

## Editorials 2: Is there a double standard?

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By Adrienne Moss

It has been almost a month since the horrific mass shooting at Democratic Congresswoman, Gabrielle Giffords' routine event with constituents outside a Safeway supermarket in Tucson, Arizona. Life is forever changed for the families of the six who were killed and the thirteen who were wounded, including Giffords. Suspect Jared Loughner, a twenty-two year old Tucson resident, faces four federal charges, including killing an employee of the federal government, a charge declared on behalf of Federal Judge John Roll who died in the devastating rampage.

Recently, authorities have released a time line for Jared Loughner's activities twelve hours before the shooting. They say "it shows an individual acting with deliberation and focus, posting a "Good-bye friends" bulletin and uploading a photo on his MySpace page, and driving to one Wal-Mart store and then another after he was not able to buy ammunition at the first (Sullivan). Additionally, authorities stated that Loughner was up most of the night before the shooting. According to their record, he dropped off photos at a Walgreens at 12:24 a.m. and checked into a Motel Six minutes later. By 2:30 a.m. he had retrieved the photos and returned to the motel. His MySpace account showed activity at 4:21 a.m. He checked out of his room before sunrise, and drove to one Wal-Mart and then a Super Wal-Mart two miles away, where he bought ammunition and a back-pack style diaper bag, in black.

He was in his car at 7:30 a.m., stopped by an Arizona Fish and Game official after running a red light. He was then released by them and arrived at his parents' home, where his father sees him remove a black bag from the car and tries to question him about it. Loughner runs away on foot, and his father drives after him in pursuit, but cannot find him. At 9:41 a.m., authorities say a taxi picks up Loughner at a Circle K store and drives him to the Safeway near Giffords "Congress on Your Corner" event to meet constituents. Loughner and the taxi driver enter the Safeway to break a \$20 bill so Loughner can pay the fare. Luckily, Loughner and the taxi driver and the subsequent shooting were captured on the store's surveillance camera.

As previously stated, Loughner is facing four federal charges; however, his attorney is try to save him from execution by arguing that he is mentally ill and suffers with schizophrenia. Additionally, Loughner has a history of marijuana use since high school and was denied entry into the Army because of it. Thus the question was posed by reporters, was Loughner under the influence of drugs at the time of the shooting or was it his "mental illness" which caused him to strike?

Either way, I have a few questions to ask. If Loughner was perhaps of African, Hispanic or Middle Eastern descent would the criminal justice system be treat him differently? Perhaps if Loughner was an African American or Latino, he would be seen in the media as a thug or a delinquent. His deviant behavior would be due to his absent father and/or living in a poor environment with little to no education, such as being a drop out. His behavior also could be linked to gang affiliation or participation in a gang initiation process. Lastly, if Loughner was Middle Eastern, he would be seen in the media as a terrorist and trained assassin. It seems as though since Loughner is a White male he is not receiving the typical “media bashing” we often see with different robberies, murders and/or terrorist attacks done by non-Whites. Moreover, it seems the media is making excuses for him or pacifying him by saying he may be mentally ill. However, if Loughner was a minority the term “mentally ill” would not come into the situation. Yet, this criminal may possibly escape execution because of his deemed “mental illness.” As of recent, he has pled not guilty upon all charges. Interesting...