

YOU CAN GET THERE

Train for the career you really want.

PIMA MEDICAL INSTITUTE
PMI.EDU

EXHIBIT
7

FBI didn't link online posts to Atchison until after Aztec school shooting

Hannah Grover, hgrover@daily-times.com Published 12:38 p.m. MT April 18, 2018 | Updated 4:23 p.m. MT April 18, 2018



(Photo: Jon Austria/The Daily Times)

AZTEC — Aztec Police Chief Mike Heal said the FBI did not provide the city police department with information about [William Atchison's \(/story/news/crime/2018/04/17/aztec-high-school-shooting-investigation-william-atchison/513013002/\)online activity](#) prior to the shooting at Aztec High School.

Instead, they provided information about the online posts but attributed them to Atchison's brother, Heal said.

Atchison killed two Aztec High School students during a shooting Dec. 7 before taking his own life. The 21-year-old former Aztec High School student did not have a criminal record, but he had been interviewed by law enforcement before.

Heal answered questions about what Aztec police knew about Atchison during his monthly Coffee With the Chief on Tuesday at Aztec City Hall. The topic of the discussion was school security and what is being done to prevent future shootings.

WHAT HAPPENED: [Aztec High School Shooting \(https://www.daily-times.com/explainer/new-mexico-shooting-aztec-high-school/82/\)](#)

The FBI first contacted Atchison in March 2016 after learning about some posts he had made on online forums. A post about shooting up his former school was among the online posts that raised alarm.

BY FOOD NETWORK
Spring Baking Championship Premiere
Tonight 9|8c!

(https://eb2.3lift.com/pass?ti_clickthrough=true&redir=https%3A%2F%2Fpr.ybp.yahoo.com%2Fcj%2Fcd%2FVAdlwkc4gl3XowL9DH78iWhf)

See more →

Heal said the FBI told the Aztec Police Department about the posts. However, he said the FBI gave them information about Atchison's brother. Heal said the Aztec police created a sketch of Atchison's brother and believed that the brother was behind the online posts.

FBI spokesman Frank Fisher declined to comment, stating the investigation is ongoing.

When asked if he thought the police would have done anything different if they had received the correct information from the FBI, Heal said police spoke casually with Atchison the night before the shooting at his place of work. He said there wasn't anything out of the ordinary during the conversation with Atchison.

The 2016 FBI investigation ended after the agency did not find evidence of a crime having been committed and found that no firearms were in his possession, according to FBI agent Terry Wade who spoke during a Dec. 8 press conference.

Atchison purchased his Glock 9mm handgun legally on Nov. 3, 2017, from the Sportsman's Warehouse store in Farmington.

On Wednesday, Heal said that on the night of Dec. 6, the day before the shooting, two of his officers happened to see Atchison working at a gas station at the intersection of Lightplant Road and West Aztec Boulevard.

Heal added the officers were getting gas for their patrol vehicles.

MORE: [Investigators: Aztec High School shooter had timeline, deadly plans \(/story/news/2017/12/08/aztec-high-school-shooter-timeline-deadly-plans/935499001/\)](#)

There have been no police calls to Atchison's residence regarding the shooter, according to Detective Lt. Kyle Lincoln of the San Juan County Sheriff's Office.

In addition to discussing what the police knew about the shooter, Heal talked about school security and the changes the New Mexico Association of Chiefs of Police would like to see come in light of the Aztec High School shooting.

Heal serves as vice president of the association. He said the association will lobby for changes during the 2019 legislative session.

Heal said the association will likely lobby to have the rules changed regarding Public Employees Retirement Association of New Mexico. Currently a retired police officer cannot go work as a security guard and continue receiving retirement benefits. Heal said he wants to see that rule changed.

The next Coffee With the Chief will be May 15 in Aztec.

Reporter Joshua Kellogg contributed to this story.

Hannah Grover covers government for The Daily Times. She can be reached at 505-564-4652 or via email at hgrover@daily-times.com.

Read or Share this story: <http://www.daily-times.com/story/news/local/aztec/2018/04/18/fbi-warned-aztec-police-william-atchison-brother-before-school-shooting/528737002/>

