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The Paddock Puzzle

No explanation or motive has been found for the mass shooting in Las Vegas on October 1, 2017. A closer look at the history of the shooter's family may provide answers and a hypothesis on hidden motives. Why ask at all? Because knowledge of perpetrators is a vital part of preventive politics.

The mass shooting of concert goers on October 1, 2017, in Las Vegas, Nevada, disturbed the global public and stirred anxiety. No apparent motive seemed recognizable behind the havoc wreaked by 64-year-old Stephen Paddock. Media and the public are still speculating about the “unresolved mystery” of this atrocity. The final report of the police investigation released in August 2018 in Las Vegas concludes that no motive could be found. [1]

Neuroscientists and criminologists place their hopes in medical and genetic revelations. Like many others, President Donald Trump ruminated about the “sheer evil” represented in the killer's act. A closer look into the history of the Paddock family may alter these perceptions and present us with a case much less enigmatic. One need only dig a little deeper, be ready to employ psychological and sociological knowledge, and take into account the emotional debris compiled within a dysfunctional family over three generations.

The atrocity committed by the eldest son, the key symptom carrier in the third dysfunctional generation, can be read as the acting out of an unprocessed bulk of unbearable affects amassed over a longer period of time. His crime carries traces of retroactive revenge, of an enactment of cumulative trauma via evoking cumulative trauma in others. Working with the material at hand, the plausibility of this hypothesis is explored.

Stephen Paddock, 64 years old, college graduate, owner of real estate in Arizona, Texas and California, was a US citizen in retirement. He had amassed considerable fortune, estimated at five million dollars -- sufficient to be independently wealthy. He collected rents from his tenants and also won large sums as a gambler at casinos with video poker machines. Together with his girlfriend, who also moved in the milieu of casinos, he would often change residences. At times, the two were separated and lived in their own spheres.

Paddock was considered an entirely nondescript citizen. Up until the day of the mass shooting, he had never had any scrapes with the law. And yet from one day to the other, he appeared to have morphed into a monster. Literally overnight, media and family vowed, this harmless and inconspicuous man mutated into a monstrous mass murderer. On October 1, 2017, Stephen Paddock committed a crime that shocked the public in the US and around the globe. For weeks and months, the tragedy made headlines on television, radio and in newspapers.

When investigators released their final report early in August 2018 Sheriff Lombardo regretted the fact, that they still had “no idea” about the shooter's motive. Yet another report prepared by the “Behavioral Analysis Unit” of the F.B.I. is expected to be released later this year. It remains to be seen whether or not it will come up with a psychological theory.

On the evening of that day, Paddock, who had booked himself into the Mandalay Hotel in Las Vegas, had smashed two windows of his suite on the 32nd floor, propped up firearms and other assault weapons that he had clandestinely stockpiled in his rooms and began to

indiscriminately shoot at the crowd of 22,000 concert goers who were strangers to him. He killed 58 and injured 887 more visitors of the Route 91 Harvest country music festival on Nevada's Las Vegas Strip in what was to become the worst mass murder in the history of the US caused by a single individual. Paddock fired as though he were a hunter aiming from a raised perch at deer unsuspectingly grazing on a clearing. When his improvised shooting range was discovered by security forces within the hotel, he took his own life, according to FBI investigators.

In the wake of the shooting Stephens youngest brother, Eric Paddock, presented himself to television cameras desperately declaring on behalf of the family: "We have no idea why he did this." It was, he said, "as if an asteroid had fallen out of the sky." There was "nothing" at all that would have alarmed anyone about his brother. Only weeks before the catastrophe Stephen had sent their nearly 90-year-old mother in Florida a walking aid because she had trouble lifting her feet. After the power outage due to hurricane Irma in early September 2017 he had enquired about the wellbeing of Eric's family, checking if everyone was all right. He'd kept in touch with his kin, albeit a bit from a distance. Stephen Paddock was pictured as a normal man, "a regular guy" by all standards, attentive at times, and yes, maybe a little withdrawn. Neighbors in various places granted they'd hardly known the man.

Particularly striking about this case of a mass shooting – followed little more than a month later by the horrific carnage of provincial churchgoers in Texas committed by an estranged army youth – were several factors. Typically, as was again the case in Texas, it's teenagers or younger men who run amok. And in almost all cases documents like letters, diaries or chat records reveal their obvious, previous grievances: they were insecure, unsettled in life, their parents had split up or they'd flunked school.

Yet here, in the Paddock case, the advanced age and the alleged complete lack of motive caused even more concern. He had acted, it appeared, out of the blue. Not a shred of evidence was presented to answer the big Why. Any ideological, religious, racist or political motive seemed to be lacking. Stephen Paddock seems to have made no attempt to justify his actions, he wrote no manifesto or farewell letter. He left no will. On the contrary, he covered his tracks. His victims were young and old, black and white, men and women who simply listened to musicians performing outdoors. The shooter could have had no idea whom his bullets would hit.

The media as well as the broader public had to make do with rumors and speculations to fill in the gap dubbed "a mystery." Conspiracy theories circulated in social media, reporters took to interviewing forensic and medical experts about possible genetic defects or health issues associated with homicidal behavior. A professional profiler told a US weekly magazine that offenders like Stephen Paddock were predestined to murder "from birth." [2] Meanwhile an autopsy of the offender's brain is supposed to clarify whether pathological findings can be made. Given the criminal career of Stephen's father, news outlets speculated about hereditary possibilities of a family history of mental illness, [3] cautiously pointing a finger at a family context. A science editor of the London Times wondered if the son had inherited his father's "psychopathic genes" [4] – eerily reminiscent of pre-World War II terminology.

Elsewhere people resorted to the idea of demonic forces which had been at work. America's president Donald Trump, in his first appearance after the massacre, called it "an act of pure evil." The management of the Mandalay Hotel asked a priest who had been one of the first

responders on the crime scene to bless the hotel room from which Paddock had fired. On October 18, 2017, the ritual act designed to placate distraught hotel staff was performed. On entering the hotel room, reverend Cletus (“Clete”) Kiley declared, he had “felt like I was being pushed back, like don’t come in here.” Kiley, priest of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, proclaimed he “could sense the evil in the room,” Newsweek reported, adding: “Like the rest of the world, the priest could not comprehend what had taken place.”[5] Clete Kiley spoke the words of a prayer beseeching the Archangel Michael for protection in the battle. [6]

Mystifying patterns of interpretation on one side competed with positivist and organicist ones on the other. Both models of explanation are evidence to the affective defense characteristic for the public sphere and proof of depoliticized, psychology-averse present-day thinking. We find traces of this everywhere, for instance in the current popularity of television documentary series such as “Autopsy” or “Medical Detectives” presenting highly technical, forensic casework without any background to the atrocities shown as “gruesome” or “horrible” and oscillating between extreme attention to detail and severe moral condemnation of the disturbed individuals committing the crimes at stake. Thrill is delivered to simultaneously invoke and diffuse horror, while the perpetrators and their acts are exterritorialized, dehumanized: These people are not us: these are the others.

In 2016, Sue Klebold, mother of one of the two gunmen who perpetrated the Columbine High School massacre in Colorado on April 20 in 1999, where they shot twelve students and a teacher, published her bestselling book “A Mother's Reckoning: Living in the Aftermath of Tragedy.” She describes the childhood of her son Dylan, adamant that no one who would have looked into her family prior to the massacre would have had a clue that anything was amiss. Not even with a magnifying glass could anyone have suspected that there was anything beyond the highly average. Children, the mother muses, appear as susceptible to mental illness today as they were to infectious diseases a hundred years ago. Scanning the past, she accuses herself of having overlooked alarming signals in Dylan such as the fact that he had wished for a weapon as a Christmas present. And she claims to remember a haunting moment of fear. Once, she writes, she had cradled new-born Dylan in her arms and sensed a sudden shudder: “It was as if a bird of prey had passed overhead, casting us into shadow. Looking down at the perfect bundle in my arms, I was overcome by a strong premonition: this child would bring me a terrible sorrow.”[7]

Sue Klebold was given opportunity to deliver these and other fragments of superstition and imagination to major media outlets. Her book was widely reviewed. Though the longing for solace and explanations is as touching as it is understandable, it is an alarming symptom for modern societies. We need to come up with more enlightening perspectives; we need to reconsider, revive and further develop the findings of psychoanalysis, psychology and sociology. They seem to have dwindled or perished in an era of digital grandiosity and technical globalization.

Modern societies need, however, to understand better than ever before the psyche of children, youngsters, adults, of smaller and larger groups – we need to understand ourselves. Increased understanding, in this case, of a perpetrator’s mindset, of how he developed and what might have driven him beyond society, helps to demystify him, to reduce a seemingly overpowering, demonic figure to much smaller, to simply human size. This can be very relieving for traumatized survivors and relatives of victims. In easing or erasing the nightmare about the

“big, bad monster” it contributes to the ability to focus on oneself, not on the “overpowering other.” To achieve this, we must face the perpetrator first. Only then can we cast his shadow aside – and we will have learned from his history. We must keep in mind: Searching for explanations is not seeking an excuse. There is none. There never will be any. But it is paramount to learn from horrifying experience in order to lessen its impact and prevent as many other cases as possible from happening at all.

A child who, like Dylan Klebold, asks his parents for a weapon for Christmas can be alarming. However, highly alarming is a mother producing a fantasy about her baby being “doomed.” She had probably projected split-off segments of her subconscious onto the newly born son and had transformed them into the “raptor” circling above her baby thus delegating them to the infant. The child, in turn, will subconsciously absorb the mother’s fantasies, acting them out in later years in one way or another.

Statements like this mother’s should have rung alarm bells, like so many similarly disquieting stories parents or other relatives relate about children. And in societies where psychological cognizance, discernment and recognition are taught and encouraged, those bells would have chimed for many to hear – and enable society to react preventively.

Extreme cases of violence, most of all those happening in peace time and under civilian rule, can push a large group, a society, to its emotional limits, for they put to test the models of self-explanation that a society harbors. They can threaten to deplete the reservoir of reason and sane judgment at hand. The most feared aspects of the extreme cases – be they the girls and boys abused in families like in California in January 2018, the athletic standouts suffering abuse from their coaches or the thousands of children abused by members of the clergy – are those aspects that are most prone to reveal the involvement of the society at large, of all those of us who condoned irritating behavior, were blind to alarm signals and unable to identify structures of malpractice and inhumane treatment or living conditions of children and adults. Extreme cases arise in the middle of society and the way they are handled shed light on its maturity or immaturity. As such a case emerges, a plethora of rationalizations and defense mechanisms that society holds in store can be observed. This is where, in the Paddock case, the idea of “pure evil” stems from, or the hope for a coroner finding indications for some “brain damage”. And this is why in contexts as these it is worthwhile to look into the structures of the history behind a case.

Stephen Paddock’s case, more than most cases of amok teens, represents the “sudden” and inexplicable outburst of extreme violence in a nutshell. The perpetrator did not seem to consider an announcement of his motivation necessary or possible. At the end of his despair, he probably turned psychotic; it seems he did not even allow himself the comforting imagination that he will be recognized posthumously as heroically reacting to the hostile conditions that he saw himself in.

In the days and weeks after the massacre of Las Vegas, the siblings, the girlfriend, the offender’s former neighbors, beleaguered by the media, were pressured to come up with problem-solving recollections or observations. None surfaced. “There was nothing secret or strange about him,” a relative told the Washington Post.[8] FBI investigators were faced with an enigma; “mystery” became the most often used term.

Eric, the perpetrator's youngest brother, had repeatedly hoped for a pathological find on his otherwise so normal and generous millionaire brother, "because if they did not find anything we're all in trouble." [9] In that case, he implies, nobody in society is safe from dangerously going berserk or knowing someone who might. But the "we" also implies the family fears something coming to light that seems to have been swept under the carpet.

No such luck, however. Brain tissue of the assassin has meanwhile been examined in the department of forensic pathology at the Stanford University School of Medicine in hope of finding anomalies that would "explain" Stephen Paddock's state of mind. The autopsy report released in February of 2018 revealed nothing. No striking abnormalities were found in the gray matter of Paddock's brain or any other organ of his, no significant amounts of any intoxicating drug, no alcohol in his blood. The substances found which he had been exposed to, such as Diazepam (Valium), forensic toxicologist Laura M. Labay concluded, did "not have any pharmacological activity." [10]

Families, just as societies, strive to denounce the delinquents that come from their midst as the odd ones out, so as to circumvent the fact that they are the products of the system they grew up in. It is not an innovative insight, but becoming paramount again to recognize just that, not least in order to help demystify the crime and the perpetrator, in order to educate, heal and prevent. Seen with the eyes of analytical enlightenment, behind and inside every criminal act causes can be outlined and behavior aligned to backgrounds, without justifying, vindicating or excusing the outrage committed.

There had to be motives. And they can be found through biographical work. This conviction stood at the outset of the search. Surely, only a biographical puzzle or mosaic would only be unearthed in parts, but one can try to start with collecting relevant data. Information about the Paddock family is scattered over a large number of publicly available sources. Data were first brought into chronological order. When arranging these data – births, nuptials, residential addresses, deaths – on a timeline, a thread began to suggest contexts, although generating constant caveats and question marks as well. "If that's how it was" should be kept in mind at all times while reading.

This is about the attempt to see a child. It's about seeing a child which had not been seen, it seems, and understanding why this child could have developed into a first successful then desperate adult who catapulted himself out of the society from which he came.

Traces of a biography

In May 1960, seven-year-old Stephen Paddock won a regional piano competition for children in Tucson, Arizona. He will have been proud of his success and that his name and year of birth, 1953, were published in the Arizona Daily Star. His parents must have been equally proud of their son, they probably praised and encouraged him. Though Stephen's musical performance in a provincial desert town in the southern region of the United States is more likely to have been a modest piano piece rather than a Mozart sonata, he must have convinced the jury with something of his own, be it musicality, ambition, performance or virtuosity or a little bit of each.

The very boy who gave his concert in May 1960 in Arizona became a mass murderer of concert goers in October 2017 in Nevada. In committing a criminal act unique in its

dimension and scope, he acted like a civilian at war with society: its laws, its peace, its zest for life.

Why?

There will hardly be a definitive answer in the case of Stephen Paddock. As of January 2018, the Las Vegas Municipal Police Department had not come up with a theory apt to answer the question why. A preliminary report issued on January 18, 2018, clearly states: “nothing was found to indicate motive on the part of Paddock [...]”[11] And yet an entire cluster of traces indicate answers – to be found in abundance in the disaster of a socialization: the early period in life where social skills, norms and values are acquired and where trauma can play a pivotal role in the way the individual perceives itself as well as society.

A host of material hints at unusual and extreme circumstances surrounding Stephen Paddock’s upbringing. It offers dots that can be connected to reveal or at least offer new insights and contexts. This exercise is not about unearthing a hitherto unknown manifesto buried in the backyard, but rather to piece together an unwritten manifesto culminating in the intentional collecting of firearms to commit the atrocity of October 1. Surely, from outside and from a distance one cannot remember as the family itself might have. But one can attempt to remember facts to assemble a body of proof.

Much of the material used is available through archives of local and regional papers in the US states of Illinois, Arizona, California, Nevada, Texas and, Florida. And with the exception of the children's concert, up to October 1, 2017, most of this material does not concern Stephen Paddock himself but his father, Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr.

This father of four was an unscrupulous criminal offender: a bank robber and fraudster, who during long stretches of his biography led a double life. Where local press reported on offences and arrests of the man, his family would incidentally be mentioned, his wife and his four sons, Stephen, born in 1953, Patrick in 1957, Bruce in 1959 and Eric in 1960.

The perpetrator’s father, Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr.

Benjamin Hoskins Paddock, Stephens’s paternal grandfather, as born on 27 August in 1881. He came from Baraboo, Sauk County of western Milwaukee in the sparsely populated state of Wisconsin. In the Great Lakes area, the pioneering spirit of America was still palpable. Paddock Sr. was a cabinetmaker and timber merchant, later in life he seems to also have worked a warehouse manager for port authorities at the Great Lakes. Forefathers of the Paddocks had arrived in the US during toward the end of the 18th century. One of them had patriotically been baptized as George Washington Paddock. They were descendants of Protestant immigrants mainly from Germany, Great Britain and Norway.

Around 1920, Benjamin Paddock Sr. married Olga Emilia Elizabeth Gunderson from Sheboygan, Wisconsin, a port town on the shores of Lake Michigan north of Chicago. According to her date of birth, March 6, 1888, she was the second youngest of four sisters. Travis Gross, director of the Sheboygan Heritage Museum, places the Gundersons among the influential family in the region. Olga Gunderson’s father Gustav, of Swedish origin, sailed as a captain on the Great Lakes. The family is said to have been relatively wealthy through their trade and transport business. To this day several Gundersons, including the head of a law firm, reside in Sheboygan.

It looks like Olga Gunderson married not only late but also somewhat below her station while he married above his. On November 1, 1926, the couple had a son who remained their only child. Maybe early infant deaths had preceded Olga's giving birth. At the time the mother was 38 years old, the father 45. Their child, Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr., was given the same names as his father who would now address himself as Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Sr., thereby indicating dynastic aspiration. The father may have placed great hopes in his only son whose identity as a namesake shows he was literally to be his successor.

In 1960, at the age of 34, the son, taken into custody by law enforcement, spoke to a psychiatrist about his childhood and youth. Physician William B. McGrath of Phoenix, Arizona, had been assigned by the court to deliver an expert assessment on the mental health of Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr. [12]

Benjamin Jr. stated he had had free reign in the household of his parents from an early age on. "I got away with an awful lot," he claimed, "I went where I felt like it and interrupted everybody's schedule." McGrath grimly added: "He frankly, almost boastfully tells of his early unwillingness to accept any discipline and of his parents' neglect in applying any discipline." Throughout McGrath's roughly three-page report, the doctor's irritation at what he learns from the patient is palpable. Benjamin Jr., six-foot-four tall, weighed almost 240 pounds and claims he had been almost as tall aged twelve and a half when he began driving his own car.[13] McGrath's annoyed tone speaks of disapproval of the father's inability to keep the son at bay. It is quite conceivable that the ageing couple was overwhelmed in dealing with their son's temper and had let their long-awaited child have his way. It's also likely that tensions existed between the parents' two unequal families of origin, open or latent devaluation of the son in law's background by the captain's kin. Such tensions would not go unnoticed by an alert "mother's darling" who might have banked on the asymmetry when thwarting paternal admonitions.

By 1935 the names of Benjamin Paddock Sr., his wife and his son are listed in the register of inhabitants for the town Superior, a town bordering Lake Superior in Wisconsin. Here or in Sheboygan, Benjamin Jr. will have enrolled at primary school. In 1940, his father being already close to sixty, mother in her late forties, the family of three relocated to Cook County, the metropolitan area of Chicago, Illinois. Benjamin Junior's years of roaming wild in the countryside will have ended there and school in the city could have challenged him more than his school in Wisconsin.

In any case, the adolescent teenager had to say farewell to the environment he was familiar with, including friends, neighbors, schoolmates and several relatives. Only the parents and the vicinity to the Great Lakes remained. However, soon the fifteen year old quit school and in 1941 he volunteered for the US army. He served no more than seven or eight months and was dismissed from military service for discipline problems. Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr. gave McGrath the impression the military was happy to get rid of him and let him off the hook without a dishonorable discharge. "They found out I was just wasn't going to do what they wanted me to", he told McGrath. Whether or not Benjamin Jr. was at all involved in the theatre of World War II could not be determined. In any case he must later have delivered adventurous stories about his time with the army, as newspapers reported in the 1970s.

At the time of his son Benjamin's inscription sixty-year-old Paddock Sr. had signed up to serve as a Quartermaster for the US Army Corps. His father's patriotic commitment may have

motivated the son to do like him, to view him as a role model or impress him to gain his respect. After his dismissal from the army, around 1942, Benjamin Jr. spent some recreational months at his parents' home in Chicago where his mother doted on him, as McGrath notes with indignation.

Perhaps the parents planned to send their son back into the working world, perhaps he broke away from home - in any case Benjamin Jr. made it to Los Angeles in 1943 or 1944, where he lodged with an aunt, presumably one of his mother's three sisters. He began earning dollars as a bus driver for the L.A. Railroad Company but soon was fired, supposedly for failure to report a traffic incident. He told McGrath he had also enjoyed clandestine weekend jaunts with the buses at his disposal.

With no income and possibly sent back home by a heavily strained aunt, Benjamin Jr. travelled across the US later in 1944 to spend another ten months at his parent's place while working for the Greyhound Company in Chicago. Being a bright and fast learner he acquired considerable skill in handling vehicles and used these skills to prepare his criminal career.

In 1946, now 19 years old, Benjamin Paddock Jr. was arrested and indicted in Chicago on several counts, among them theft of twelve automobiles, forgery of documents and imposture. One of the offences the state attorney held against him was to have stolen army stationery from his father's desk to abuse it for counterfeit sales contracts. Benjamin Jr. was taken to a high security prison, the Statesville Correction Center in Joliet, Illinois. Of the eight year sentence, he served five. At an age where his peers attended college or took on a profession Benjamin Jr. received an informal education behind bars, his equivalent for professional training.

Stephen Paddock's future father spent formative years in Joliet. Despair and constraint, rage and fear must have played a dominant role in the father's socialization during this period. These affective states may have had their indirect share in the escalation of Stephen Paddock's behavior, in fearful states of persecution and guilt, anger and deeply rooted despair.

The Statesville Correction Center in Joliet, a monumental limestone construction, existed from 1858 to 2002. It had been built by forced labor of prisoners with material from the nearby quarry. Some wings embodied the concept of the Panopticon which prison reformer Jeremy Bentham had designed and Michel Foucault analyzed in one of his major works.[14]

He described the Panopticon as an architectural manifestation of the power regime of prisons, where inmates as well as staff are inescapably monitored from a central position.

While Benjamin Paddock Jr. was doing time the directorate of the prison lay in the hands of Joseph Ragen, an adept of social rehabilitation through more humane incarceration. Joliet's modernity was demonstrated for instance by the prohibition of physical violence, staff were not allowed to beat inmates. Yet reports on the asylum reflect an atmosphere of constant control, discipline and submission, which will have produced impulses to undercut the rules. Up until 1950, when card playing with cash was abolished, secret card and gambling clubs thrived between prison walls. Benjamin Paddock Jr., who later opened bingo saloons, will have been part of the "gambling era" in this jail. His son Stephen too became a professional gambler who for decades played against video poker machines in cities like Reno and Vegas.

In 1949 Adlai Stevenson had become governor of Illinois, a democrat and dedicated reformer of the judiciary and police system. His influence contributed to improved conditions within the prison system. But prison director Joseph Ragen, beyond party politics, managed to continue running Joliet and further enforce the established style of regime. As of the 1950s, in addition to the quarry, prisoners were able to work in orchards and vegetable fields, furniture was manufactured, and there was a textile factory, classes were offered, a choir and an orchestra were in place.[15]

At the same time, the buildings laid out for less than half the number were often overcrowded with up to 5000 inmates at a time. Military drill and utmost cleanliness were required, isolation cells looked like man-sized cages. Benjamin Paddock Jr. stated to McGrath, as he had often become involved in brawls he had spent “seventy percent” of his sentence in solitary confinement. The last two years of his sentence he claims to have entirely spent on his own in a cell. Even if he exaggerated, as he often did, his claims ring true enough to raise concern. The parents surely will have visited their only child or have at least written letters.

It’s hard to imagine a contrast more extreme than that between the freewheeling life of the premature youngster driving, stealing and manipulating cars and the regression forced upon an individual in near total confinement. Nevertheless, Benjamin Paddock Jr. seems to have mobilized defenses and survival strategies in coping with claustrophobia, some type of imagined outbreak to deal with chronic stress. He seems to have harbored a strong will to cast aside depressing components of his situation, to remain rebellious and in fighting mode, even if this meant risking yet more repression and sanctions against his criminal maneuvers. It testifies to considerable resilience that the 24 year old, after having spent half a decade in the unbecoming social climate of Joliet, summoned up enough energy to instantly rekindle his car dealer’s skills and, in 1952, one year after his release from prison, to celebrate his wedding.

Stephen Paddock’s Mother: Dolores Irene Paddock, née Hudson

In the wake of October 1, 2017, the media gave considerable attention to the father of the Las Vegas perpetrator, but hardly any to his mother: the then nearly ninety-year-old lady living in Florida who had asked the FBI for the ashes of her son in order to give him a burial.[16] She seems another key figure in the tragedy.

When Dolores Irene Hudson married Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr. on July 16, 1952, it must have been clear to the bride that she wedded a former convict. Benjamin Paddock Jr., two years older than she, may have impressed her as a self-confident and eloquent guy, resourceful in many ways, a hands-on practical man who did things his way and appeared entirely unintimidated by authority. Like her husband, Irene, as she calls herself, had grown up during the Great Depression in the United States, and in times of economic crisis daring talent for improvisation was much appreciated.

The couple got married in Reno, Nevada, at the First Methodist United Church, a neo-gothic concrete building with luminous church windows. The Evening Democrat, a newspaper of Fort Madison in southeastern Iowa, announced their wedding on August 25, 1952, and states 4090 Kenmore Street in Chicago as their address. The bride, it said, was a granddaughter of Henry Tausch of Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois. Records show that members of the Tausch family had been residents of Nauvoo at least since 1828. It was in this same Nauvoo that Dolores Hudson was born on January 10 1928.

The town on the east bank of the Mississippi river had been founded by Mormons [17] and offers an unusual history. By the middle of the 19th century an exodus of Mormons to Utah – due to riots and ideological infighting – had been underway. Nauvoo, now mostly deserted, was chosen in 1849 as the site for a model settlement of utopian socialists inspired and led by the French Icarians. They had bought some land and brought with them artists, musicians, winemakers and artisans, established a theatre, a library and newspapers in English, French and German. A brief cultural blossom ensued until the settlement encompassing 1,800 members altogether – within a spell of around eleven years – disbanded, as a result of debts and other dilemmas. However, the narrative of the exceptional Icarian period of Nauvoo may have left the later puritan population with a certain tolerance for or curiosity of the free spirited.

Dolores Irene was the daughter of Ralph Rolland Hudson (1893-1969) and Elsie Marie Hudson, née Tausch (1893-1945) who was of German descent. Her mother died when Dolores was 17 and her younger sister Ora Elaine, born on July 4, 1931, was 14 years old. For a third, younger sister, Doris Hudson Ayers, no exact biographical data could be established. With all likelihood the eldest daughter will have been coerced into replacing the loss of the mother looking after the household of father and siblings. Perhaps Dolores Irene had previously also tended to the needs of an ailing mother. In any case, we can assume that a certain degree of parentification [18] was present.

At the time, Benjamin Paddock Jr. was arrested in 1946 Dolores Irene Hudson, 18 years old, had moved with her father and sisters to Fort Madison, Iowa, registers tell us. There she may have received training as secretary, the profession she made a living by in later years. And she will have met Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr. in Chicago or in and around that area where he was busy travelling and selling cars. They might have chosen Reno for their wedding because of liberal legal regulations in Nevada where not only Las Vegas is famously known for “quick and easy weddings”. The bride’s widowed father and the rest of the family surely were not overjoyed by Dolores presenting a former convict as her spouse. Benjamin Paddock Jr. explained to psychiatrist McGrath he had dropped the job as a traveling salesman once he was married, possibly after his wife got pregnant and insisted on having her husband around the house.

At the time of the Reno wedding, Dolores had not yet been with child. The baby arrived on April 4, 1953, ten months after the nuptial ceremony. Stephen Craig Paddock, who was to become the Las Vegas mass murderer 64 years later, was born in Clinton, Iowa, his parents must have left Chicago some time before. On his birth certificate, issued by the Iowa State Department of Health, the father is named as “Patrick Benjamin Paddock,” as if slightly altering his true identity so as to distance himself from his past or from his family of origin. The father's profession is noted as “salesman for the Erectrite Corporation.”

Neither of those two who had found each other came from particularly stable homes. Benjamin Paddock Junior's parents were unusually old when he was born and had raised their only child ranging somewhere between helplessness and laissez faire. Dolores Irene Hudson had lost her mother when she was a teenager. While Stephen Paddock’s father had become used to self-centered, irresponsible and ruthless behavior, his mother, after the premature death of her own mother, will probably have had to shoulder too much responsibility given her age.

Benjamin Junior's availability for the wife and their new-born son did not last long. Only a few months after Stephen had been born Benjamin Paddock Jr. faced prison again. He was sentenced to four years, leaving the mother shocked and the newly formed family torn asunder for three years until he was paroled. Benjamin Paddock Jr. spent those years in a place he knew all too well, the Statesville Correction Center in Joliet, Illinois. Apparently he had not committed his new series of crimes in the surroundings of his current residential area but in Chicago, about 370 miles from there. In his conversation with McGrath he claimed that he had been abetted by some former fellow inmates from Kansas City. The 1953 indictment accused him, along other counts, of document fraud amounting to \$90,000. It gives the impression that this was the way in which the young husband and father had the intention to take care of wife and son.

Irene Paddock will most probably have met with reproachful comments from her family of origin, remarks such as "Didn't we tell you he's no good?"

During the three years her husband was incarcerated, Irene was left to her own devices with baby and toddler Stephen. Initially, her sister Ora may have been around. On July 23, 1953, four months after Stephen was born, the Mason City Globe Gazette of Iowa announced the wedding of Ora Elaine Hudson, 22, from Clinton, Iowa, with Donald Henry Gellhorn, 21 years old, from Waterloo, Iowa. Ora Elaine, who must have known Stephen as a child, passed away in California in 2009 where for many decades she had lived with her husband and had had a son. What role aunt Ora had played for her nephew Stephen and what he had meant to her could not be ascertained.

Apparently, Dolores Irene moved back to Chicago at some point during her three years as a single mother. She may have found employment as a secretary in the more urban environment. She may have taken advantage of the vicinity of her parents-in-law to help her look after the child, and she may also have sought a location closer to the prison where she could visit her husband. As soon as he had left jail, however, in August 1956, the reunited family moved from Chicago to Tucson in Arizona. After his release, Benjamin Paddock Jr. had told McGrath, he had first visited his parents in Oregon. On his return trip to Chicago he had travelled through Arizona, liked the climate and had decided to settle there. The entire family may have had a conceivable longing to change location so as to escape the social sphere within which the now notorious criminal record of son, husband and father Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr. was known all too well.

Time with Father: Stephen Paddock, three to seven years old

When Stephen was three and a half years old many changes happened in his life. He previously never had to share his mother with anyone, now, all of a sudden, a father whom he could only have known from visits in prison was present all day long. The child was confronted with a man who had spent eight of his thirty years in detention and had more experience with the roughness and toughness of this realm than with the responsibilities of fatherhood. In any case, the fact that Benjamin Paddock Jr. had urged his family to resettle seems to speak for an attempt to say: "Let's go somewhere else and start from scratch." A new beginning was possible, if not for the sake of the child.

The Paddocks had found a home on Block 1100 of North Camino Miraflores at the western fringes of Tucson, a town which until mid-19th century had been part of neighboring Mexico. Everything here was new to the three who arrived, their neighborhood, the local dialect, the

desert climate, the landscape. Where Tucson counts one million inhabitants today, it had 220,000 inhabitants in 1960. Many of them were veterans of World War II, who had after 1945 had transferred their households to a place equally sunny as Florida or California at considerably less cost of living.

The Paddock family bought a pink-painted, ranch-style bungalow with four bedrooms surrounded by knee high walls, cactuses and desert shrubs. In his conversation with psychiatrist McGrath, Paddock claims that their real estate had been purchased with a couple of thousand dollars: his wife's savings. There are indications that his father-in-law had also contributed to cover the costs and maybe some proceeds of Paddock's shady deals went into the house as well. Apart from the house, a gas station had been bought, situated in the same street.

In Tucson, and only there, Stephen Paddock was offered some conventional family normality with mother, father and child living together. It lasted from the age of three to seven. During a crucial phase of boyhood where the child's bonds with mother are loosened and the paternal role gains more importance a degree of triangulation was achieved.

We don't know how the father fulfilled his part. Did he engage in playing with Stephen, did he take him fishing, toss balls to him on the lawn, had him watch dad or help dad work at the gas station? And what kind of narrative did the parents use to explain father's resurfacing? Stephen will gradually have noticed that their family was different from others and perhaps also that relatives on mother's side had reservations regarding his dad. Not only for Stephen, but for his father too, these four years were the only ones in his life he spent in the framework of an – at least outwardly – intact family. Yet those four Tucson years would be an interim between his father's prison terms.

From what is known about Benjamin Paddock Jr. he is likely to have been an instable father, impulsive at times and most probably prone to aggressive or even violent behavior due to the post-traumatic stress caused by solitary confinement and the rough prison environment in general. At the same time, this father possessed some fascinating skills, especially to a young boy in the 1950s. He is said to have had a rich imagination and must have been quite a storyteller; he held an amateur radio license,[19] had worked as an electrician and as a car mechanic and was able to not only do repairs but also manipulate odometers, sales papers – and people. In the interview with McGrath he repeatedly emphasized his above average intelligence.

For the first time Benjamin Paddock Jr. now seemed to earn an honest living, soon running two gas stations in Tucson and also becoming first a salesman then a franchise taker for the Arizona Disposer Company, where he was selling waste containers. He seemed on the path to a respectable middle class breadwinner, husband and father. (Incidentally, "containers for garbage" seem an appropriate metaphor for what this family longed for: a containment [20] for the burdening leftovers of its past.)

In close succession, Dolores soon gave birth to three more sons. During each of the few years she spent with her husband she became pregnant. On September 14 in 1957, Patrick Benjamin Paddock was born in Tucson when Stephen was four and a half years old. He now had to share his parents with a sibling, a brother, and cope with the typical jealousy and rivalry. Only a few months after the birth of this second grandson, Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Sr. died at the age 79 on January 26, 1958, in Grants Pass, Josephine County, Oregon, a former gold

mining area near the north western coast of the US. How close he was to the family of his misguided only son could not be determined. In any case, an obituary in a local newspaper noted that Benjamin Hoskins Jr. had made the journey to attend the funeral. Was he accompanied by his wife? By his elder son? The paper does not tell us.

On January 20, 1959, Dolores Paddock had her third child, Bruce Douglas Paddock, and for the second time in a row Stephen underwent the experience of a younger rival entering the family space, this time while his life among peers had begun in school and he took his first steps outside the house into a sphere of his own. Just several weeks before the birth of Bruce, the father took on a volunteer job at – of all places – the Pima County Juvenile Probation Department in Arizona where he worked as an unpaid probation officer for the rehabilitations of delinquent youths. At that time he is supposed to have acquired his nickname “Big Daddy.” He bragged to McGrath about this job for which he had claimed to be qualified for as a “social psychologist”: “I told them I had a degree in social psychology and nobody cared to check it on.” He was in charge of adolescents between the ages of 14 and 17, he said, and had a special talent to deal with them.

What he did not reveal to McGrath, however, was the fact that he immediately had soon lost this job once his criminal record had become known. Instead, he claimed to have built up a whole department at the institution and that none of the inmates under his care had later ever relapsed into delinquent behavior.

But he himself did. Six weeks after having become the father of a third son, on February 19, 1959, Benjamin Paddock Jr. committed an armed robbery of a branch of the Valley National Bank in Phoenix, Arizona, cashing in \$11,210, around a third of a then-average annual income in the United States. The crime, most probably meant to replenish the family fund, went undetected. No one, except perhaps the wife had any knowledge who was the perpetrator.

This having gone so well, it seems, Benjamin Paddock Jr. ventured to repeat his deed only one year later, with another child due to arrive. Two months before the assumed date of birth he again equipped himself with a handgun and drove down to Phoenix to rob another branch office of the same bank. This time the spree netted him \$9,258 which he will have carried back to his highly pregnant wife Dolores Irene. She delivered her baby on March 29, 1960, the parents had it named Eric Hudson Paddock, “Hudson” being a reminder of the mother’s maiden name, the last name of the widowed maternal grandfather.

In the meantime Dolores Irene had to look after a new born, two toddlers and a young schoolchild. She must have been busy all day with preparing meals, breastfeeding the baby, clothing and bathing the children, shopping and laundry for a household of six. Her husband’s intransparent attitude towards his various businesses will have been an additional source of worry, such as flimsy explanations for the origin of the wads of cash he presented her with on occasions. If she was not an accomplice of sorts, one might assume she must have suspected one thing or the other.

In the midst of this lively household with stressed parents and three small siblings Stephen not only attended school but also must have found the inner seclusion to practice the piano. As though he was undisturbed by the whirl around him, in May 1960 Stephen won the piano competition for children in Tucson. His success speaks of a remarkable ability to withdraw in order to pursue his own goals, to concentrate on a creative and mentally challenging activity

and it may also testify to his desire to impress his parents and gain their affection by outdoing his younger brothers. It is possible that he received piano lessons and practiced at his elementary school in Tucson and maybe there was even a piano at his parents' house, a remnant of the status of mother's family, of Grandmother Olga, wife of the renowned captain at the Great Lakes.

July 26, 1960: Collapse of the Paddock family

Benjamin Paddock Jr., who after the birth of Eric now had to feed a family of six, took one more stab at stocking up on cash for his kin. On July 26 of 1960 once again he drove from Tucson to Phoenix where at yet another branch of his favored bank-to-rob he forced an employee at gunpoint to hand over cash. This netted him \$4,620 which the overweight man carried to his car to head for the casinos of Las Vegas where he had booked himself a hotel room in advance to try his luck at gambling.

His plans came to a halt, however, when another employee of the robbed bank, a man who had tailed Paddock in his Pontiac, alerted law enforcement to the car with the two conspicuous amateur radio antennae. Police confronted Paddock Jr. at a gas station in Las Vegas. The driver only yielded to their calls after a bullet from a police gun had smashed the car's windshield. Along with the loot a loaded weapon was found in the car.

It was to become the most fateful day yet for Benjamin Paddock Jr., a day of utmost turmoil. His hopes and wishes, his self-deception and his aspirations collided with reality, with the law he had ignored. It must have dawned on the apprehended father that this time his prison sentence would by far exceed the previous ones and that a normal life with the family he was supposed to support would no longer be possible until the children would be grown.

He may have told his wife he would be gone for a brief business trip overnight; she may have had a hunch of what he was up to. Then, instead of her returned husband standing on the doorstep in North Camino Miraflores, it was officers of the Las Vegas Municipal Police who enquired about him as a suspect in a severe crime and held a search warrant in their hands. Dolores Irene Paddock, asked to let the FBI sweep through house, garden and garage, must have been in anguish and distressed by the thought of young Stephen witnessing what was going on and asking mother questions she could not or would not answer.

As The Tucson Daily Citizen [21] reported, the mother has asked a neighbor named Eva Price to take care of her eldest boy while the estate underwent the search. Ms. Price told reporters she had gone swimming with Stephen so that he would not become aware of what was going on. The paper quoted another female helper of Ms. Paddock, Mary Jacobs, a friend from her days in Chicago who had obviously come in March to stay in the household for some time while the mother was nursing new-born Eric. She had looked after the three little boys during the search.

For the entire family the day of the father's arrest in Las Vegas in July 1960 was the most consequential they had ever experienced. It marks the date of the family's collapse.

With the verdict on Benjamin Hoskins Paddock's in January 1961, family life as they had known it was over. He was facing 20 years of imprisonment, de facto his marriage was over, his four children would grow up without a father at hand. Their mother was left to her own

devices and could not expect economic support from him anymore. For her as well as the children it was an emotional earthquake. The two older sons, Stephen and Patrick, would be asking for daddy, where was he, what happened to him, when would he be back?

Irene Paddock decided to hide the truth from the children and resorted to a fatal lie in telling them their father had died and was never to return. A childhood friend of the younger sons, John Magee, told the New York Times that the mother had made the children believe their father had died in an accident at work as a car mechanic.[22] She invented lies as if she could erase shame and anguish with them, same as she now planned to resettle elsewhere, to move from Tucson, where the name of her family now was notorious, to California.

She will have rationalized her lies claiming she wanted to spare the children the truth, just like she acted when she sent Stephen swimming with her neighbor. But an alert seven-year-old not only notices that mother is nervous and upset when packing his bathing trunks and towels. He will sense that catastrophic events have taken place or are being communicated among the adults. Soon a first-grader will realize that mother is not in mourning at all, but rather in distress, perhaps strangely angered and saddened by something unspeakable, and that words are whispered by grown-ups who are abruptly dropping silent as soon as the children show up. Why was there no funeral, why is there no grave, Stephen may have pondered or even asked. What has happened to daddy? His questions will have met with eerie or sad silence, perhaps answers like: “Don’t ask, mom is troubled enough already.”

One key fact remained: The father was gone. Stephen Paddock was left alone with the sudden loss of his father. There had been no chance for the son to say goodbye to him. The father himself had not said goodbye, he owed his sons all answers. Yet hardly any a figure is idealized more intensely by children than an absent parent, most of all a mythical father who at the same time represents a dreaded figure, a highly ambivalent one – because he has left his children, for whatever reason, because he is hated and his revenge, hence, feared.

Maybe, without her children's knowledge, the mother paid visits to her husband in prison. Maybe she confronted him with her reproaches, her anger and sadness. And perhaps she beseeched him not to write to the boys as she revealed to him that he would be declared “dead” by her and that this would be best for the children. Such a narrative would protect them from stigmatization in school and among peers, she would leave town and move. Did she assure her husband she would not forget him?

Apparently, Irene did not divorce Benjamin Paddock Jr. while he was incarcerated. Family documents of 1965 refer to her as “Ms. Paddock,” and only later in life did she re-adopt her maiden name of Irene Hudson, perhaps only after the death of her – by then most probably long since estranged – husband in 1998.

For Stephen Paddock, the emotional detonation of July 26 1960, can have come not only as a shock but also as a confirmation of the child’s latent perception that unspoken threats had been in the air, that many matters were amiss in his family, that a hidden menace had been lurking and “something bad” had happened or would happen.

But while the child's perception was validated, it was overarched by yet another idea that there was something wrong with this sudden and inexplicable “death” of the father. A monstrous suspicion like this can have stirred the son’s guilty feelings even more. All children suffering from grief for a parent are known to undergo phases of anger that contribute to the

feeling of guilt the demise of a parent instills in any case. What, they ask themselves, was so wrong with me, the child, that mom or dad has left me?

In addition, as in Stephen's case, there will have been the typical oedipal rivalry with the father, who usurped the son's privileged place at mother's side, and apart from that the rivalry with the siblings competing for mom's and dad's love and attention. Any of these affects are prone to increase feelings of guilt, self-doubt and self-devaluation. Have my illicit longings and wishes maimed or eliminated the father? Then, why is the "good father" dead and not "the bad child"?

And another factor comes to bear on Stephen, an experience repeated by proxy. Like baby Eric in 1960, Stephen himself was a baby when in 1953 his father all of a sudden was gone. At the age of seven, and this time able to grasp what is going on, Stephen unconsciously re-experienced the lot of the infant he had been back then, and that of the abandoned mother at the time in Chicago. Not least the mother herself will have been reminded of the harrowing earlier crisis, which had left her alone with the first-born in her arms and a husband in jail.

It seems realistic to assume that the family disaster of July 1960 held devastating consequences for the eldest son Stephen Paddock and that the mental distress of the boy was neither recognized nor soothed by anybody. There was no solace. The only comfort that the mother would offer over "dead daddy" would feel at least queasy if not false and scary.

Apart from all of this, the eldest son, as though he had achieved an oedipal success, was now the new "man in the house." Presumably, given her own possible experience with parentification, the immature, overchallenged and overworked mother, allotted her bright boy a new role. She may have deemed him old enough to impose on him her neediness in terms of support and assistance. While such a commission by the mother may appear to compensate for the big loss, the eldest may have heard his mother say, he now needs to be strong and brave, protect the little brothers and so on. It was one more burden for the torn psyche of the child.

Messages by single mothers who use such types of emotional blackmail are usually heeded by the boy-child as conveying what they actually mean: "You must be father's substitute now, you must replace the husband I lack!" At the same time, Stephen will have heard openly and subtly articulated messages like: "Don't you become like your father!" Or: "You're just as bad as your father was!" Abandoned and disappointed women tend to transfer aggression against the man toward a son who resembles him or who was the first born.

If it went like this, Stephen internalized several ambivalent messages about his father, about his father's and his own masculinity, as well as his role regarding his mother and women in general. To him they will have seemed needy, looking for male power and support while instrumentalizing men as substitutes and scapegoats for significant persons in their own past. The man will suspect "she doesn't mean the real me". In adulthood, Stephen Paddock fulfilled many of the roles ascribed to him as a child. As the "good boy," he not only gave his mother a house and paternally took care of his youngest brother's wellbeing and finances. He also, as "the bad boy," partially re-enacted his father's behavior: gambling in casinos, buying firearms, and moving about from place to place and handling relationships, especially with women, in a non-committed way.

A child exposed to extreme inner tensions like Stephen Paddock runs the risk of collapse or exploding. In order to avoid the overpowering, disruptive trauma, the child's psyche attempts to split off the traumatic material imposed on him. Where it would be unbearable for any child to become fully aware of the abusive and dysfunctional character of the parents' behavior dissociative reactions are inevitable. The boy Stephen had little chance to break free from the climate of his family, not least due also to the family's constant mobility, which left him with little or no familiar helping forces from the outside world. No trusted voices of significant others sounded, no continuous corrective emerged.

Thus, most likely, Stephen Paddock's psyche fought an exhausting battle against a cacophony of demands, doubts, taboos, fears and unsettling feelings of guilt. Dynamite had accumulated in this family, it had become an arsenal of emotional explosives – and it was, again, on the run. By leaving the area where her husband had robbed banks and been arrested, Dolores Irene Paddock hoped to bury the explosives so they would not go off. “Your daddy is dead,” seemed the magic formula she had found for herself.

But as it is, where denial and obfuscation is sought as a remedy, it only feeds the disease. What was unbearable remains virulent, even when shoved under the surface. An existential and toxic lie had perverted the sense, the meaning of family. Defense and fear had taken over the lead. Meanwhile though, Dolores Irene Paddock planned to move from Tucson, where the name of her family had become notorious through local media and court proceedings, to California, from the desert of Arizona to the coastal Pacific region.

A major crime and its possible contexts

Given what we can reconstruct about the explosive emotional devices the Paddock family had to handle, a hypothetical conclusion can be drawn about the disastrous events ensuing decades later with Stephen Paddock's murderous act of October 1 in 2017. It may be seen as an ultimate explosion of the dysfunctional emotional material amassed over time within the family where truth and reconciliation were forbidden or made impossible by a web of lies, a bulk of knots and antagonisms within this family's social structure. “My brother did this. It's like he shot us,”[23] Eric Paddock told media in the wake of the mass shooting. It is not surprising to find the family concerned with itself rather than the victims in Las Vegas.

Eric's claim that Stephen had symbolically shot the family could not even be that far from the psychological truth. Stephen Paddock's psyche, no longer able to repress continued inner conflicts, had gradually grown into near-psychotic states and in some way he may have indeed shot at his family. With the seemingly erratic and undeniably horrific act, the vexing subterranean labyrinth was to surface, “it all” would come to daylight – and at the same time “it all” would be cloaked by the unspeakable irrationality of the atrocity. In short, the act may represent the irreconcilable messages Stephen grew up with: horrific loss and treason is happening to us, and we are neither to know nor find out what it means. This corresponds with the obvious contradiction of an act committed fully in the open while motives and traces are covered up with utmost care.

Many other aspects of the act perpetrated by the eldest son of this family, Stephen Paddock, point to this interpretation. He chose Las Vegas as the place of his crime scene, the city where his father, carrying a weapon, was on his way to casinos to play – with other people's, namely

his family's, fate. It was Las Vegas where, back in 1960, police officers had taken seven-year-old Stephen Paddock's father, an armed casino-goer, away from him forever.

Almost six decades later, Stephen Paddock, an equally notorious casino-goer, went to a hotel in Las Vegas, literally up in arms, to commit an extreme, murderous act. He surpassed whatever the father had done, he took revenge for him, or on him, or both. He set alight a stage of innocent people dancing and listening to music, like trusting children who fear no harm. He brings about loss and despair on them, disturbing and distorting the lives of many, as many as he could.

Were we to follow this train of thought, then Stephen Paddock was brutally avenging a childhood and an entire biography contaminated by the betrayal of innocence by both parents. Thus the crime, the psychotic enactment, was not only aimed at the father but also at the mother, who was still alive as her son committed what could symbolize a "massacre of trust" endured by a child stopped in his tracks on the road to maturity.

The same son, acting from within his filial and reality-compatible realm, had sent his near ninety-year-old mother in Florida a walking aid only weeks earlier and inquired about the family when hurricane Irma had struck in September 2017.

Stephen Paddock had smashed two hotel windows from the inside and turned them into shooting holes. In 1960, a police officer had smashed the windshield of his father's car from the outside and threatened to shoot his father so as to have him surrender. He smashed two windows, not one or three, thus turning the tower block of the hotel into a kind of giant with two eyes spitting bullets into the crowd of child-size dwarfs from above, like a huge powerful statue casting bad spells on tiny beings unable to face their attacker. Another association seems close too. Smashing those windows between the inside and the outside was as if he had smashed the glass screens separating the gambler from those blind and anonymous virtual opponents he battled in endless hours of video-poker, as if he had laid bare the trail leading from the imaginary to the real world. Now he would get at them: without facing the real people whose lives he extinguished.

Investigators assume that Paddock had planned to flee after the shooting spree and commit further atrocities elsewhere; his lorry was found packed with explosives. Once his improvised fortress had been discovered, however, the entire scenery conflated and he took his own life.

Crimes with random victims are not usually considered to be connected to the real relationships of the perpetrator. Paddock had known none of those he killed or hurt. And yet the features of his act – reading the pathological logic behind it – can be seen as intensely knitted to relationships: those of child to parents, son to father, and criminal (father) to law enforcement.

During Paddock's socialization his trust in the world was destroyed by what appeared to him to be unknown forces whose faces Stephen, the child, could not discern in the darkness of the events, which occurred without apparent reason and meaning. The adult Stephen Paddock chose to attack "faceless" people in darkness as victims of his avenging act without apparent reason and meaning. His scenario seems to have spelled out what had tormented his devastated psyche.

Another strong indication for this hypothesis is the fact that, before the Las Vegas shooting, Paddock had scouted out as a possible setting for his crime at least one other significant place

connected to his childhood past. He had made a reservation for two rooms at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago which overlooked the four-day Lollapalooza music festival. One of the rooms was booked from 23 July to August 1, the other from July 7 to August 3. The first day of the festival would have been the last day of his stay, the days before could have been used to funnel his arms deposit into the rooms. But he had cancelled the booking, obviously deciding for Las Vegas instead.

It was in Chicago where Stephen had been deprived of his father for the first time, in 1953 as a then new-born, and he must have learned about this in later life; it was there that the father had failed and abandoned his family for the first time. Their residential address at the time had been on Kenmoore Street, a few miles away from today's festival grounds. Paddock did scout out other locations as well, but the most serious ones remain those two hot spots connected to shattering events in his early life: Chicago and Las Vegas. And in both cases, concert areas seemed to attract him most.

Why concerts? Why attack people enjoying music? Simply because the venues are crowded and maximum damage can be yielded? Perhaps, yet this is speculative as well. Stephen, the boy who won the piano competition, saw himself as deprived of a musical career when, presumably after the arrest of his father in 1960 and due to the ensuing poverty of the single mother, his piano lessons had to end? All we learned is that the adult Paddock enjoyed country music and concerts just like those he spied out to murderously spoil them.

Stephen Paddock left no open message regarding any of these contexts. To disclose them to himself or others would have meant an attack to his strategies of compensation by grandiosity and evasion. In fact, the alert meticulousness with which he covered his tracks rather than present them may speak of a desperate degree of shame and not only of those subconscious aspects of reenactment.

If there was to be a readable message, it seems, it was meant to be read only by those recognizing his tragedy, the distortions forced upon him. The message was to be understood, if at all, perhaps by the imagined father or "Father in Heaven." In early November 2017, the FBI publicly discussed the hypothesis that Paddock's recent losses in gambling at video poker had hurt his narcissistic ego dramatically enough to drive him to depression and to plan his crime. The final police report of August 2018 states that Paddock's fortune was worth more than two million Dollars. Poverty cannot have been a driving factor for wreaking such havoc.

Experienced high stake gamblers who play along the lines of Paddock also doubt this could be the case. Huge wins alternate with huge losses in their trade and Paddock was used to both. But even if losses had contributed to the crime he planned for over a year, amassing fire arms, bullets and other equipment, this changes little with regard to the biographical significance of those striking aspects of the scenario. The city, the casinos, the arms, the smashing of the windows.

Had Stephen Paddock ever verbalized the entanglements of his psyche, had he risked therapy, he could have had a chance to find and defuse the family's subconscious explosives and they would most probably not have been detonated in Las Vegas. Statements of the brothers point to the permanent continuation of denial of all involved including the outside witnesses of a socialization torn to pieces by emotional disasters.

Even if pathological evidence had been found in the offender's brain tissue, neither the crime itself nor its place happened because of random discharges of some synapses. The condensed circumstances – Las Vegas, hotel, casinos, weapons, violence – all point to the acting out of intolerably destructive and undigested mental states.

Report of a psychiatrist on Stephen Paddock's father, November 1960

On November 9, 1960, three months after the arrest of bank robber Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr., psychiatrist William B. McGrath of Phoenix, Arizona, who has been quoted here already, was asked on behalf of Judge David Ling at the Federal Court House of Phoenix to assess the suspect's legal culpability. McGrath wrote his report about Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr. referring to him as "Patrick Paddock," the name the father had given on Stephen's birth certificate. The doctor depicted the suspect, who he saw at Maricopa County jail, as jovial and genial, of winning nature and considerable eloquence. "His account of himself is highly verbalized," McGrath notes, "he has fluent account of language and of 'criminal slang.'" McGrath attested to his ability to tell right from wrong, to follow proceedings and instruct counsel accordingly.

All the more, McGrath, who authored popular works on society and mental questions, was amazed by his patient's lack of concern with regard to the sentence awaiting him: "No despair, alarm, or concern about his fate is manifest." He seems "almost incongruously cheerful" and displays "superciliousness." Physically, McGrath pictures a "big, blond, bald, rather white faced man of Nordic stock," six-foot-four tall and weighing 237 pounds: a man who must have made a strong impression on children. Benjamin Paddock Jr., the report says, had strikingly bright, grey eyes, wore a thin moustache, sported horn-rimmed glasses and chain-smoked during the examination, the attention of which, McGrath gathered, he rather enjoyed.

Although he'd more or less been caught in the act, the patient undertook a transparent attempt to assign the robbery in Phoenix to a case of stolen identity. He incriminated a mafia-like "syndicate" which had supposedly taken advantage of his car, people on whose account he was not to defend himself in court and whose identities he was not to disclose, seemingly for self-protection. Though an obvious fabrication, Benjamin Paddock Jr. might just as well have spoken about his unconscious: where agents and impulses were at work, whose names he'd prefer not to spell out.

By this manoeuvre, Paddock Jr. had passed on the chance to assume the role of the beleaguered father of four at pains to feed wife and sons. Maybe this is why the judges did not seem to consider the plight of the family in delivering the harsh verdict of 20 years. Interestingly the McGrath report makes sparse mention of the family: "He has been married for eight years. They have four children," is all we learn from him. Only once is a son mentioned: "He was interested in automobile racing until he thought that it might adversely influence his boy," which could only refer to Stephen, old enough by then to pick up what dad did.

McGrath reports that Paddock Jr. expected a sentence of about 15 years and hopes not to be placed into forensic psychiatry but in a regular detention center where he believes he can perform useful tasks. Nevertheless, Paddock Jr. hints at himself as a psychiatric case, stating: "Maybe I am an alert psychotic. I can pick up, learn anything."

A depressive streak becomes apparent in a remark where he calls himself “a third time loser,” alluding to this being the third time he was caught for offences. The diagnosis concluded there was “no evidence of mental illness or defect,” but “a sociopathic personality.”

Mother Paddock and sons moving to California, 1961

Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr. had spent the time December 1960 to January 1961 at La Tuna prison in Texas, when the verdict was pronounced. It finalized the end of the mother’s hope that the father of her sons would be able to help her with their education and in financing their living. He would be put away for two decades, perhaps a little less, but by the time he would be back in freedom the boys will have grown up. Irene Paddock’s decision to relocate to California meant another escape from an environment where her husband’s delinquency threatened to stigmatize the family. Perhaps she removed Stephen from elementary school for the interim time, so he could not listen to rumors coming from teachers or classmates and their relatives.

In the house without a father, the upheaval of a departure scenario followed with its cardboard boxes and suitcases, packing clothes and toys, phone calls coming in and going out, and removal vans on the driveway ready to transport the interior to the new place. Relatives of the mother in Sun Valley north of Los Angeles helped to find a new home there. Maybe Irene Paddock chose the proximity of her younger sister in California, Ora Elaine Gellhorn.

In the backseat of a car, the children were driven from Arizona to California. The only one of them who could preserve conscious memory of the big change was Stephen. For Stephen, moving away from Tucson meant the end of his relationship not only with the father proclaimed as “gone forever,” but also a change of home, friends, neighbors, classmates, teachers, piano lessons and possibly two grandparents. Benjamin Paddock Jr. had stated to McGrath that his mother was living in Tucson and documents indicate that the father of Dolores Irene had also settled in Tucson in the meantime.

There are indications that Irene’s father Ralph Rolland Hudson, widowed since 1945, took over the Tucson home of the family in 1961, and he may have lived with his daughter’s family before that. This is one possible reason why Eric, the youngest, received the middle name “Hudson.” Ralph Rolland Hudson gave Tucson as his place of residence when he and his daughters negotiated the purchase and sale of real estate located in their city of origin, Nauvoo, between February and May 1965.[24]

The family seems to have wanted to assist Irene who now had to raise her sons on the small salary of a secretary. The aid may also have been preventive: the children should not grow up in dire poverty “so the boys don’t follow in their father’s footsteps!”

Unlike the name suggests, Sun Valley was plagued by industrial pollution from a coal-fired power plant. In the run-down street where the Paddocks once lived, today people left homeless after the 2008 economic crisis have pitched their tents. They lived there from 1961 to around 1971. Stephen first attended the Fernangeles Elementary School, then the Richard E. Byrd Middle School, and finally was enrolled at the John H. Francis Polytechnic Senior High School.

Former classmates told reporters after the Las Vegas attack that Stephen had been an introverted student, almost “invisible.” He never put his hand up in class, they say, but was a whiz kid in math. At the school’s canteen, he used to sit by himself. [25] But sometimes he

deliberately broke rules in class, like when pupils were told to construct a model bridge using only light wood material and no glue. Ignoring the teacher's request, Stephen applied thick layers of white glue to his model, to the amusement of the class. Newspapers quoting this scenario from the arts and crafts class interpreted it as proof of Paddock's antisocial tendency. It can however also be read as the activity of a boy who had lost trust in the connecting principle of the "bridge" and reinforced his model bridge to counteract its feared fragility.

"Big Daddy" breaks from jail and goes into hiding

On the last day of the year that became famous for its Summer of Love, on December 31, 1968, Benjamin Paddock Jr. escaped from prison. He may have used the loosened order during the New Year's party of guards and fellow inmates to sneak out. Many years later, when he had been on the run, he was briefly apprehended and then released soon after. He disclosed to a reporter that he had calmly walked off the medium security prison work farm in Texas, adding "I just paroled myself." [26]

Benjamin Paddock Jr. initially fled to California, where he must have known his wife and sons lived. However, according to the incomplete records, he did not head for the Los Angeles area, but to San Francisco with sufficient vigor to rob another bank obtaining the cash necessary to go into hiding for a while. After unsuccessful attempts to find the fugitive in June 1969, he was ranked among the top ten most wanted on an FBI poster. His picture and a description showed up in media throughout the country.

Stephen Paddock was fifteen, at the height of adolescence, when in 1969 his "dead" father suddenly resurrected and was present in the press as well as in an FBI search warrant where the father ranked among the "ten most wanted". It seems possible that the father had carefully gotten in touch, though this bore a high risk. By then, with all likelihood, the family in Sun Valley will have come under close scrutiny by law enforcement. If any of them, perhaps wife and eldest son, had heard from the fugitive or even met him at some place, it would have been paramount they not breathe one word about it to anyone. Self-control like this could be less expected by the three younger boys.

On the June 1969, the FBI profile of Benjamin Paddock Jr. referred to him as a diagnosed "psychopath," confusing it with the term "sociopath" McGrath had used – a vital difference. Sociopathy does not encompass a severe mental disorder but is seen as partly caused by the influence of socialization, environment on the personality. The poster further warned that the fugitive, an "avid bridge player," was armed, very dangerous and that he was "suicidal," in impression that neither McGrath had communicated nor the undaunted fraudulent future lifestyle of the runaway would ever prove true. Over a ten full years, Benjamin Paddock Jr. managed to remain undetected. In fact, he entered new, lucrative existence under an assumed name.

Also in 1969, during the first year that his son-in-law was on the run, Ralph Rolland Hudson, Stephens's maternal grandfather died at 73 in Tucson, Arizona. At the end of the year, in October 1969, the mother of the fugitive, Olga Paddock, nee Gunderson, Stephens's paternal grandmother also passed away. She died at the age of 81 in Illinois. Both widowed, old people will have been sadly aware that the spouse of their daughter and daughter-in-law was wanted by the police.

What had those grandparents meant to their grandson Stephen? We have no clues about this and one could only assume that he had meant much to them. He had received some support and protection from them and was now in renewed turmoil having to cope with a father who had come back from the dead and then had gone missing again.

Records from Northridge College California show that in 1970 Stephen Paddock had stated on an enrolment form that his father had died ten years earlier – like mother’s lie. College documents also show that Stephen’s mathematical achievements had not always been outstanding, that his grades had oscillated up until 1976 and that in 1971 – two years into his father’s renewed disappearance – he had taken a leave of absence from College for unspecified health reasons.[27]

While Stephen Paddock attended high school in California, his father had taken on the name Bruce Warner Erickson and settled in Junction City, Oregon, where he had gone back to working as a car’s dealer and occasionally a truck driver, banking on his previous experience. He had changed his outward appearance and was now wearing a parted goatee. He was nowhere to be found, though they looked hard. On June 12th 1974 the FBI sent a request for administrative assistance to Australia, where a traveler from Manila bearing a name similar to Dolores Irene Paddock was to be identified. It proved to be a mistake.[28] In 1977 the FBI gave up hope to locate him, abandoned the search and replaced his photo on the ten most wanted warrant.

Benjamin Paddock alias Bruce Ericksen took notice of the change and immediately expanded the scope of his activities by opening a bingo saloon and becoming an entrepreneur in the gambling business. He had lived on Main Street 612 in Springfield, Oregon for some time where he was well liked by locals who soon became to know him as “Bingo Bruce”. The news clipping of 1979 says that “Erickson earned a reputation as a smooth-talking, friendly man who went out of his way to help disadvantaged youth, the elderly and the poor.”[29] Among those he took care of were former juvenile delinquents, but not, he modestly added, with too many at once: “I can do my bit with one or two kids at a time and I’m good at it. I speak their language because I’ve been there.” He complained to the reporter that libraries in major prisons were not well equipped and stressed the fact that “re-education” was essential to prevent recidivism. In order to stay mentally fit, he said, he played chess. With regard to his character Paddock alias Ericksen had assured the newspaper’s readers: “I am one of those rare individuals who can take care of himself. I can make a living at a lot of things – legitimately.”

The interview with Paddock alias Ericksen was preceded by another dramatic chapter in his life. In September 1978, his disguise had been discovered when an FBI agent who saw a photograph of “Bingo Bruce” in a local paper found the face familiar. Apprehended, the man confessed guilty to the 1968 escape and was put in detention in Lompoc, north of Los Angeles, until March 1979. His confession and the petition of 1,600 Springfield residents who wanted him back had convinced the judges to let him off the hook. Paddock alias Ericksen was now out on parole until April 1992 and had to hand in written monthly reports.

In May 1979, he opened a new bingo salon in Springfield, this time under the patronage of a Christian church which he promised rental income from this “non-profit” entertainment center. It seems significant that the man who had not been able to take care of his own wife and sons, like back in Tucson, showed remarkable zeal and resourcefulness in being charitable to others, as if he was making up for the inability to live up to the legitimate

expectation of his families: his family of origin and the one he had founded. What will the sons have made of their father's charitable second or third life? It comes close to mockery that a father of four will find time to worry about many neglected kids while neglecting his own kin.

"My name is Erickson now," he informed the reporter of the Eugene Register Guard, "Paddock is dead," literally declaring his past as a split-off portion of his life. To him, his past was simply buried: just as his wife had "buried" him with her lie about his demise.

And another aspect of this chapter is significance. For his aliases, the father made use of the names of all three younger sons: Patrick, Bruce and Eric. While he had already called himself "Patrick" before the birth of this son, he chose "Bruce" as his new first name and incorporated Eric's name into his new last name, "Eric[kson]," the suffix being a possible echo of his Scandinavian forebears. The only name he did not use – or abuse – for his chameleonic play with identities was that of his eldest, Stephen. Was he afraid to do so? Was he too attached to Stephen to turn his name into a self-decorating item? Did he blame himself most in the case of Stephen to have let this son down, the only one he had seen grow up for some years? In any case his abstinence testifies to a special relationship with his eldest.

All the while "Bingo Bruce" was establishing and re-establishing himself in Springfield, Stephen attended college and graduated from California State University, Northridge, with a degree in Business Administration. He held a number of jobs during his time in college, working as a paper boy, for postal services, and doing night-shifts at a local Californian airport in California before finding himself steady workplaces as an Internal Revenue Service agent and as a chartered accountant. Dealing with numbers, sums, figures and statistics may have felt like a safe haven shielding him from emotions. But there were girlfriends. On July 17, 1977, Stephen Paddock married Sharon Brunoehler, a year his senior, who he'd met in college. Their marriage lasted about two years, remained childless and is supposed to have ended in mutual agreement.

According to the New York Times, at least one son had made the journey from California to visit the "resurrected" father around 1977, as Eric Paddock told the paper. If this was indeed the case, the shock of knowing that their father, proclaimed dead, was still alive, must have preceded his renewed apprehension by law enforcement in 1978. Depending on maturity and age, it will have been another emotional attack on their concept of family, to grasp that their mother had symbolically "killed" the father, that he was a criminal, a runaway from not only police and jail but also from his family.

Perhaps the truth had come to light because the grandparents could no longer bear to keep the truth from their fatherless grandsons? Or a letter sent by father to mother was found in the hallway one day when one of the sons came home from school? Eric Paddock, who was a new-born baby when his father was arrested in June 1960, claims to have seen him for the first time aged seventeen, which would make it 1977, the year Stephen Paddock married.

Eric said he was irritated by father telling stories about the letters he wrote to J. Edgar Hoover[30] whom he called a "pansy," possibly because of his childless marriage. "That's what he chose to tell his seventeen-year-old son whom he never met before," Eric indignantly told the paper, adding somewhat opaquely: "I don't think I ever saw him again." [31] In front of a CNN camera, Eric Paddock cursed the father to whom crime was more important than his

family. This may have been the basic narrative of his mother, especially after the father had resurfaced but stayed away from the sons to help the sons of other people in Oregon.

By November 1982 authorities were once more after Benjamin Paddock Jr. alias Bruce Erickson, alleging he made illegal profits from his bingo parlor. The accused paid a large bail sum as deposit and, though still on parole, remained in freedom. Oregon prosecutors filed yet another suit against him in 1987, accusing him of cheating in gambling, blackmail and manipulation of odometers – an old skill of his. Paddock, alias Erickson paid a substantial bail of \$ 623,000 and once more evaded prison. He had meanwhile found himself a new girl friend and business partner, Laurel Paulson, with whom he spent the last years of his life as a salesman for cars, moving from Oregon to Arlington, Texas where “Bruce Erickson” died in mid-January 1998. Engraved on the tombstone was his self-assumed, new name.

Stephen Paddock's path into adult life

Stephen Paddock's early career initially looked like it was heading to the opposite direction of the chequered and versatile vita of his father. The choice to train as an accountant, a person who is checking invoices rather than counterfeiting checks implies seriousness, reliability, a settled middle-class life. However, hardly any part of Stephen Paddock's future private life would match this description. Gradually the “ghost of his father” seemed to seep into Stephen's biography through the crevices and clefts that a traumatizing childhood and youth had left him with.

In 1981, at the ten-year student reunion of his university class, all participants were asked to drop a line about themselves for the yearbook. Stephen's self-description read: “Single, accountant, has traveled to Hollywood, lives in Sepulveda [California].”[32] In all its briefness, the line was a quite coquette offer of ambiguity apt to supply a bookkeeper's existence with some glamour, even mystery. In some way, Stephen mirrored the dissociated self-images of his father who was able to present himself as a bank robber as well as the assistant of a probation officer. And in some sense, the name “Hollywood” does not seem too far-fetched. The atmosphere of Stephen's childhood must often have felt like a movie: dizzying, mind blowing, detached from reality. And he turned it into reality a horrendous horror film set on the last day of his life.

In the early 1980s, Stephen Paddock began to acquire firearms, not uncommon for US citizens. On March 9, 1985, he married for the second time. His marriage with Peggy Paddock, née Okamoto, lasted until 1990; no children were born. The year he married Peggy he took on a job as an auditor for Boeing and the Lockheed Martin group, which produces technologies for international aviation, aerospace and defense industries.

When he quit this job in 1988 he had begun investing in real estate, at first buying run-down apartment houses on the outskirts of Los Angeles and teaching himself plumbing pipes or repairing air-conditioning systems to increase the value of the estates. It looked like the opening stage of an American Dream. In 1987 he bought a building with 30 rental units – and he was in a position to sell around one hundred apartments in the Dallas area in 2010 for more than eight million dollars. During violent riots in Los Angeles in 1992, neighbors saw Stephen Paddock patrol on the rooftop of one of his properties armed and in a bulletproof vest, ready to defend his property from looters.[33] The scenario easily evokes associations with the

armed man who on October 1, 2017, pointed his gun from a high vantage point at the crowd below him.

Paddock, who had brought his youngest brother Eric into his business in 2013, invested in real estate in Nevada, Texas, and California while, parallel to all this, he pioneered more and more on the path to become a professional casino player. Like his late father, he operated in the half-world of extensive gamblers, but unlike him he was not as a sociable bridge and bingo player. Stephen Paddock's specialty became the isolated battle against the machine, reminding of the lone boy sitting by himself in the school's canteen. His method in video poker was said to have been mathematically elaborated, his take on the game impassionate. "For him it was a job!" insisted his brother Eric. Stephen's main focus had been on profit.

In any case, like his father, he had gotten caught up in the demimonde of the casino landscape, playing nights in a row and sleeping during daytime and enjoying the prestige that went along with winning. He studied expert literature for gamblers and subscribed to the relevant newsletters.[34] The more he succeeded in the casinos, the more he seems to have unfolded traits of grandiosity masking depression. Ostentatiously he referred to himself as the "world best" video poker player, although it seems he lost just as often as he won.

Stephen Paddock also took advantage of the hostesses, escort ladies and prostitutes linked to the flamboyant casino climate. Some of these women were interviewed after the disaster in October 2017 and if their statements are true they fit into the disturbing picture of a derailed life. Their clients, they said, preferred violent sex practices and fantasized about bondage and tied up women who would cry out for help. Images of passive and suffering females could echo his fear of a mother in need of rescuing and also a mother tormented by the aggressive father-introject present within the son.

The interim report issued by the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) in January 2018 states that "several hundred images of child pornography were located"[35] by forensic analysts on the hard drive of one of Stephen Paddock's computers, pointing to yet another, deeper layer of violent, sexualized fantasies about overpowering a helpless other, pointing to an array of possible identifications and split off partial-objects from earlier stages of the infants development. It seems significant here that similar material depicting child abuse was found with Stephen Paddock's homeless brother Bruce Paddock who was taken into custody in late 2017 for offences unrelated to the Las Vegas attack. Bruce, who was born in January 1959, was only a year and a half old when their father was arrested. Sexual development of all sons took place mostly under the auspices of their mother.

Stephen Paddock is said to have boasted to escort ladies in Las Vegas that he was the son of a famous bank robber and to have told them he had inherited his father's dispositions: "I have bad blood," he is supposed to have said, and "I was born bad." [36] This may be a reflection of family murmurs about the genetic makeup of the "sons of a criminal." Stephen Paddock would also display paranoid traits, the escort women related, and believe in conspiracy theories such as 9/11 being an "inside job" of US authorities.

In 2003, Stephen Paddock acquired a hunting and a fishing license in Alaska, and in 2008 he received a pilot's license for light aircraft in California, taking a special exam for poor visibility flights. It seems he was assuming an air of a macho man into adventure sports and

wildlife scenarios, while he was moving from place to place as if he were on the run -- as a proxy of his father, and as if he bore his guilt or guilty feelings. Another striking feature of this, mentioned by those who knew him, was a distinct aversion to being photographed. A photograph had given away his father's identity to the FBI in 1978. Did this account for his camera-shyness? It may have contributed to it.

Stephen Paddock, the player, liked to dress casually, frequented luxury hotels and cruises and -- similar to "Bingo Bruce" -- boastfully enjoyed to dote on friends inviting them to expensive restaurants. He liked to go to country music concerts popular with conservative white Americans, concerts like the one he would attack.

Though Stephen Paddock seemed nowhere at home, the places he bought for himself to stay and live in were predominantly in the areas of his childhood or connected to significant places his parents had visited, like the apartment he bought in Reno, Nevada, where they were wed in 1952. The list of his residences as an adult includes more than three dozen addresses in California, Florida, Texas and Nevada. Nowhere was the press able to detect any neighbor to whom he had been personally close. His cosmos was that of a player, someone who, like his father, sort of plays with life. But while Benjamin Paddock was gregarious, enjoying relationships and admiration, Stephen's way of playing was lonely, far more guarded and compulsive.

The constellation of the four Paddock brothers

"Steve was my surrogate father!," Eric Paddock revealed in a teary voice in front of the garage door of his bungalow in Florida, gesticulating as he searched for words when the US television station CBSN interviewed him two days after the mass shooting. His big brother had helped him to prosper financially, he had also cared for the mother living nearby buying her a house because her pension was so little. Eric hoped to undo by explaining; he defended his brother in panic. He praised his brother's enormous income, his generosity and autonomy. "He did everything himself, he did not take help from anyone!," Eric said; he was "a stand-alone guy." Nothing he knew about his brother corresponded with the atrocity he committed. "Something horrible happened to my brother," Eric speculated, "something happened, that drove him to the pit of hell." What happened seemed to him, the brother said, was like "the bad twist at the end of a good movie." [37]

Eric Paddock commented with astonishing expertise on the weaponry used by his brother in the Vegas massacre revealing that he had practiced shooting with his children, but in a responsible, fatherly way, as if to say: We Paddocks know how to handle guns. An FBI investigator described the interviews the brother gave to the press as "manic." Eric's manic public effort was meant to serve or preserve the image of his brother and their entire family. Whatever compassion he felt compelled to show for the victims of the attack gave the impression of bad acting. He was desperately trying to bridge the canyon between two pictures of his brother: his own and the public one, which would not fit together. And, one wonders, he might have been trying to conceal matters that he may not even be able to name to himself.

Eric is the only one of the four sons of bank robber Benjamin Paddock Jr. to have led an average, traditional middle-class life: a wife as a house maker, parents living together, and

four fine children: Nicole, Patrick, David and Jacob. His son Patrick works as a church musician and choirmaster in the Catholic community of St. Jude, Michigan. For him, Eric had picked the name of his brother Patrick, and one of the names their father had used as an alias. None of his sons received the name of their wealthy and generous uncle Stephen.

Stephen Paddock's mission imposed on him was to replace the father, most of all for the baby born only weeks before their father "died." In several ways, Stephen had fulfilled his mission for his mother and the youngest brother. He showed conspicuously less concern for the two sandwich brothers, Patrick and Bruce. His system of care circled around the family nucleus that he had constructed, the mother, the youngest brother as "son" and himself as the "surrogate father" Eric spoke of. Stephen's core family construct was the idealized reproduction of the triad – father, mother, and son - which should have existed in his first three years of life, and did not.

Of all four brothers, only Stephen held active memory of their mythical father and was the only one ever to have truly been fathers by him for some years. He may have been secretly envied for this by the other three. In any case the two sandwich-children appear to have represented rivals rather than surrogate sons to Stephen Paddock, and as "bad objects" in his psyche they may have served to represent split-off parts.

Patrick Paddock, the second son, told the press when news broke about the mass shooting that he had difficulties recognizing his brother Stephen in pictures shown on television, indicating they were estranged to a high degree and that they had not seen each other for the past twenty years. Neither had he had any contact to their father and could not remember his first three years in Tucson. Yet Tucson is the place he chose to settle and where he now lives as an engineer.

Stephen was the least conspicuous of the four brothers, Patrick claimed, also the least aggressive and violent of them, simply "the most boring." They all, he said, had to cope with strong feelings of rage and anger. Patrick believes he got rid of his anger during his seventeen-year long service in the US Air Force. Like Stephen, he had turned to flying, eager to take off the ground, though not for the mere sake of it and with a private aircraft but within a framework delivering meaning and embedded in a group of fellow army men.

In their childhood years in Sun Valley, Patrick Paddock remembered, their mother had a hard time paying the bills as the sole-earner for five. They lived on the brink of poverty and the boys often quarrelled with each other over who would have the whole milk and not the cheaper drink mixed from cheap milk powder which was their more common diet. By choosing milk as an example, Patrick seems to talk about the struggle of the children for their mother's milk, for motherly love. Their mother had never told them anything about the father, Patrick stated: "She kept that secret from the family." [38] Publicly he made no mention of their mother's painful lie about the father having died, a lie he must have been confronted with as well, and also with the uncovering of the lie in later years.

Surprisingly, Patrick Paddock seems to have had a special relationship with his father that he did not care to mention. When Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr. died on January 18 in Arlington, Texas, the obituary notice of a local newspaper bore the name of one son only: Patrick. He will have ordered the notice and paid for it. The absence of all other names is a strong manifest to the fractured and dysfunctional sphere of the Paddock family.

Bruce Paddock, the third son, seemed nowhere to be found in the initial days after the Vegas shooting when media and investigators were searching everywhere. By the end of October 2017, police in California announced that Bruce Paddock had been arrested and had been wanted for a long time.

The unemployed brother of the real estate investor Stephen Paddock had been living without fixed abode and evicted from a car repair shop where he squatted in Sun Valley, California, in 2015 – the town where the Paddock sons grew up. In 1989, he was charged with assault, in 1992 he filed private bankruptcy in Los Angeles. The following year Bruce Paddock was charged with sexual harassment of a child and was acquitted. At times he had stayed at places belonging to his brother Stephen, among them an address in Lancaster and in Corte Benavente, Temecula in California. In 1994 and 1995 Bruce had to answer court for theft and driving without a license.

It seems that the mother had housed her troubled son living with him for a while in 2005, when he and she were registered under the same address, 105, Clear Lake Lane, Mesquite in Texas, where Stephen Paddock had bought a place for his mother to live.[39] Circumstances indicate that he had supported Bruce for some time but relinquished helping the dependant brother who might have become a burden to both, mother and Stephen.

As of 2006, there is no fixed residential address for Bruce; apparently his big brother had given up on him or Bruce withdrew from the setting. Between 2005 and 2014, several FBI investigations for theft, vandalism and the use of verbal threats had been going on regarding Bruce Paddock. A charge for Arson was dropped.

On October 25, 2017, after he had undergone multiple surgery for back problems Bruce had fled to a nursing home in the North Hollywood district of Los Angeles where he was finally arrested. According to the press release of the Los Angeles Police Department he is charged with child abuse and the possession of over 600 illustrations showing sexual violence against minors, including photographs of children under the age of twelve. His arrest was unrelated to Las Vegas mass shooting of his brother Stephen, the FBI said.

58-year-old Bruce Paddock was known to consume drugs and, like Stephen, he displayed paranoid behavior. Stephen had secured his room at the Vegas hotel with surveillance cameras, Bruce had done the same at his hiding place in the car repair shop. He had changed his appearance while on the run from his arrest warrant, like his father Benjamin Paddock Jr. had done, way back then. And like the father he sought the proximity to cars and garages. In court, at the end of October 2017, Bruce Paddock appeared bent over and sitting in a wheelchair. He pleaded not guilty.[40]

October 1, 2017 in Las Vegas

In 2015, Stephen Paddock decided to swap the ocean air of Florida, where he lived in the vicinity of his brother Eric and their mother, for the dry desert climate of Nevada where he had been staying on and off anyway. He may have wanted to put more distance between himself and the family members, perhaps because fantasies about some heavy acting out had already begun to accumulate in his decompensating psyche. Close to Las Vegas, he bought himself a house in Babbling Brook Court in Mesquite, Nevada, for which he paid \$369,000 in cash, as if using loot from a robbery.

It seems possible that by this time Stephen Paddock had dealt more intensively with the history of his father and the family. He may have looked up sources on the internet; he may have come across the name of psychiatrist William McGrath, whose expert opinion played a significant role in the harsh verdict of 1960 that separated the father from the family. His influence could, earlier on, have been mentioned by the mother making conjectures such as “if only that doctor had diagnosed your father as ill...”

In any case, on July 25, 2016, a number of articles by McGrath became available on the internet. Anyone who would search for his name could come across the digitalized archives of the Arizona Medicine Journal launched on that day. McGrath had been deputy editor of the journal since the 1970s and contributed to it since at least 1966. In July 1975, his topic was vices and bad habits and how hard it is for many people to give them up. McGrath argued: “They are secretly unwilling – afraid. Why? The human is just as nervous as any intelligent animal. His territory is as fraught with known and unseen dangers as that of a deer in hunting season. At any moment and without warning down by a coronary or a stroke, by a car accident or a criminal, by a law suit, by a real or calumnious scandal, or by any fatal error in judgment.”[41]

This scenario fantasized by McGrath becomes eerily familiar in hindsight, given our knowledge of what happened in Las Vegas. Any innocent person could be shot down at any moment by a hunter, or by a trial or a “fatal error in judgment.” Like Benjamin Paddock Jr. had been subjected to McGrath's error in judgment. Should Stephen Paddock have read the columns by McGrath, lines like these will have rang to his ears as pure scoff. And they seem to almost eerily spell out a blueprint for what he planned, as if he wanted to prove such lines true.

Between October 2016 and September 2017, Stephen Paddock began to enlarge his stash of ammunition and the number of his firearms from 29 to 84 legally buying a substantial arsenal of handguns, shotguns, a revolver, a rifle and equipment. He purchased them online and in several places like at a shop in Mesquite, Nevada, called “Guns and Guitars,” grotesquely apt for attacking a concert with firearms. The weapons found with him in the Vegas hotel after his suicide there had all been newly acquired ones, the LVMPD’s interim report states.

In the last years of his life, Stephen Paddock had sporadically lived together with two-years-younger girlfriend Marilou Danley, an Australian from the Philippines who he had met sometime after 2010. She had worked as a “high-limit hostess” at the Atlantis Casino in Reno, Nevada, in service of “Club Paradise” members, who play at high stakes and receive bonuses like hotel or restaurant vouchers by the casinos they frequent. Connecting dots one may note that Stephen Paddock’s love affair with Marilou Danley started in Reno, Nevada, where his parents had married in 1952 and where he owned and often used an apartment in Sierra Street, one hundred yards from their wedding church.

Stephen Paddock is said to have been allergic to detergents, soaps, perfumes and several chemical agents. Photographs of the crime scene reveal that the person lying on the floor wore black gloves. He is supposed to have used such gloves often to protect his hypersensitive skin, hinting to his disturbance in the realm of attachment and contacts in general, same as his dislike to chat over the phone, a form of communication with no control of the other’s facial reactions. Eric Paddock described phone contact with Stephen as minimal, he preferred text

messages or short phone calls. Neighbors and fellow casino visitors also found him shy and concise in communication.

While Eric insisted that Stephen had treated Marilou Danley well, to whom he had wired around \$100,000 shortly before the mass shooting, others witnessed his contemptuous and harsh treatment of her. An FBI investigator quotes her observation of Stephen Paddock frequently groaning words like “oh my God!” in his sleep during the months before the attack.[42] Whatever his nightmares were, he does not seem to have revealed them to anyone. He did see a physician for medication to sedate his mind and help him sleep. Steven Winkler of Henderson, Nevada, wrote prescription for him of the anxiolytic diazepam (Valium) to be taken in high dosage of ten milligrams twice per day.[43] He picked the prescriptions up at a Walgreens in Reno, Nevada. His physician, the interim report of the PVMPD says, states that his patient Paddock was “fearful of medications,” had refused anti-depressants but agreed to prescriptions against anxiety.

On September 28 of 2017, Stephen Paddock moved into his suite of two rooms at the Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas preparing to prey on his victims and to kill as many as possible of the 22,000 visitors expected for the open air country concert. In the days to follow, he frequented casinos and played his usual rounds of video-poker. Intermittently, he managed to funnel the arsenal of weapons into his suite and install cameras on the peepholes of the doors and in the hallway to monitor what was going on and to be warned about personnel or law enforcement becoming aware of his activities. His planning seemed meticulous and rational, by the irrational and monstrous standard he had set for himself. Then, on the first day of October, he committed mass murder.

More than from any autopsy report examining the dead man can be learned from the time he was alive, his biography, the traumatic stress and bottled up pain of the child, the nightmares of this mass murderer, whose mental derailment led to the escalation culminating in the horrendous act. Thus far one can discern a habitual gambler who harbored fantasies of omnipotence, a player in search for his luck and then venturing to destroy what luck others may have, indiscriminately firing into their destinies. He shot from an elevated position, from above, like a giant targeting dwarves on the ground, towering over them like a violent father over a small child ignoring its existential fear and distress.

Offenders and their crimes are always symptoms of a society as a whole. Although Stephen Paddock knew none of the people he shot at, he was our contemporary and his victims were his contemporaries. One of the survivors, a young man, bears the same last name as Olga, the perpetrator’s grandmother: Gunderson.[44] A coincidence. But it does underline the linkage between the society and this culprit who aimed to deny and cut the vital link attaching any of us to all others.

Perpetrators like Paddock testify to a disturbance in society, and the extent to which society refuses to recognize this is in itself a meta-symptom of the disorder. Robert Jay Lifton, Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University, became famous for his studies of the national-socialist medical profession and the mental aftermath of trauma and disaster. He coined the term “malignant normality”[45] for the trivializing of dysfunctional and pathological syndromes in societies. In many ways Stephen Paddock's story stands for “malignant normality”, as evidenced by relatives and others who had known him insisting on

the completely inconspicuous “normality” of this man’s life and lifestyle. No one seemed to find anything particularly striking about his worrisome habits and idiosyncrasies.

An even more worrying degree of malignant normality may be diagnosed in the relationship of this society to arms and the right to bear them. A culture which has produced not only a Stephen Paddock but a considerable number of amok running mass shooters is still at a loss when it comes to connect one with the other, the traumatized and anguished shooter with his opportunity to amass firearms. Paddock had enough weapons at hand to equip a small battalion in a civil war. And this is what he did – him, his splintered self, representing that battalion of complex antagonisms he was unable to disentangle. But without easy access to arms, much less harm would have been inflicted on others. His assistants were the American arms lobby, the National Rifle Association, the deregulations in existence for the private acquisition of weaponry and ammunition. Liberal discussants complain in vain about the status quo. Arms lobbyists claim the best protection against armed adversaries is to be armed: malignant normality, no doubt.

And another desideratum becomes evident with this tragic case. Communities and institutions had no eye on this family; no one took notice of the turmoil and the needs of those four children whose father was there and then gone, imprisoned, “dead,” then alive, then vanished. Where there are families with emotionally and mentally disturbed parents or with an incarcerated parent, there are bound to be troubled children. Parents, teachers, and social workers need to be informed about the risks and rifts for these children’s lives, about how to read symptoms and react appropriately. Even while a parent is still jailed sensible work can be done with children to counteract the effect. Systemic concern for the dynamics within such families is needed, psychological information offered to the families involved. The monumental deception of the Paddock children – due also to the mother’s fatal lie – went unseen because neither their relatives nor teachers or classmates were able or asked to respond. Not mention the judges and lawyers or the psychiatrist examining their father, who made no mention of the children’s fate in his report about the father who would be locked away for twenty years. Leaving children in this situation to their own devices is another part of malignant normality.

Mobility of families is another aspect to be considered. Not just the Paddocks and other families in America, but millions of families globally are forced to develop a high degree of mobility in a globalized world, often deracinating children and subjecting them to sudden ruptures of the social fabric they were accustomed to. More and more people experience their existence as “gambling chips”: coincidences and sudden events bring unexpected turns, erratic relationship patterns and a high degree of mental and emotional insecurity.

In an attempt to compensate for the lack of protection, many people take to legal or illegal medication drugs and psychotropic drugs. The US leads worldwide in the use and abuse of painkillers and narcotic drugs, numbers currently being at a record high. In late October 2017, the US government announced a scheme to counteract the endemic use of painkillers such as opioids. A national emergency was declared. In 2015 alone, 33,000 people died of opioid-related overdoses, they are killing people at almost twice the rate of firearm and car-accidents together.

The key question about painkillers, however, is seldom: Why the pain? In his own way, Stephen Paddock seems to have been a “pain-killer” in a triple sense. He killed out of pain, he

killed his own pain, and he killed in order to cause others pain -- to delegate to others the pain he had endured and was unable to bear. It was as if he had wanted to show others what happens when one loses all confidence in this world.

The perpetrator is not here to speak. The psychotic core of his action will never be fully understood. It can only be partially deduced from the parts of the puzzle we are left with. Piecing parts of it together we are seeking answers to the huge “why?,” also to add to the meaning of those thousands of hours of coverage and investigative work society was commissioned with -- by the perpetrator and by his victims.

Chronicle of the Paddock family

About the material

Data and background information for this chronicle are necessarily incomplete. Most of it was collected from current and historical reports in US media. American media were concerned with the perpetrator of the mass shooting of October 1st 2017 in Las Vegas, local and regional press often focused on aspects of Stephen Paddock's biography touching their area, searching their archives for reports which were decades old. This was precious material, birth and marriage announcements, obituaries, facsimiles of documents, court reporting and more.

The information used was, among others, gathered from the following media: Chicago Tribune, Washington Post, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, Time Magazine, Newsweek, The Daily Beast, The Independent (UK), BBC, CNN, ABC News, The Tucson Sentinel, Tucson Daily Citizen, Arizona Daily Star, The Clinton Chronicle, The Eugene Register-Guard, Oregon, The Mason City Globe Gazette, the Vegas Review Journal the Los Angeles Daily News.

In addition web-archives like www.findagrave.com were consulted, US Federal Census Registers, City Directories, U.S. Public Record Indices or other publicly available files. Some data could only be estimate or deduced from others, maps and geographical web services deliver images of streets, houses, neighborhoods. Complete verification of the data is not possible.

The chronicle

1881, August 27: Birth of Benjamin Hoskin's Paddock Sr. in Baraboo, Sauk County, Wisconsin, west of Milwaukee in the area of Great lakes. The protestant family of Stephen Paddocks paternal grandfather had immigrated from Germany, Great Britain and Norway.

1888, March 6: Birth of Olga Emilia Elizabeth Gunderson in Wisconsin, paternal grandmother of Stephen Paddock, daughter of a captain on the Great Lakes.

1920 (approx.): Marriage of Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Sr., furniture and lumber dealer, with Olga Emilia Elizabeth Gunderson in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

1926, November 1st: Birth of Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr., father of Stephen Paddock.

1928, January 10: Birth of Dolores Irene Hudson, later mother of Stephen Paddock in Nauvoo, Illinois. Her mother, Elsie M. Hudson, née Tausch (1893-1945) died when her daughter Dolores Irene was 17 and daughter Ora Elaine, born on 4 July 1931, was 14 years old.

1935: Paddock Sr. family is registered as residents of Superior, Wisconsin.

1940: Paddock Sr. family registered as residents of Cook County, Chicago City.

1941: Benjamin Paddock Jr. quits off school and volunteers at the US Navy for several months.

1941: Benjamin Paddock Sr. is in service as a Quartermaster of the US Army at his place of residence.

1942: Benjamin Paddock Jr., released from the army, spends some months with his parents

1943/1944: Benjamin Paddock Jr. works as a bus driver for the Los Angeles Railroad Company. He is fired for irregularities on duty.

1944/1945: For about ten months, Benjamin Paddock Jr. works at the Greyhound Bus Company in Chicago, at the place of residence of the parents.

1946: Dolores Irene Hudson is registered as a resident of Fort Madison, Iowa.

1946: Benjamin Paddock Jr. is arrested in Chicago for multiple car theft and falsification of documents. He is sentenced to seven years imprisonment and is released after five years.

1951, July: Benjamin Paddock Jr. sells used cars in Chicago. He acquires a license as an amateur radio operator.

1952, July 16: Benjamin Paddock Jr. marries Dolores Irene Hudson in Reno, Nevada. The couple goes on to live in Chicago.

1953, April 9: Their first son, Stephen Craig Paddock, is born in Clinton, Iowa.

1953, July 23: marriage of Ora Elaine Hudson, 22, Clinton, Iowa, sister of Dolores Irene Paddock, to Henry Gellhorn, 21, from Waterloo, Iowa.

1953: Soon after the birth of his son Stephen, Benjamin Paddock Jr. engages in check fraud and is sentenced to three years of imprisonment.

1956, August: Relocation of the family of Benjamin Paddock Jr. to Tucson, Arizona.

1957, September 14: Birth of the second son, Patrick Benjamin Paddock in Tucson, Arizona.

1958, January 26: Benjamin Hoskin's Paddock Sr. dies in Grants Pass, Josephine County, Oregon.

1959, January 20: Birth of the third son, Bruce Douglas Paddock, in Tucson, Arizona.

1959: Benjamin Paddock Jr. works as a volunteer probation officer in Arizona. He pretends to be a social psychologist. He sells waste containers for a living.

1959, February 19: Benjamin Hoskin's Paddock Jr. commits an armed robbery on a branch office of a bank in Phoenix, Arizona.

1960, January 29: Benjamin Hoskin's Paddock Jr. commits a second-armed armed robbery on a branch office of a bank in Phoenix, Arizona..

1960, March 29: Birth of the fourth son, Eric Hudson Paddock, in Tucson, Arizona.

1960, May: Stephen Paddock wins a children's piano competition in Tucson, Arizona.

1960, July 26: Benjamin Paddock Jr. commits a third armed robbery on a branch office of a bank in Phoenix, Arizona. He is apprehended by police in Las Vegas on his way to a hotel and gambling casinos.

1960, July 28: FBI officials question Dolores Irene Paddock about her husband. She hides the facts about their father from the children.

1960, November 9: Psychiatrist William B. McGrath of Phoenix, Arizona compiles a report on Benjamin Hoskins Paddock for the judges of the court.

1961, January: Benjamin Paddock Jr. is sentenced to 20 years imprisonment and transferred to a prison in La Tuna, Texas. The mother tells the sons their father has died.

1961: Dolores Paddock moves to Sun Valley in California with her four sons. She works as a secretary in an office.

1961-1971: Stephen Paddock attends the Fernangeles Elementary School, Richard E. Byrd Middle School and the John H. Francis Polytechnic Senior High School in Sun Valley, California.

1968, December 31: Benjamin Paddock Jr. escapes from prison in La Tuna, Texas. He robs a bank in San Francisco and goes into hiding.

1969, June 10: The FBI puts Benjamin Paddock Jr.s name on the list of the ten most wanted offenders in the US.

1970: Stephen Paddock completes high school at Northeastern College of San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles.

1969: Ralph Rolland Hudson, maternal grandfather of Stephen Paddock, dies in Tucson, Arizona.

1969, October 13: Olga Paddock, née Gunderson, paternal grandmother of Stephen Paddock, dies in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin.

1970: Stephen Paddock takes up studies of business administration at Northridge University, California.

1971: Benjamin Paddock Jr. settles under the alias name of Bruce Werner Erickson in Oregon, where he works as a truck driver and sells vehicles.

1971-1977: While in college Stephen Paddock holds jobs as a postal worker and works night shifts at a Californian airport.

1977, May: The FBI has lost hope to find fugitive Benjamin Paddock Jr. and delete his name from the list of the ten most wanted. Benjamin Paddock Jr. opens a bingo parlor in Springfield, Oregon.

1977: Stephen Paddock receives his degree in Business Administration from Northridge University, California. After graduation he works as an Internal Revenue Service Agent and as a chartered accountant.

1977, July 17: Stephen Paddock marries Sharon Brunoehler, a friend from college, in California.

1978, September 6: The cover of Benjamin Paddock Jr. is blown, he is sentenced to prison in Lompoc, California and pardoned in March 1979. He restarts a bingo parlor in Springfield.

1979: Stephen Paddock's marriage to Sharon Brunoehler is divorced.

1981: Stephen Paddock attends a student reunion at the tenth anniversary of graduation at Northridge University, California

1985, March 9th: Stephen Paddock marries Peggy R. Okamoto. The second marriage remains childless like the first.

1985-1988: Stephen Paddock works for a predecessor company of Lockheed Martin as an auditor and certified public accountant. He buys real estate business and enters this trade.

1987: Benjamin Paddock Jr. aka Bruce Warner Erickson is charged with fraud in Oregon. He deposits high sum for bail and evades detention.

1988-2013 (approx.): Stephen Paddock expands his real estate business, he buys properties in Nevada, Texas and California and involves his youngest Brother Eric in his investments. He moves frequently and becomes a professional video poker player in casinos.

1989: Bruce Paddock, Stephen's second younger brother is sued over assault and disregard of court. The charges are dropped some time later.

1990: Stephen and Peggy Paddock, née Okamoto, get divorced.

1992: Bruce Paddock files bankruptcy in Los Angeles.

1993: Bruce Paddock is charged with sexual harassment of a minor. He is acquitted in the proceedings.

1994/1995: Bruce Paddock is charged for various thefts and driving without license.

1998, January 18: Death of Benjamin Hoskin's Paddock Jr. in Arlington, Tarrant County, Texas.

2003: Stephen Paddock acquires a pilot's license for small aircraft. He also holds a hunting license and a fishing license from Alaska.

2009, September 11: Stephen Paddock's Aunt Ora Elaine Gellhorn, née Hudson, dies in Carlsbad, California.

2012: Stephen Paddock sues Cosmopolitan Hotels & Resorts for an incident at one of their casinos, where he slipped on uneven ground. He loses the law suit in 2014.

2013-2015: Stephen Paddock often stays in Melbourne, Florida, where his mother lives as well as his brother Eric with family.

2015: Stephen Paddock moves from Florida to Nevada and buys a house in Mesquite, close to Las Vegas. He has had around 25 residential addresses to this point.

2016, October – 2017, September: Stephen Paddock purchases 55 firearms in addition to the 29 he already owns. He sporadically lives with his girlfriend Marilou Danley.

2016 and 2017: Stephen Paddock receives high-dose valium prescriptions from a Nevada doctor.

2017, August: Stephen Paddock books two rooms at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago, overlooking the space where the Lollapalooza music festival is going to take place later in the year.

2017, September 28: Stephen Paddock rents a two room suite at the Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas. He brings several suitcases filled with weapons and ammunition into the rooms.

2017, October 1st: Firing from two Las Vegas hotel windows, Stephen Paddock kills 58 visitors of an open air country music concert and shoots himself.

2017: As of 2nd October: Media and public speculate about Stephen Paddock's motives. The perpetrator gave no clues and left no will.

2017, October 18th: A Catholic priest blesses the rooms in the Mandalay Hotel from which Paddock had shot. Hotel management seeks to reassure staff.

2017, October 25: Stephen Paddock is arrested at a nursing home in North Hollywood by a special police unit of the Los Angeles Municipal Police Department. He is charged with owning child pornography.

2017, October 25: Investigators report the absence of the hard drive belonging to the laptop Stephen Paddock had used at the Vegas hotel.

2017, October 30: Brain tissue from Stephen Paddock has been sent for examination to Stanford University School of Medicine.

2017, November 3: The FBI in Las Vegas announces Stephen Paddock had had significant losses in casinos since 2015.

2017, November: A lawyer in Las Vegas demands compensation for 75 families of victims of the massacre from funds of the deceased perpetrator. His mother waives her legal right to manage the estate.

2018, May 23: Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department issues an interim report on its findings. Investigators have located “several hundred images of child pornography” on the hard drive of one of Stephen Paddock’s computers.

2018, August 3: Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department issues a final report on its findings declaring that “no motive” has been found behind the perpetrator’s acts.

ANNOTATIONS

[1] Report from the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department’s Force Investigation Team on the shooting that occurred on October 1, 2017, at 3901 S. Las Vegas Boulevard at the Route 91 Harvest music festival. LVMPD Criminal Investigative Report of the 1 October Mass Casualty Shooting. LVMPD Event Number 171001-3519. Joseph Lombardo, Sheriff, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, August 3, 2018. URL: https://www.lvmpd.com/en-us/Documents/1-October-FIT-Criminal-Investigative-Report-FINAL_080318.pdf (accessed 24. 9. 2018)

[2] Chris Harris: What May Have Caused the Las Vegas Shooter to Kill? At Expert's Analysis. 12.10.2017, Weekly Magazine People (TIME Inc.). The circulation is more than three million copies. John Kelly says paddock, in his opinion, has the so-called "warrior gene," so he was methodical and structured. "Paddock was a pathological gambler, psychopath and a sociopath. He was predisposed from birth and childhood to extreme internalized shame, low self-esteem, depression, and aggressive anger. "

[3] Dave Philipps: Father's History Could Offer Insight Into Mind of Las Vegas Gunman. New York Times, 13.10.2017.

[4] Tom Whipple: Did the Las Vegas gunman Stephen Paddock carry his father's psychopathic gene legacy? The Times, London, 4. 10.2017.

[5] Beatrice Dupuy: Las Vegas Shooters Room in Mandalay Hotel blessed by Catholic Priest. Newsweek, US Edition, 25. 10. 2017

[6] „Holy Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; Satan and all the evil spirits who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.”
(www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php)

? p = 1389, last accessed on October 31st 2017).

[7] Sue Klebold: A Mother’s Reckoning. Living in the Aftermath of Tragedy. Crown Publishers, New York, 2016

[8] Who is Stephen Paddock? Las Vegas gunman's father was psychopathic bank robber on FBI most-wanted list. Washington Post, 10/2/2017 [no author name provided].

[9] Ann O'Neill and Bob Ortega: The Unknowable Stephen Paddock and the Ultimate Mystery: Why? CNN online, 7.10.2017.

[10] Autopsy Report. Pathological examination on the body of Stephen Craig Paddock. Clark County Coroner, 1704 Pinto Land, Las Vegas, NV 89106. Case Number: 17- 10064. October 6, 2017.

[11] Preliminary Investigative Report. 1 October / Mass Casualty Shooting, LVMPD-Event 171001-3519, submitted by Detective Trever Alsup, P#5782, Las Vegas Municipal Police Department (LVMPD) on Jan. 18th 2018, page 52 of 81

[12] The report was issued on November 6, 1960. Psychiatrist William B. McGrath examined Benjamin Hoskins Paddock Jr., who had taken on the name "Patrick Paddock" like he had done before. McGrath was to determine the culpability of the inmate-
(assets.documentcloud.org/documents/4)

107878 / USDC-Phoenix-Criminal-15713-Governments-Exhibit-1.pdf, last accessed on Nov. 24 2017).

[13] Today, teen-driving in Wisconsin is allowed from the age of fifteen and a half years onward. In sparsely populated areas of the US regulations for driving licenses used to be more casual.

[14] Foucault, Michel: *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated from the French by Alan Sheridan. New York, 1978. "The Panopticon may even provide an apparatus for supervising its own mechanisms. In this central tower, the director may spy on all the employees that he has under his orders: nurses, doctors, foremen, teachers, warders; he will be able to judge them continuously, alter their behaviour, impose upon them the methods he thinks best; and it will even be possible to observe the director himself. An inspector arriving unexpectedly at the centre of the Panopticon will be able to judge at a glance, without anything being concealed from him, how the entire establishment is functioning." (p. 204)

[15] R. Wilbur Miller (ed.). *The Social History of Crime and Punishment in America: An Encyclopedia*. Thousand Oaks, California, 2012

[16] Meanwhile, by mid-January 2018, Stephen Paddock's brother Eric has been handed over the remains of his brother and announced they would be buried at an undisclosed location.

[17] The Mormons deduced the name „Nauvoo“, derived from the Hebrew words for "beautiful place", "na-avauh" according to the prophet Isaiah, 52:7.

[18] The term "parentification" is applied to forms of role reversal where minors are cast into the role of adults meeting their needs.

[19] Benjamin Paddock Jr. had offered neighbours in Tucson to contact relatives and friends abroad via his amateur radio station, as Tommy Thompson reported for *The Tucson Daily Citizen* on July 2nd 1960 in his article "Big Daddy Made Big Impact Here". He himself had obviously used the device to monitor police radio.

[20] "Containment" is a psychoanalytical term coined by Wilfred Bion who used it for the ability of adults to contain unbearable emotions of babies and children thereby transforming them into bearable ones. In 1959 Bion extended his theory to describe social groups as "maternal containers".

[21] Tommy Thompson: Little Children underfoot as FBI agents move in. *Tucson Daily Citizen*, 29.7.1960.

[22] Dave Philipps and Matthew Haag: Las Vegas Gunman's Criminal Father Vanished From Sons' Lives. New York Times, October 2, 2017 (print edition on October 4, 2017).

[23] José A. Delreal und Jonah Engel Bromwich: Stephen Paddock, Las Vegas Suspect was a Gambler Who Drew Little Attention. New York Times, 2.10.2017.

[24] See: Nauvoo Restoration, Inc. corporate files, 1839-1992. A Register of the Collection. CR

387 19, Church History Library. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2012. Publicly accessible is only the registry with data and Brief information on correspondence. The documents themselves are all marked. Closed to research, closed to the public. One of the documents of 6 March 1964 (Box 6, Folder 10, Item 19, Reel 5) apparently contains details about the family history. The archival note states: "Readable part of the letter is about the family's history."

[25] Itay Hod: "Math Whiz," "Loner," "Invisible": Vegas Shooter's Friends Say He Grew Up "at the Bottom of the Bottom." The Wrap, 26.10.2017. Paddock shared his mathematical inclination with at least one other mass murderer, the so-called Unabomber. The anarchist mathematician Theodore John Kaczynski killed several people over the course of some years until 1995 by mailing them explosive packages.

[26] Rick Bella: Springfield get its 'Big Daddy' back. Eugene Register Guard, Oregon, June 19th 1979, pages 2A and 2B of the local section.

[27] Wade Tyler Millward: Las Vegas shooter was not a standout college student. Las Vegas Review Journal, November 21st 2017.

[28] Declassified FBI document: DRC-OI / 03IW120446.

[29] Rick Bella: Springfield get its 'Big Daddy' back. Eugene Register Guard, Oregon, June 19th 1979, pages 2A and 2B of the local section.

[30] John Edgar Hoover was the legendary director of the FBI from 1935 to 1972.

[31] Dave Philipps and Matthew Haag: Las Vegas Gunman's Criminal Father Vanished From Sons' Lives. New York Times, October 2, 2017 (print edition on October 4, 2017).

[32] William Wan, Sandhya Somashekhar and Marwa Eltagouri: New details emerge about Las Vegas shooter Stephen Paddock and girlfriend Marilou Danley. Washington Post, October 6th, 2017

[33] Abrina Tavernise, Serge Kovalevski and Julie Turkewitz: Who was Stephen Paddock? The mystery of the "most boring son". Irish Times, 8.10.2017.

[34] Amongst other material he read Jean Scott's "Tax Help for Gamblers", mentioned in the report by Brian Joseph and Arthur Kane in the Las Vegas Review Journal of 10 November 2017: "Inside the Las Vegas shooter's gambling world".

[35] Preliminary Investigative Report. 1 October / Mass Casualty Shooting, LVMPD-Event 171001-3519, submitted by Detective Trevor Alsup, P#5782, Las Vegas Municipal Police Department (LVMPD) on Jan. 18th 2018, page 47

[36] Chris Pleasance: "I was born bad": Las Vegas prostitute who romped with mass killer Stephen Paddock says he enjoyed violent rape fantasies as she reveals he boasted he had always been evil. Daily Mail, 8.10.2017.

[37] Interview with Eric Paddock in Florida on CBSN TV, October 3rd 2017. URL: www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPZFN6VFFow, accessed October 12th 2017.

[38] Abrina Tavernise, Serge Kovalevski and Julie Turkewitz: Who was Stephen Paddock? The mystery of the "most boring son". Irish Times, October 8th 2017.

[39] Stephen Paddock owned real estate in two places called Mesquite, one in Texas and one in Nevada, his last registered address.

[40] Kate Mather and Joseph Serna: Bruce Paddock, brother of Las Vegas gunman, pleads not guilty to child porn charges. Los Angeles Times, October 27th 2017.

[41] William McGrath: Vice - Advice. Arizona Medicine Journal, 35 (7), July 1975, p. 575 (ia601203.us.archive.org/1/items/arizonamedicinej322unse/arizonamedicinej322unse.pdf, last accessed on Dec. 1st 2017). McGrath, born about 1915, died in December 1990.

[42] Emily Shugerman: Stephen Paddock "used to lie in bed screaming and may have been in mental anguish". The Independent, 6.10.2017.

[43] Paul Harasim: Las Vegas strip shooter prescribed anti-anxiety drug in June. Las Vegas Review-Journal, 3.10.2017.

[44] Vegas Survivor: Despite Being Shot In Leg, I'm Standing For The President. Posted by Tim Hains on October 5, 2017 for Real Clear Politics. 28-year-old Thomas Gunderson from Newport Beach in California received a gun shot and helped other victims. He was interviewed by several US media when the President and the first lady visited him in hospital.

[45] Robert Jay Lifton: Malignant Normality. Dissent Magazine, New York, Spring Number, 2017