

Catholic priest suggests Satan made James Holmes a killer

by [David Gibson](#)

July 30, 2012

c. 2012 Religion News Service (RNS) A Catholic priest has suggested that Satan may have driven accused killer James Holmes to open fire at a Colorado cinema, continuing the religious debate over a shooting that claimed 12 lives and wounded 58 more.

"Was he demon possessed? Maybe. It happens," the Rev. Dwight Longenecker wrote at the Patheos website, where the Catholic priest from Greenville, S.C., is a columnist.

Religious leaders and public figures have sparked some of the most heated discussions in the wake of the tragedy as they have offered various explanations for the violent outburst and spiritual guidance for dealing with it.

Former Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, a onetime Baptist minister, blamed the nation's "sin problem" for the crime. He echoed the views of Rep. Louie Gohmert, R-Texas, that the shooting happened because public prayer is not allowed at public schools and so Americans have lost the "protective hand" of God.

Longenecker dismissed the range of explanations for what might have motivated Holmes -- a bad childhood, mental illness, social awkwardness, extreme political or religious views, or exposure to violent video games or to the Batman movie that was showing when he allegedly opened fire. The real culprit, he says, was spiritual, and malign.

"Demonic infestation is a rare, strange and terrible psycho-spiritual affliction," Longenecker said. "In simple terms, a malevolent, separate intelligence infests the mind and spirit of a person."

The priest conceded that "trying to diagnose the possibility of demonic influence is extremely difficult." An exorcist, he says, "often feels like he is walking blindfolded through a minefield set in quicksand. He is wrestling with a pool of oily octopuses."

Longenecker suggests that in the end, it is best to say that Holmes was "taken over by Evil."

"Something happened to the mild mannered science geek. He turned into a monster. Something twisted in his mind and heart, and Evil made an entry. Evil infested his life. It took him over."