelynn Rodriguez**.

Ms Rodriguez confirmed that she had said the vanished words to a *New York Times* reporter. She also said the killer had asked colleagues, in her hearing, where he could buy marijuana. I am still trying to get *The New York Times* to explain why it felt that, of all the news it had in its possession that day, the shooter’s liking for marijuana was the bit they did not think was fit to print.’

Source: Peter Hitchens, “Censoring the past is no longer 1984 fiction”, *The Mail on Sunday* (UK), June 12, 2022. URL: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-10907457/Peter-Hitchens-Biased-BBC-says-dope-legal-cocaines-joke-pay-it.html>

A few weeks later, after a killing in Oslo, I noted:

AS WE recently saw in Texas, most Americans miss the point about rampage killings. They are so anxious to blame gun laws, exclusively, that they actually suppress evidence that the killers are crazed by drug abuse, as the *New York Times* did over the Uvalde killer. They shockingly deleted accurate information that he was a marijuana user.

In Europe we have a similar problem, as governments and media are determined to blame Islamist terror, exclusively, for all such events.

So you probably won’t know that the alleged Oslo murderer, who is accused of killing two and wounding 21 others in the Norwegian capital, is on record as having mental problems (common in marijuana users) and has also been convicted for drug possession. As usual with such people it is very hard to see how his crime could possibly have helped any cause.

Yet the Oslo Police have said they consider the attack as ‘an act of extreme Islamist terrorism’.

When the authorities are in the grip of this sort of crazy misunderstanding, there is little hope that anything will be learned from such episodes. So they will keep happening.’

Source: Peter Hitchens, “Still blind to killers’ drug abuse”, *The Mail on Sunday* (UK), July 3, 2022. URL: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-10976505/Peter-Hitchens-no-way-stop-secret-brainwashing-generation.html>

As I said.

About the author

Peter Hitchens (born 1951) is the conservative Christian younger brother of the late Christopher Hitchens, the English atheist. He is a former foreign correspondent in Moscow and Washington. In 2010 he was awarded the Orwell Prize. He writes a regular column for [The Mail on Sunday \(UK\)](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-10976505/Peter-Hitchens-no-way-stop-secret-brainwashing-generation.html) and a [personal blog](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-10976505/Peter-Hitchens-no-way-stop-secret-brainwashing-generation.html). He has published several books, including *The War We Never Fought: The British Establishment’s Surrender to Drugs* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2012). Paperback: 256 pages.
URL: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/war-we-never-fought-9781472939388/>