

Sir David Amess murder suspect 'radicalised after watching YouTube videos of hate preacher Anjem Choudary'

From the [Telegraph](#)

SUSPECTED MP killer Ali Harbi Ali was radicalised after watching YouTube videos of hate preacher Anjem Choudary, former friends claimed last night.

✘ As a first photo of the alleged knifeman emerged, school pals said vile online material turned him from a popular pupil into an extremist. One friend who witnessed his dramatic change told The Sun last night: "Choudary was someone he became utterly obsessed with."

investigators are confident that Ali, 25, was not directed by terror kingpins abroad.

He had been previously referred to the Government's Prevent anti-terror scheme but investigators are still piecing together how and when he became radicalised. It's believed he was referred to the scheme as long ago as five years ago by a teacher who believed him to be an extremist risk.

Choudary went to prison in 2016 and was released under stern conditions in 2018. It is only this year (still too early) that he has been allowed to speak in public or walk relatively freely around Ilford. The time scale fits, and I anticipate that the authorities are looking at any direct involvement they had which may well result in a recall to prison. (Please..!)

Sources said Ali's online contacts – and what material he viewed – were now "prime movers" in the investigation.

Last night a former pal told how Ali had been a popular pupil who loved playing football at their secondary school in Croydon, South London. They said: "He had been a really lovely lad. A devoted Muslim and very popular. He enjoyed football and was very normal and we'd all go to the cinema. He'd socialise and everyone really liked him."

However the friend said his personality then changed dramatically in the sixth form after being lured into extremism online.

The pal went on: "He watched a lot of extreme videos including those posted by Choudary and his followers. Everyone used to say to him, 'But he's a hate cleric and hates the West' but he didn't care. He became a huge fan. He admired Anjem, said he was right and his cause was right. It disgusted me. We were all very, very worried. He became totally radicalised through the internet and now he's a suspect in something as evil as this. It's horrendous."

Ali's phone is now playing a crucial role in the police investigation. Immediate analysis is understood to have shown messages, web searches and links that pointed to an Islamist extremist. It led police to declare a terrorist incident within hours of Sir David's death, rather than delaying for further forensic checks.

The investigation into the tragic death of Amess suggests he was not specifically targeted, but picked at random as part of a plot to kill any national politician. The realisation three days into the police investigation that there may have been no specific motive for the targeting of Amess will further reinforce the need for MPs across all parties to tighten up security at their homes and constituency offices.

Police and intelligence officials now believe he was stabbed to death simply because his alleged killer had succeeded in booking a face-to-face appointment as part of an

indiscriminate and chilling attack on democracy.

Sir David was well known for his willingness to meet the public face to face wherever possible.

Ali, according to reports, had apparently told Amess's constituency staffers that he had recently moved to the area. *Without that lie they could not have met; Parliamentary rules would not have allowed Sir David to advise or take up what he would have anticipated as Ali's 'problem'.*

"He was unlucky," said one source inside Government. "He was not targeted because of his political party. David Amess was not specifically targeted."

It is unclear if Amess was chosen after posting on Twitter details of the time and place of his Friday lunchtime constituency surgery.

Police and security services believe the motivation may have been to strike down an MP to further the Islamist cause espoused by groups such as al-Qaeda, Islamic State and al-Shabab, which is active in Somalia.

I don't suppose this will be the last such attack.