



THE CONGRESSIONAL SHOOTER: A BEHAVIORAL REVIEW OF JAMES HODGKINSON

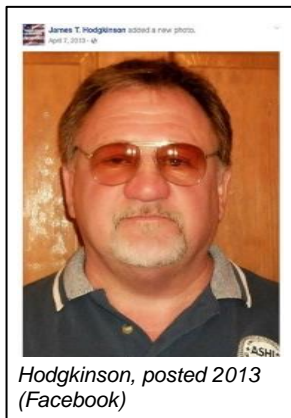
October 2, 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 14, 2017, at 7:09 a.m., James Thomas Hodgkinson, 66, fired at least 70 rounds from a 9mm pistol and an SKS 7.62mm rifle at Republican Congressmen, their staffers, and others practicing at Eugene Simpson Stadium Park in Alexandria, VA for the Congressional Baseball Game for Charity. Five people were wounded during the attack, including the House Majority Whip and two U.S. Capitol Police special agents who were part of his security detail. Hodgkinson was shot by responding officers and later died of his injuries. Approximately three months prior to the attack, Hodgkinson told his wife that he was going to Washington, DC to work on reforming tax brackets. He drove from Belleville, IL to Alexandria, VA, where he was living out of his van prior to the attack.

NTAC conducts operational research on incidents of targeted violence to update Secret Service investigative practices with the latest information on the thinking and behavior of past attackers. Hodgkinson's background illustrates many key investigative themes relevant to threat assessment. A few of these are highlighted below.

Hodgkinson's Background



- ★ Unemployed home inspector whose business failed months prior
- ★ Married for over 30 years; fostered 35 children, adopted 2
- ★ Described as unfriendly, a loner, and pushy by some, but “quite mellow” and a “nice guy” by others
- ★ Criminal history included numerous traffic violations and charges for fleeing police, DUI, resisting or obstructing police, and domestic battery
- ★ Openly shared his anti-Republican views with friends, family, and others; attended protests; wrote letters to his local paper expressing discontent with economic inequality and taxes; never made a threat
- ★ Emailed and called his Republican congressman at least 10 times to express his disagreement over the issues his office put forth

Investigative Themes of Threat Assessment

Communications: Hodgkinson *never made a threat* against any public officials or made his intentions for the attack known to others, but he did engage in politically-charged rhetoric that was derogatory and antagonistic. These statements were not entirely different from those regularly made by many like-minded others. During the presidential campaign and following the election, *others noted changes in his behavior* as he became increasingly unhappy, angry, and more politically charged. This was evident in his online postings in which he referred to President Trump as a traitor, stating “It’s Time to Destroy Trump & Co.” His anger was also evident the day prior to his attack, when he took his van to a service center and the manager mentioned that he had to work six days a week. In response, Hodgkinson launched into a curse-filled rant that was *concerning due to its intensity*. The manager thought it was more than just an angry voter, “It was deeply rooted to where [Hodgkinson’s]



whole tone and composure changed.” Despite his alarm, the manager did not report Hodgkinson because he *never mentioned hurting anyone*.

Aggressive and Intimidating Acts: Over the years, Hodgkinson was known to *act out aggressively* with sudden bursts of intense anger while in the community and at home. For instance, sometime in 2002, he was banned from working with the county as a contractor due to his *concerning behavior* after he was found rummaging through an accountant’s desk. When caught, he erupted into an angry confrontation. Similar behavior is evident in his criminal history, which also reflected a *willingness to defy authority*. For example, in 2006, he was charged with battery after he and his wife tried to physically force their foster daughter to return home from a neighbor’s house. During the incident, Hodgkinson forced his way through a door, assaulted his foster daughter, cut her seatbelt to pull her from a car, struck her female friend, and fired a shotgun when the friend’s boyfriend confronted him. During a hearing in the case, he was removed from the courtroom due to several outbursts. His wife also endured verbal abuse and had dishes thrown at her. At some point, *she grew so concerned* that she asked his doctor for help.

Past and Present Stressors: Hodgkinson experienced various stressors in many aspects of his life – including his *health, family, employment, finances, and civil and criminal court actions* – that significantly impacted his thinking and behavior. According to his wife, his mood changed and he was quick to anger after he began dealing with diabetes. Around the same time, one of the couple’s foster children committed suicide at age 17. Focusing on the months just prior to the shooting, Hodgkinson experienced several stressors that may have contributed to *feelings of desperation*. He was facing increased financial stress as he had reached retirement age and his business failed. Further, he and his wife were *experiencing marital problems*, and compounding his stress, one of their daughters moved back into the home with her two-year-old son. Though it is not clear exactly how long prior to his attack, Hodgkinson began to make vague statements to family members indicating that he may not be around much longer.

Not Being Held Accountable: Hodgkinson *did not appear to suffer meaningful consequences* in response to his criminal behavior or inappropriate communications. Although he was charged with various crimes, most were dismissed, with the harshest penalties being fines or unsupervised probation. The most significant charges, which were related to the 2006 domestic incident, were dismissed after a witness failed to appear. Beyond criminal acts, those around Hodgkinson, even if concerned, tolerated his vitriolic speech.

Contacts with Law Enforcement: In addition to the criminal history noted above, Hodgkinson was known to call police *and lodge complaints against his neighbors*. He called police to report teens who were drinking and had driven through his driveway, a neighbor whose trash service was using his driveway, and others who had damaged his yard. Hodgkinson’s *neighbors also called police to report complaints against him*. After the domestic incident, the neighbor involved in the dispute, reported that Hodgkinson had run over her dog while it slept in the roadway. Just prior to leaving for Virginia, Hodgkinson was reported by a neighbor for firing his rifle from his backyard, across a field. The neighbor, who did not know Hodgkinson, yelled for him to stop as there were homes in the direction he was firing, but Hodgkinson persisted. After showing responding deputies his firearms licenses and stating he was doing target practice, Hodgkinson was warned about making too much noise and firing the rifle in the area.

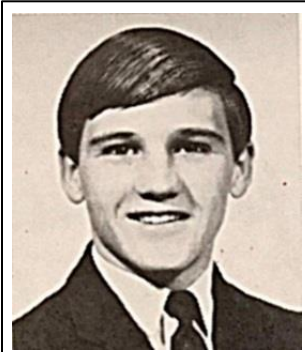
This behavioral brief illustrates the importance of gathering information on the key themes that guide protective intelligence investigations. Though angry rhetoric may be the norm for an individual, changes in the content, tone, or frequency of those communications may be a cause for concern. Investigators should also explore the presence of past, present, or future stressors, as well as the setting in which the person is operating. Gathering information about all aspects of a person’s life, and corroborating information from multiple sources, assists the investigator in determining if the person poses a risk of targeted violence and appropriate interventions to mitigate that risk.



FULL CASE SUMMARY*

Hodgkinson's Background

Hodgkinson and his two siblings grew up in Belleville, IL. Having participated in wrestling and track, he graduated from Belleville West High School in 1968. Friends described him as a normal teenager, "a little bit withdrawn," but not in an unusual way.¹ He sometimes got into fights, but as one friend stated, "all the guys in high school would get into the occasional scrape."² He was also known to be passionate, as he stood up for what he believed in.



Senior year, 1968
(Belleville West High School)

In 1969, Hodgkinson spent some time studying aviation at Belleville Area College (which later became Southwestern Illinois College), and then transferred to Southern Illinois University Edwardsville three years later. Although he took classes there, he never received his degree. Instead, in 1976, Hodgkinson created a construction company, JTH Construction, and later became a licensed roofing contractor in 1986.

In 1984, Hodgkinson married his wife, Sue. Unable to have children of their own, the Hodgkinsons became licensed foster parents in 1990, according to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. This license was valid until 2003. According to Sue Hodgkinson, they housed approximately 35 foster children over time, eventually adopting two of their foster daughters many years later.

Hodgkinson's criminal history in St. Clair County, IL, shows that he had at least 20 contacts with law enforcement related to traffic violations and other misdemeanor crimes. The majority of these contacts were for moving violations and occurred between 1978 and 1993. However, he twice faced additional charges that went beyond minor infractions. In 1982, he was charged with fleeing or eluding a police officer while operating a vehicle and criminal damage to property. These charges were dismissed on February 22, 1983. A decade later, on December 31, 1992, he was charged with three moving violations, fleeing or attempting to elude police while operating a motor vehicle, resisting or obstructing a police officer, and driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol. While most of the charges were dismissed in February 1993, he was ordered to complete a total of two years of court supervision and pay fines. Following this, the frequency of Hodgkinson's charges in St. Clair County dropped off significantly, and he was cited only twice for minor traffic violations in 2001 and 2005. He was also arrested as a result of a domestic battery incident in 2006, which is described below.



Mugshot, 1992
(St. Clair County Sheriff's Department)

Hodgkinson was also involved in civil court proceedings. Just months before his DUI, he was a party in two civil actions. On August 31, 1992, he and his wife were defendants in a civil dispute in Florida. The dispute appears to have involved almost \$50,000 that the Hodgkinsons received from refinancing a property in Illinois. The Hodgkinsons were ultimately dismissed from the case, and the money was distributed to other parties. Then on October 8, 1992, Hodgkinson was involved in another civil matter when a lawsuit was filed against him in St. Clair, IL. The nature of the dispute was not described in available court records. However, in Illinois, civil lawsuits are reserved for matters involving \$5,000 to \$50,000. This case was dismissed on March 31, 1993.

*While permission to reprint is not necessary, when quoting, paraphrasing, or otherwise referring to this document, the citation should be: National Threat Assessment Center. (2017). *The congressional shooter: A behavioral review of James Hodgkinson*. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.



According to Sue Hodgkinson, her husband began suffering from diabetes in the 1990s. Though no problems were noted in his behavior in the early years of their marriage, Hodgkinson's mood changed considerably around the same timeframe. This would have also coincided with his DUI arrest and subsequent court supervision. Sue observed that his anger would come more suddenly, he would throw dishes at her, and shout at the television. In an interview with the media after the shooting, she referenced an incident at a local brewery during which he had an outburst. At some point, she grew so concerned about his anger that she wrote his doctor for help.

Neighbors who had known him for years described Hodgkinson as a loner, unfriendly, and reclusive, even during social or family get-togethers. For example, he was known to immediately leave after arriving at dinner parties if the meal was not ready.

From 1994 to 1997, Hodgkinson held a real estate appraiser license, and he ran his business out of his home. Though most sources reported that he converted his business to provide home inspections and air quality testing services around this time, available records indicate that he did not receive an inspector's license until 2003.

In October 1996, one of Hodgkinson's foster daughters, Wanda Stock, who had only been with them for approximately three months, committed suicide at age 17. Local media sources reported that her suicide note indicated that she was pregnant and that her boyfriend had broken up with her hours before she drove herself to a rural area south of Belleville, IL. There, still inside the vehicle, she poured gasoline on herself and set herself on fire.

Still operating as a licensed roofing contractor, from about 2001 through 2003, Hodgkinson worked for the St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department as a housing rehabilitation and weatherization contractor. During that timeframe, the county paid him over \$143,000 as part of a federally-funded program. Sometime in 2002, one of the accountants for the county arrived in her office on a Monday to find Hodgkinson rummaging through her desk. She described him as very angry at the time. When she asked him what he was doing, he said he was looking for his check. She informed him that it had been sent in the mail the previous Friday. Still angry, Hodgkinson went to the bank in the building and shouted at employees there, demanding to know why he had not received his check. As a result of this encounter, Hodgkinson was banned from doing any further work for the county. According to the County Board Chairman, "It's unacceptable behavior, it was strange; he was sneaky, in what he was doing. It's certainly not the type of activity we want."³ In or around 2012, Hodgkinson inquired as to what he needed to do to reinstate his contract with the county, but he never followed through with seeking his reinstatement.

On December 30, 2002, the Hodgkinsons petitioned for subsidized guardianship of their grand-niece, Cathy Putnam, 12. The Hodgkinsons had fostered Cathy at different times over the previous seven years after her biological mother lost custody of Cathy and her siblings due to abuse in the home. Their petition was granted the same day, and at some point her last name was changed to Hodgkinson. As required of subsidized guardianships, the couple submitted yearly reports to the courts that included a breakdown of the costs associated with caring for Cathy, whom the Hodgkinsons once stated required adult supervision. The Hodgkinsons continued to care for Cathy until 2006, when an incident of domestic violence ended their guardianship (see below).

On February 10, 2003, soon after he was banned from future work with the county, Hodgkinson received his home inspectors' license. This license would expire in November 2016.

In March 2003, Hodgkinson legally purchased a Century Arms International SKS-style 7.62x39mm semi-automatic rifle. This was one of the weapons that he would later use in his attack against Republican congressmen. At some point, the rifle was modified to include a folding stock and removable magazine.





On May 8, 2004, Hodgkinson's mother passed away. That same year, the Hodgkinsons were the subject of an article in the Department of Children and Family Service's newsletter about the foster care system. The article described events surrounding the wedding of one of their foster daughters, Julie, whom the Hodgkinsons had started fostering around 1994, when she was 14. According to the article, Hodgkinson was in the hospital for a serious undisclosed illness on the day of Julie's wedding. He left the hospital to walk her down the aisle and returned to the hospital following the ceremony. Years after the wedding, the Hodgkinsons adopted the then 24-year-old so she would officially be part of the family.

Hodgkinson was known to alert local police to nuisance behaviors occurring on or near his property and request that local law enforcement address the situation. For example, on February, 5, 2005, he called police to report that underage individuals were drinking alcohol on the property behind his own and that he believed these individuals had driven through his driveway. As described later, similar incidents occurred in 2006 and 2007.

Charged with Domestic Battery

By the spring of 2006, Cathy, now 16, had become close to a girl, Janae, who lived across the street with her mother, Nicki. According to a St. Clair County Sheriff's Department report, on April 1, 2006, Cathy was at this neighbor's home with another friend, Aimee. According to Aimee, Cathy told her Hodgkinson was terrible to her and always angry. She stated that Cathy "was really unhappy there. She had come over [to the neighbor's home] to get away from them."⁴

Hodgkinson and his wife, however, wanted Cathy to return home that day. In her statement to deputies, Aimee reported that Hodgkinson arrived to retrieve Cathy and forced his way through the front door. When he yelled for Cathy, she came downstairs and Hodgkinson ordered her to return home. Cathy refused, stating she wanted to stay until her friend Janae returned. She then went upstairs and locked herself in a bedroom. Hodgkinson followed, forced his way in the room, and ordered Cathy to go. After she again refused, he pulled her up by her hair and threw her to the floor. Cathy tried to free herself, but the altercation continued with Hodgkinson hitting Cathy on the arms and throwing her around the room.

Cathy managed to get away and get into Aimee's car. Hodgkinson caught up, opened Cathy's door, and tried to pull her from the car. Unable to do so, he took the keys from the ignition and used a pocket knife to cut Cathy's seatbelt to get her out. Sue Hodgkinson also tried to get Cathy out of the vehicle by hitting her, pulling her hair, and trying to drag her by her legs. Sue gave up the struggle, but threatened to call the police and have Cathy sent back to foster care. Aimee stated that once his wife gave up, Hodgkinson started choking Cathy. After Aimee warned that she was going to call the police, Hodgkinson struck Aimee in the face using his fist and immediately returned to his house across the street.

Sometime later, Aimee's boyfriend went to Hodgkinson's house to confront him about the incident. According to the boyfriend, Hodgkinson met him with a 12-gauge shotgun as he approached the front porch. As the boyfriend attempted to flee, Hodgkinson struck him with the stock of the shotgun and fired a shot. It is unknown if he fired in the boyfriend's direction or in the air, but Aimee later characterized it as a warning shot. Sheriff's deputies investigating the incident documented that they observed injuries to Cathy, but none to Aimee or her boyfriend. Their report also noted finding a spent shotgun cartridge in the area in front of Hodgkinson's home.

Hodgkinson and his wife were taken into custody that day, and Hodgkinson's shotgun was seized. The couple was transported to jail, and a hold was placed on Hodgkinson for aggravated discharge of a firearm and domestic battery. A hold was also placed on his wife for domestic battery.



Mugshot, 2006
(St. Clair County
Sheriff's Department)

Court records show Hodgkinson faced charges of two counts of battery causing bodily harm and one count of aiding or abetting damage to a motor vehicle. After he was released and charges were pending, tensions continued with the neighbor, Nicki. On June 15, 2006, Nicki called police after the two got into an argument when Hodgkinson ran over her dog while it was sleeping in the roadway.

Cathy never returned to the Hodgkinsons' home following the incident. On July 7, 2006, a judge officially removed her from the home and returned her to state custody.

Both Aimee and Hodgkinson's attorney for the battery case were interviewed after the congressional shooting. They both described Hodgkinson engaging in confrontational behavior during his legal proceedings. According to Aimee, Hodgkinson was removed from the courtroom after disrupting an initial appearance several times. She stated that "every time the judge would talk to me, he would have an outburst and start screaming."⁵ Hodgkinson's lawyer offered a similar view, describing his client as "a pushy little bastard, an in-your-face kind of guy. He believed what he believed and he wasn't going to take any shit from anybody."⁶ He also said that he "came across as a very irascible, angry little man," but did not expect him to shoot congressmen.⁷ Though many who knew Hodgkinson shared this view, Aimee was one who thought differently. As she would later tell the media, "Do I think he's capable of [the shooting]? Definitely."⁸ She continued, "It sounds really awful, but I'm not surprised...Every interaction I've had I've thought, 'that guy's crazy.'"⁹

On November 2, 2006, all charges related to the domestic incident were dismissed when Aimee failed to appear for a hearing as a witness due to confusions with the dates. She later stated, "I tried to tell the court that this guy's crazy, that this is a big deal, but they didn't listen to me."¹⁰

On November 21, 2006, at a hearing regarding Cathy's status, Cathy testified that Hodgkinson had physically abused her and was an alcoholic who drank daily. She claimed that he would hit her in the face when she did not mow the lawn as directed or when she was argumentative. She also claimed to have suffered verbal and emotional abuse, but denied any sexual abuse. Sue Hodgkinson, however, continued to claim that, while Hodgkinson was verbally abusive toward her and their daughters, he never physically abused them.

In a December 26, 2006 court filing related to Cathy's custody, the Hodgkinsons noted that the judge "has seen fit to award guardianship of Cathy to our next-door neighbors, which is a quite stressful and uncomfortable situation for our family."¹¹ It further detailed the expenses they had faced related to Cathy's care, including "the lost work time we incurred for counseling, court dates, incarcerations, and medical expenses for the stress the rest of the family was put through while [Cathy] manipulated her way through the system."¹² The last hearing in this case was January 23, 2007. Eventually, the neighbor officially became Cathy's guardian and her last name was changed again. Cathy continued to have difficulties and was emancipated at age 18. In 2015, at the age of 25, she died from a heroin overdose.

Hodgkinson also had additional encounters with law enforcement, some of which he initiated. For example, Hodgkinson complained to law enforcement about neighbors he thought were unruly or damaging his property. On August 13, 2006, he called police when he found someone had damaged his yard using a vehicle to spin donuts. On January 16, 2007, Hodgkinson called police to complain that his neighbor's trash service was using his driveway to turn around, and he wanted them to stop. Then on February 18, 2007, he called police to complain that an individual drove through his yard and caused damage to his property. The responding officer was able to identify and locate the driver, who agreed to cover the damages.



Hodgkinson's most recent criminal charges prior to the congressional shooting occurred on July 2, 2009, when he was charged for failing to obtain an electrical contractor's license before doing electrical work and failing to obtain a permit to perform electrical work. He pled not guilty to both charges on July 8, 2009. His attorney for this licensing case, who also represented him in the assault case three years earlier, stated he remembered Hodgkinson saying, "What are they charging me for? I know what I was doing. So what if I didn't have the paperwork?"¹³ On February 11, 2010, his charge for failing to obtain a permit was dismissed, and he pled guilty to failing to obtain an electrical contractor's license. He was fined and had to pay court costs totaling \$100.

On May 26, 2011, Hodgkinson's 91-year-old father passed away.

Voicing Political Discontent

In the few years leading up to his attack, Hodgkinson made numerous written statements criticizing Republican policies and ideology, as well as statements directly criticizing specific public officials, including congressmen and former Republican Presidents of the United States. The communications were through calls or emails to his congressional representative, letters sent to the local paper, and comments or re-postings of articles or political comics on Facebook or Twitter. On Facebook alone, he posted such statements three to four times per week.

Although many of his online political statements were inflammatory, none violated any laws or directly threatened members of Congress. A friend of Hodgkinson described him as zealous about his political beliefs and claimed that Hodgkinson was "pretty well fed up" with current politics.¹⁴

Although specific dates are unknown, Hodgkinson reached out to his congressional representative, Mike Bost (R.-Ill.), a number of times. According to Rep. Bost, Hodgkinson emailed him nine times, and called him once in the year prior to his attack. Rep. Bost noted, "Every issue that we were working on, he was not in support of."¹⁵ He stated that Hodgkinson's communications were never sent "with any threats, only anger," adding that he "never crossed the line, but he was always angry."¹⁶



*Hodgkinson protesting, 2012
(Reproduced with permission of the Belleville (IL) News-Democrat.
Photo by Derik Holtmann. Copyright, 2017.)*

From 2008 to 2012, Hodgkinson also wrote at least 27 letters to his local newspaper, the Belleville News-Democrat, most of which discussed his desire to increase the number of tax brackets. Other letters discussed the economy and economic inequality. Two of his letters promoted legalizing marijuana so that it could be a source of tax revenue for the government. One letter from 2011 expressed admiration for protesters in the Occupy Wall Street movement and complained about "our do-nothing Congress doing nothing while our country is going down the tubes."¹⁷ That same year, he was at an Occupy Wall Street protest near his hometown and told a television news reporter that "the 99% are getting pushed around and the 1% are just not giving a damn."¹⁸ The local newspaper reported at the time that Hodgkinson was part of a group of the "99 percent" who hoped to bring awareness to the political and financial power he



believed were controlled by the top 1 percent of wage earners in the United States.¹⁹

In a letter published on August 28, 2012, Hodgkinson wrote, "I have never said 'life sucks,' only the policies of the Republicans," and described a plan to expand the number of tax brackets.²⁰ In addition, at one event in 2012, he was pictured during a protest outside a U.S. Post Office building in Belleville, IL, where he held a sign challenging conservative "trickle down" economic policies.²¹

Little is known about Hodgkinson's activities for the next few years. One neighbor who had known him during that time described him as a regular guy. The neighbor told reporters that Hodgkinson hosted a Halloween party every year, and invited neighbors by distributing flyers.

In 2014, his adopted daughter, Tasha, got engaged. Some who knew him reported that Hodgkinson appeared to be quite disinterested in her engagement and did not attend the wedding. His new in-laws, who had only met him a few times, found him to be aloof, describing him as not a "very big father figure."²² After the shooting, the father acknowledged that Hodgkinson "did not seem 100 percent stable to [him]."²³ During family gatherings, Hodgkinson would sit alone in another room, usually in front of a computer screen, or outside in his garden shed. A family member also reported to the media that Hodgkinson's wife said she wanted a divorce, likely sometime between 2014 and the shooting in 2017.

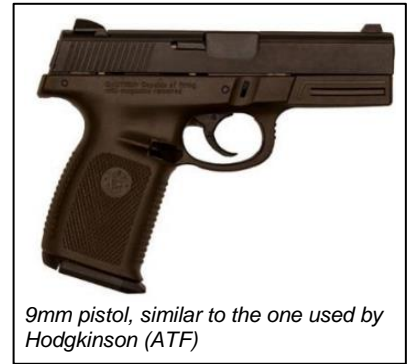
In January 2015, Hodgkinson posted a political comic about Rep. Scalise to his Facebook page. He commented on the comic, "Here's a Republican that should Lose His Job, but they Gave Him a Raise."²⁴ In another example, on October 16, 2015, Hodgkinson posted another comic to this same account. This one from the political cartoonist Matt Davies that addressed the rising cost of health care. He also commented on the comic, stating, "Thieving Republican Congress Strikes Again!!!"²⁵

People familiar with him reported that Hodgkinson appeared greatly affected by the 2016 presidential election. According to his wife, he became intensely upset and angry about politics during this election cycle. During the campaign, Hodgkinson was an avid supporter of Presidential Candidate Bernie Sanders and volunteered for the senator's campaign in Illinois. Those who knew Hodgkinson from the campaign described him as "very mellow, very reserved" and said he was a "quiet guy."²⁶ Hodgkinson's support was also evident on his Facebook and Twitter profiles. On June 13, 2016, as Candidate Sanders' campaign struggled, Hodgkinson posted a petition from Change.org calling on the candidate to continue his election efforts. The comment that accompanied the post stated, "Bernie is the Only Candidate in Decades that Really Cares about the Working Class."²⁷ Ultimately, Candidate Sanders lost the nomination for Democratic Candidate for President on July 26, 2016. Despite this loss, weeks later, on August 12, 2016, Hodgkinson reposted a photo meme about Senator Sanders's chances of winning the election and a call to sign a petition on Change.org for Sen. Sanders to join the Green Party. He commented on this post, "I want Bernie to Win the White House."²⁸

After President Trump won the election on November 8, 2016, family and friends noted that Hodgkinson was unhappy and troubled. His wife told reporters later that his views took an "extreme, fanatic" turn, and that while "life moved on for other people," the election "never ended for him."²⁹ His wife stated that he went "bananas."³⁰ Though she encouraged him to get involved locally as best he could, he told her he wanted to take it to the top.



On November 14, 2016, one week after the election, Hodgkinson legally purchased the Smith & Wesson M&P Shield 9mm semi-automatic pistol that he later used in his attack in Alexandria, VA.



In the months prior to the attack, Hodgkinson was experiencing financial difficulties and changes in his home environment. In late 2016, he stopped working and on November 30, 2016, his home inspector's license expired. On January 10, 2017, he voluntarily dissolved his business. Around this same timeframe, he told a neighbor he was planning to retire. Though it is not clear exactly when, he was "increasingly making vague statements [to family] about how he would 'not be around much longer'."³¹ Compounding his stress, in early 2017, one of Hodgkinson's adopted daughters was going through marital problems, and she and her two-year-old son moved back into Hodgkinson's home. His wife reported that this family change may have been stressful for Hodgkinson. She said that "he's home all day long; I think he just wanted a break from it."³²



On March 22, 2017, Hodgkinson posted on his Facebook page that he signed a Change.org petition calling for the removal of the President and Vice President of the United States from office for treason. He also commented on his post saying, "Trump is a Traitor. Trump Has Destroyed Our Democracy. It's Time to Destroy Trump & Co."³³

On March 24, 2017, a neighbor heard gunfire and saw Hodgkinson firing his hunting rifle from his backyard, across a field into nearby trees. The neighbor heard two single shots followed by several in quick succession while he was outside with his grandchildren. The neighbor, who did not know Hodgkinson, yelled to him to stop as there were homes in the direction he was firing. Many of the neighbors had guns, but none were in the habit of firing randomly over open spaces as Hodgkinson was doing. When Hodgkinson persisted, the neighbor then called the sheriff's department.

Deputies arrived and Hodgkinson showed them valid firearms licenses and other documentation and explained that he was doing target practice. They determined he was not violating any local ordinances and warned him about making too much noise and firing his rifle in the area. In later interviews, the sheriff's department indicated that Hodgkinson was polite and nice about the whole incident.

Travel to Northern Virginia

Sometime in the last week of March 2017, Hodgkinson told his friends and family that he was going to travel to Washington, DC to protest and/or work on tax issues. Although an exact date is not provided, neighbors reported that sometime before he left Belleville, IL, he listed his motorcycle for sale. He also used his computer to search for truck stops, toll-free routes, and maps for his drive to Northern Virginia. Hodgkinson then drove to Alexandria, VA in a white conversion van he had recently purchased. One media report noted that Sue Hodgkinson was aware that he took his pistol with him on his trip, but was not aware that he also took his rifle. According to reports following the attack, Sue initially believed that her husband would return, she would retire, and they would go on motorcycle



treks for days. Neighbors also reported that in April 2017, while he was in Alexandria, VA, Sue told them that her husband was planning to retire. Sue later told reporters that Hodgkinson “walked out on [her].”³⁴

Once in Alexandria, VA, Hodgkinson lived out of a gym bag and slept in his van. He was often seen in the evenings on a bench at a local Walgreens, smoking or reading. He also spent time at a restaurant, Pork Barrel BBQ, about 15 minutes walking distance from the Eugene Simpson Stadium Park in Alexandria, VA. Staff at the restaurant reported Hodgkinson often visited the restaurant during happy hour or to watch golf games, and would order one or two beers. One bartender stated “he definitely creeped out all our female bartenders...I tried to shy away from him...just a feeling, he gave me a weird, odd vibe.”³⁵ When she did chat with him, she said they spoke mostly about the weather or craft beers, but never about his personal life or politics. She said he mostly kept to himself and he would stare out the windows, daydreaming a lot. He was not particularly friendly and could be rude at times, looking angry or annoyed, especially when trying to get a bartender’s attention during high traffic times.

Hodgkinson also frequently visited local libraries in Alexandria, VA. Because he was not a resident of the city, he was ineligible for a library card and unable to use the computers at the library; however, he was able to access the free Wi-Fi connections available there.

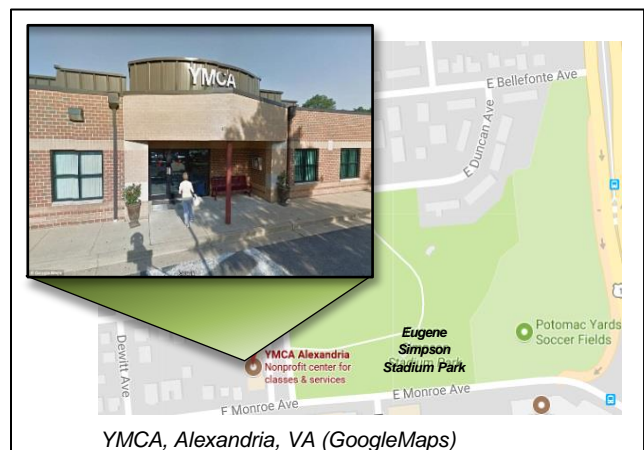
A later search of Hodgkinson’s phone by the FBI revealed that, starting on April 11, 2017, he visited and took pictures of a number of prominent locations around Washington, D.C., including the east front plaza of the U.S. Capitol, inside the visitor entrance to the Dirksen Senate Office Building, the front entry to the Library of Congress, the west side of the Supreme Court building, the entrance to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the Washington Monument. Also, on an undisclosed date that same month, he took video of the baseball field using his cell phone. Witnesses also reported seeing Hodgkinson walk around the field in May 2017.

On April 15, 2017, Hodgkinson attended the Tax March in Washington, DC. That same day, he took several photos of Eugene Simpson Stadium Park in Alexandria, VA. According to media sources, in mid-April 2017, the congressional Republican baseball team began holding daily 6:00 a.m. practices in Eugene Simpson Stadium Park in preparation for their upcoming Congressional Baseball Game for Charity.

On April 16, 2017, Hodgkinson rented a storage locker in Alexandria, VA, which he would visit more than 43 times over the next two months. Most of his visits occurred between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m., and sometimes he visited the facility twice in one day. When police searched the locker after his attack, they found more than 200 rounds of ammunition, additional SKS rifle components, a laptop computer, and a receipt for the gun purchased in November 2016.

Starting in early May 2017, Hodgkinson began spending time at the YMCA in Alexandria, VA. This facility is adjacent to the Eugene Simpson Stadium Park, where the attack occurred. Hodgkinson showered at the facility daily and spent much of his day in the lobby using his laptop, where he continued to post his thoughts about politics on Facebook and Twitter.

Patrons of the YMCA fitness facilities reported seeing Hodgkinson in the gym regularly after he became a member. One patron reported that Hodgkinson parked his van near the front door of the facility. Some patrons described him as a “sourpuss,” but others thought he





seemed friendly.³⁶ Though no details were provided to articulate why, an attorney who used the facility told reporters that sometime in the week prior to the shooting, he had noted to himself that it may be worth talking to the staff about Hodgkinson, who never seemed to work out. Though he grew curious about who Hodgkinson was and why he hung out there, he did not voice those concerns.

The former mayor of Alexandria, VA reported seeing Hodgkinson at the YMCA regularly. He described Hodgkinson as “a very friendly person,” and suspected he did not know anyone else in town.³⁷ The former mayor also reported that Hodgkinson appeared to be homeless because he wore similar clothes every day, and likely lived out of the gym bag he always had with him. Hodgkinson asked the former mayor for recommendations on restaurants within walking distance of the YMCA and whether work was available in the area, telling the former mayor that he was a home inspector. The former mayor claimed he tried to help Hodgkinson find work. The two did not talk about politics specifically, but if political news came on the television, Hodgkinson indicated he supported the former mayor’s political party, the Democratic Party.

About a week prior to the shooting, the former mayor of Alexandria noted that Hodgkinson seemed to be getting comfortable as he started to bring cookies and donuts in for the customers and staff at the YMCA. The former mayor thought that “it was his way of trying to connect with people.”³⁸

On June 8, 2017, Hodgkinson posted a news story on his Facebook page from Yahoo.com titled, “Georgia GOP candidate For U.S. House: ‘I Do Not Support A Livable Wage.’”³⁹ His comment on the post read, “Republican Bitch Wants People to Work for Slave Wages, when a Livable Wage is the Only Way to Go! Vote Blue, It’s Right for You!”⁴⁰

On June 10, 2017, according to the a report issued by the Office of the Commonwealth’s Attorney after the attack, a witness saw Hodgkinson get out of his van and walk around the baseball field when there was no practice underway. The person found this behavior strange at the time, later describing it as if he were “casing” the location.⁴¹

On June 12, 2017, Hodgkinson reposted an article from impeachDJTnow.com to his Facebook page titled, “Furious Veterans Ran This Brilliant Ad On Fox News To Make Sure Trump Saw It.”⁴² He commented on the article that “Trump is Guilty & Should Go to Prison for Treason.”⁴³ The same day he used Facebook to post a political cartoon about President Trump’s decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Accord that had been published by The Santa Cruz Comic News. Hodgkinson also commented on the comic, writing that “Trump is a Mean, Disgusting Person.”⁴⁴ Later that day, he posted an image of President Trump from an organization called Fight the Right. He also commented on this image, writing “Make America Great Again, Resign!”⁴⁵ On the same day as these posts, Hodgkinson told a family member that he intended to return home to Illinois.

On June 13, 2017, Hodgkinson was seen by at least one member of the Republican congressional team sitting in the stands during practice. That same day, he contacted his wife and told her he was out of money and wanted to come home soon because he missed her and their dogs. He also informed the YMCA that he wanted to cancel his membership because he was moving.

At about 10:00 a.m., Hodgkinson took his van to a service center to have air put in his tires. While he and the manager were talking, the manager mentioned that he had to work six days a week. In response, Hodgkinson immediately launched into a curse-filled rant. According to the manager, “He went on a tirade. He called [Trump] an asshole, that he f-----d the country up more than anybody in history.”⁴⁶ The manager felt the amount and intensity of the rant was concerning. He observed that “It was more than the average person who had maybe voted for



Hillary. This was different. It was deeply rooted to where his whole tone and composure changed. His voice got loud and deep. There was so much anger in it.”⁴⁷ The manager also recounted that Hodgkinson said, “Something needs to be done.”⁴⁸ Despite his alarm, he did not report the comments as Hodgkinson never mentioned hurting anyone. After calming down, Hodgkinson asked if the tires would be good for a drive to the Midwest.

That afternoon, Hodgkinson spent time in Alexandria and was seen at several locations. He ate lunch between 1:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. at a Chinese restaurant where he had ordered lunch to-go every day over the last two to three weeks. This time, however, he ate in the restaurant. Later that evening, Hodgkinson used his laptop to conduct a Google Maps search for travel routes between Alexandria, VA and his home in Illinois. He also did a Google search for the 2017 Republican Convention, retrieved information from a financial account, and logged onto Facebook to search highlights from a news website. Hodgkinson was also reported to have been sitting in the stands at a Little League Baseball game played at Eugene Simpson Stadium Park that night.

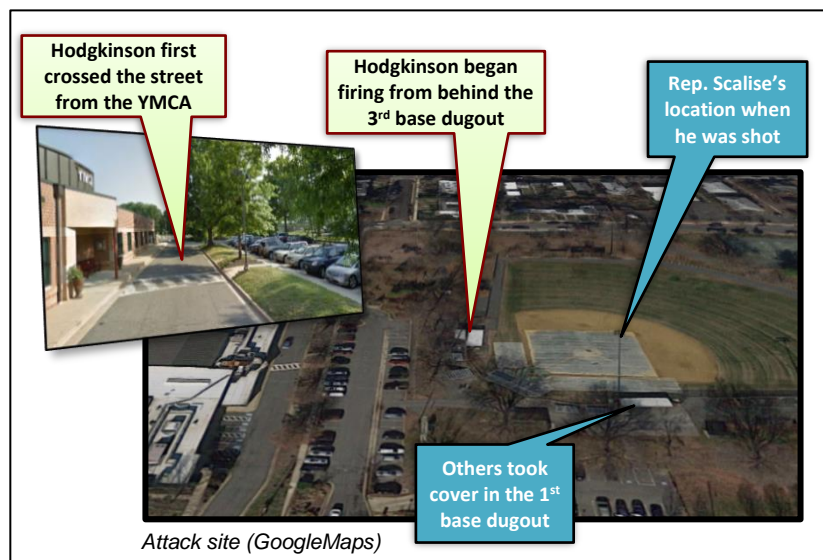
The Attack

On June 14, 2017, at around 5:30 a.m., 25-30 participants and observers, including some children, began arriving at Eugene Simpson Stadium Park for the Republican practice for the Congressional Baseball Game for Charity between Republican and Democratic representatives scheduled for the following day at Nationals Stadium. Three U.S. Capitol Police special agents were present at the field to provide security for Rep. Scalise who served as the House Majority Whip and was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives Leadership. Rep. Scalise is known as a conservative politician who supported many of President Trump’s controversial policies.

At the same time most people were arriving, Hodgkinson was at the YMCA. By 6:15 a.m., practice was underway. Minutes later, at 6:23 a.m., Hodgkinson entered his rented storage facility, stayed for 12 minutes, and departed at 6:35 a.m. Hodgkinson then went to the YMCA and parked his van in the parking lot. Rather than park in his usual spot near the front door, he parked in a spot adjacent to the baseball diamond, near third base. It was later reported that curtains and blinds covered the windows of the vehicle, and that it bore an anti-Trump sign.

At about 7:02 a.m., Hodgkinson walked across the street to the baseball field. He approached Representatives Ron DeSantis (R-Fla.) and Jeff Duncan (R-S.C.), who were by their car preparing to leave early. Hodgkinson asked them whether those practicing were Republicans or Democrats. The representatives confirmed they were Republicans. He then thanked them and returned to his van, where he retrieved his rifle, two clips holding 80 rounds, and his pistol.

Hodgkinson took up a position behind the third base dugout and, at approximately 7:09 a.m., he opened fire on the players, staffers, and special agents on the field with his rifle. Two of the armed USCP agents returned fire. During the exchange, Special Agent Griner was hit in the ankle by Hodgkinson’s gunfire. Special Agent Bailey was struck by shrapnel, then moved his location in an effort to draw gunfire away from those on the field. At some point, Hodgkinson switched to using his pistol. Hodgkinson’s shots hit Rep. Scalise in the hip, congressional aide Zachary





Barth in the leg, and lobbyist Matthew Mika in the chest. Police from Alexandria, VA were called to the site at 7:10 a.m. and arrived a few minutes later. These officers also opened fire on Hodgkinson.

During the gun battle, congressional personnel and others on and around the field ran to the dugout for cover. Rep. Scalise, who was unable to walk, crawled toward the dugout and was able to take cover with others. Other players used their belts as tourniquets to aid those who had been shot. Rep. Mo Brooks (R-Ala.) and Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) attended to Rep. Scalise until he was airlifted to MedStar Washington Hospital Center. Others found cover elsewhere, including three individuals from the practice who took shelter in a nearby apartment home. One witness reported that Hodgkinson appeared to be trying to get “as many Republicans as possible” and that he moved around the fence line in order to fire on individuals who had sought cover.⁴⁹

After firing at least 70 rounds, Hodgkinson was hit by law enforcement gunfire and reported down at 7:14 a.m. He was then taken into custody and transported to the hospital. He died from his injuries at 9:16 a.m.

Hodgkinson had three handwritten notes in his pockets at the time of the attack. Two of those notes were described publicly. One note was a sketch of streets in Washington, DC. The second note listed six Republican congressional representatives and included a brief description of the individuals and the location of their offices in the Rayburn House Office Building. Those listed included Representatives Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.), Jeff Duncan (R-S.C.), Trent Franks (R-Ariz.), Morgan Griffith (R-Va.), Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), and Mo Brooks (R-Ala.). Investigators determined that Hodgkinson conducted a superficial internet search for two of these congressmen in the months prior to the attack, but did not specify which two or give a more specific timeframe for when the search was conducted.



Congressional aide Barth, Special Agent Griner, and lobbyist Mika were treated for their injuries at a local hospital and were expected to make full recoveries. Several other individuals suffered injuries as an indirect result of the shooting, including Rep. Roger Williams (R-Tex.) who injured his ankle running from gunfire. Rep. Scalise experienced complications as a result of his injury, related to skeletal, soft tissue, and organ damage. Following months of treatment, he resumed his congressional responsibilities on September 28, 2017. The attack also damaged structures in the park and windows in the YMCA building across the street. Both Eugene Simpson Stadium Park and the YMCA were closed as a result of the attack and reopened on June 21, 2017.

Investigators also searched Hodgkinson’s van and found a laptop computer, cell phone, and digital camera inside. When Sue Hodgkinson learned about the shooting on the news, and prior to the gunman being identified, she thought her husband was involved in some way. She then dismissed the idea as she incorrectly thought he had only taken his pistol on the trip, not his rifle.



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