


"If we are to control the increasing expressions of violence which threaten our society, it is imperative that we seek every technology at our disposal to understand the nature and character of those who would use violence as their weapon. What better source could we hope for in our understanding of such individuals than their own words and the content of their communications?"

(Miron & Pasquale, 1978)

National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime

A law enforcement-oriented behavioral analysis resource center which offers on-site investigative support, research and training to law enforcement agencies throughout the world which are confronted with unusual, bizarre, serial, violent and complex criminal behavior. Among cases analyzed annually are ones involving homicides, kidnappings, THREATS, and other crimes of violence.

"Profiling" has many names



A word cloud of the word "Profiling" in various colors (red, green, yellow, black) and orientations (horizontal, diagonal, vertical) on a dark blue background.

- Psychological profiling
- Offender profiling
- Criminal personality profiling
- Criminal personality assessment
- Investigative profiling
- **Criminal Investigative Analysis**

Criminal Investigative Analysis

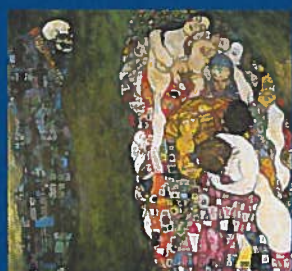
Process of reviewing and assessing the facts of a criminal act, and interpreting offender behavior and interaction with the victim, as exhibited during the commission of the crime, or in the crime scene.

Criminal Investigative Analysis Services

- Crime Analysis
- Threat Assessment
- Profiles of Unknown offenders
- Investigative Suggestions
- Interview Strategies
- Source Assessment
- Search Warrant Assistance
- Prosecution & Trial Strategies
- Expert Testimony
- Media Strategies
- Statement Analysis
- UC Ops Assessment



Meloy JR & Hoffmann J, eds., The International Handbook of Threat Assessment



THREAT ASSESSMENT

- Communicated Threat – a verbalized, written, or electronically transmitted statement, or a combination of some or all of these methods, that states or suggests that some potentially harmful incident or event will occur that negatively will affect the recipient, someone or something associated with the recipient, or specified or non-specified other individuals.

GOOD NEWS !!

Most threateners don't act.
Most Actors don't threaten.

Homicidal Threats

- Study of 100 patients admitted to the Colorado Psychiatric Hospital between 1961 & 1962 (for threats)
- 81 verbal and 19 nonverbal threats to kill
- Later data on 77 patients following their release

NOT ONE Killed the person they threatened.

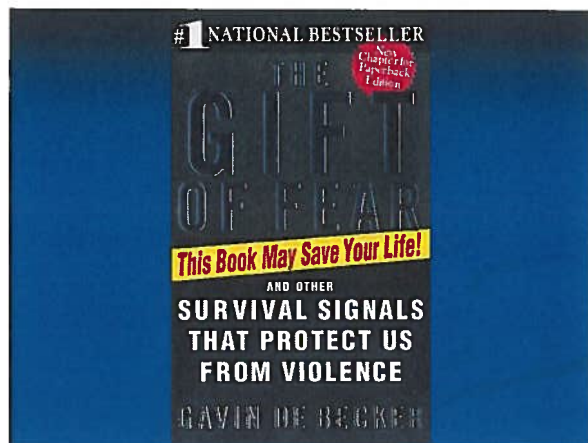
John MacDonald, MD

Offenders who committed acts of targeted violence rarely issued a direct communicated threat to their intended target prior to attacking.



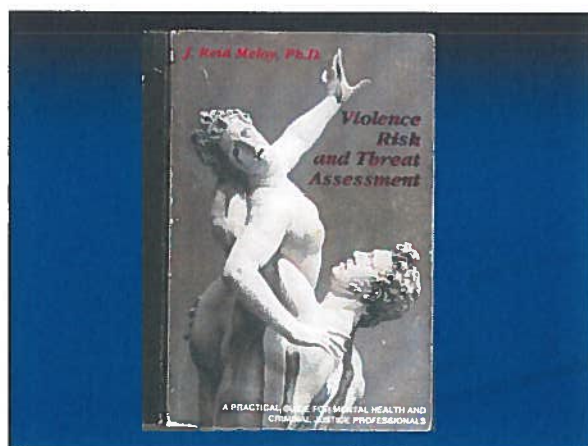
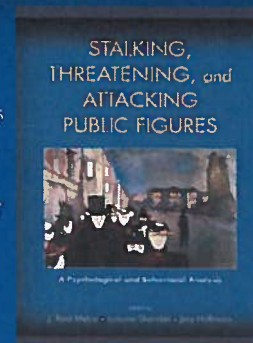
"... not one successful public - figure attacker in the history of the media age directly threatened his victim first."

Gavin de Becker - The Gift of Fear



However ...

- "... the operational position is clear: All communicated threats should be initially taken seriously because any particular individual may act subsequent to his threat."



THREAT ASSESSMENT

- CASE RECEIVED AND ASSIGNED
- CASE MATERIALS PROVIDED TO TEAM MEMBERS
- INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF CASE MATERIALS
- INTERACTIVE CASE CONSULTATION
- RESULTS REPORTED TO REQUESTING AGENCY

THREAT ASSESSMENT

- WHAT IS THREAT ASSESSMENT?
 - Threat assessment is the detailed examination the elemental parts of a verbal or written threat in order to assess the credibility and overall viability of the expression of an intent to do harm.

THREAT ASSESSMENT WITHIN THE NCAVC

IN UNKNOWN OFFENDER CASES, THE ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN, TYPE-WRITTEN, TAPE-RECORDED, AND COMPUTER-GENERATED THREATS MADE AGAINST PERSONS, PLACES OR THINGS.

IN KNOWN OFFENDER CASES, THE ANALYSIS OF BEHAVIOR EXHIBITED BY THE THREAT TO ASSESS POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE.

THREAT ASSESSMENT

- INVESTIGATIVE OBJECTIVES:
 - Save Lives
 - Evaluate Threat Potential
 - Develop Investigative Techniques and Strategies
 - Help To Identify Unknown Threatener
 - Save Money and/or Property

The Blind Men and the Elephant



The Risk of Confirmation Bias

- Generally defined as the seeking or interpreting of evidence in ways that are partial to existing beliefs

Nickerson, R.S. (1998). Confirmation bias: A ubiquitous phenomenon in many guises. *Review of General Psychology*, 2(2), 175-220.

Questions for Threat Assessments

- How organized is the subject? Is he/she capable of developing and carrying out a plan?
- Has the subject experienced a recent loss and/or loss of status, and has this led to feelings of desperation and despair?
- Combination - what is the subject saying and is it consistent with his/her actions?
- Is there concern among those that know the subject that he/she might take action based on inappropriate ideas?
- What factors in the subject's life and/or environment might increase/decrease the likelihood of the subject attempting to attack a target?

Taken from "Threat Assessment: Defining an Approach for Evaluating Risk of Targeted Violence." Randy Borum, Robert Fien, Brian Vosskuhl and John Berghurst. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, Volume 17, 1999.

Triage Questions

- How was the communication delivered?
- How many communications have been received and by whom? During what time frame?
- Is this a single, isolated communication, or part of a series sent to the same victim(s)?
- **Are there indicators of a possible relationship or prior contact between the victim and the offender (if knowable)?**
- When did the victim receive the communication, and when was it reported to law enforcement?

Triage Questions contd.

- According to the anonymous threatening offender, when will the undesirable threatened act occur?
- Is it feasible for the offender to carry out the threatened act? (e.g., "I will destroy the earth..." versus "The next time you leave work I will be there waiting.")
- Who are the targets, named and implied, of the threatening communication?

Triage Questions contd.

- Who are other persons or organizations named or referenced within the communication and what is their relationship to the primary targeted victim?
- What is the significance of any named or referenced locations or dates?
- What steps or measures did the author take to conceal his or her identity?
- What details are available concerning the recipient's victimology (defined by the BAU as a comprehensive analysis of a victim)?

Pathway to Violence

6. **Attack**
5. **Breach**
4. **Preparation**
3. **Research & Planning**
2. **Ideation**
1. **Grievance**

From Calhoun and Weston, "Contemporary Threat Management" (2005)

Triage Questions contd.

- What details are available concerning any personal or professional issues and conflicts experienced by the targeted recipient(s)?
- What is the victim's assessment of the ATC, both for level of concern and authorship?
- What specific analysis (or combination thereof) will most benefit the primary investigating agency (e.g., assessment of concern for violence, threat and/or risk management strategies, target hardening strategies, unknown offender characteristics, investigative suggestions, media strategies, etc.)?

Triage Questions contd.

- Who are other persons or organizations named or referenced within the communication and what is their relationship to the primary targeted victim?
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VICTIMOLOGY

- A comprehensive analysis of a crime victim, including personality traits, behavior, lifestyle, habits, reputation, family, employment history, psychology, security awareness, environment and risk factors – relevant in determining the victim risk level and possible interaction with the offender ...

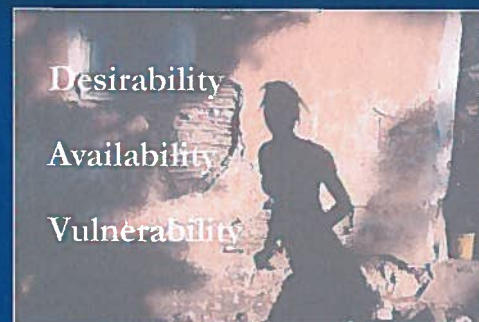
PROFILING VICTIMOLOGY

- Essential in homicides, serial rapes and other violent inter-personal crimes.
- An analysis of the victim's antecedent behavior and interaction with the offender.
- Why was the victim targeted?
- Did the victim precipitate violence?
- Exposes motive.

VICTIMOLOGY COMPONENTS

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ■ Physical Description | • Daily Habits |
| ■ Lifestyle | • Criminal History |
| ■ Personality | • Drug/Alcohol use |
| ■ Family/Friends | • Sexual/Dating Habits |
| ■ Marital Status | • Transportation |
| ■ Employment | • Mental Health Issues |
| ■ Economic Status | • Significant events prior to offense |
| ■ Relationships | |

VICTIM SELECTION



Victim of Opportunity or Targeted Victim?

- Determination of why this individual was selected to be the victim of a violent crime by this offender at this particular point in time
- Was this a random act or was the victim specifically selected by the offender?

VICTIM RISK LEVEL

- Lifestyle, habits, "normal" behavior of the victim
- Degree to which victim exposes self to injury or violent crime
- Can be influenced by substance abuse or circumstances (situational/geographical)



Staging

Intentional manipulation of physical evidence by the offender, at a crime scene or purported crime scene, in order to redirect an investigation away from the offender and/or mischaracterize the nature of the event and its true motivation

Staging

- "when someone alters the crime scene prior to the arrival of the police. There are two reasons why someone employs staging: to redirect the investigation away from the most logical suspect or to protect the victim or the victim's family"

Douglas, J.E., & Munn, C.M. (1992). 'The detection of staging and personation at the crime scene.' In J.E. Douglas, A.W. Burgess, A.G. Burgess, & R.K. Ressler (eds.), *Crime classification manual* (pp. 249-252). New York: Lexington Books.

Hallmarks of Linguistic Staging

Use of the Pronoun "We"

- Bolsters Credibility/Capability
- Instills Fear
- Invocation of Powerful & Mysterious Group
- May Be Excessive for the Crime at Hand
- May Slip at Some Point to first person "I"

➤ *CONTRAIINDICATORS*

Scary or Interesting Moniker

- "The Avenger"
- "Army of God"
- F.C.
- F.P.



Unique Symbolism

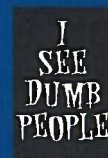


- Symbolism known only to the writer
- May have its roots in his/her own past experiences.
- Real communication should be clear, not symbolic.

Ramsey Case
Unabomb

The "Dumbing Down" Phenomenon

- Intentional misspelling
 - Intentional Grammatical mistakes
 - Case example
- ...If you hate the victim enough to try to kill her, wouldn't you get the name right?

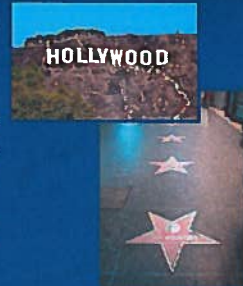


CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENSE ARE RELATED TO THOSE OF OFFENDER

- We do what we are
- What we do in a highly stressed environment is more likely to reflect our true nature
- Beverage-of-choice Theory

The Hollywood Stage

- Elaborate complicated scheme
- May reflect a lack of criminal sophistication/maturity
- Full of drama and may even read like a recent popular novel
- UNSUB may not want scheme to succeed



The Physical Location of the Communication

- Found in area that is difficult to access or with limited accessibility
- How did it get there?
 - Examples: How did the UNSUB know that the victim moved?
 - How did he know who would deliver the pay-off?

Personal Information Contained Within the Communication

- Contains symbolic or inside information known only to someone very close to the victim.

MOTIVES

- Financial Gain
- Revenge or Punishment
- Instill Fear or Anxiety
- Relief from Stress
- Manipulation or Forcing Victim to Take Action
- Excitement
- Attention
- Actual Warning – again, rarely
 - *Ask yourself, what is the profit? What is the gain?*

Elbogen, E. & Johnson, S. *The Intricate Link Between Violence and Mental Disorder*. Archives of Gen. Psychiatry, Vol. 66 (No. 2) Feb 2009

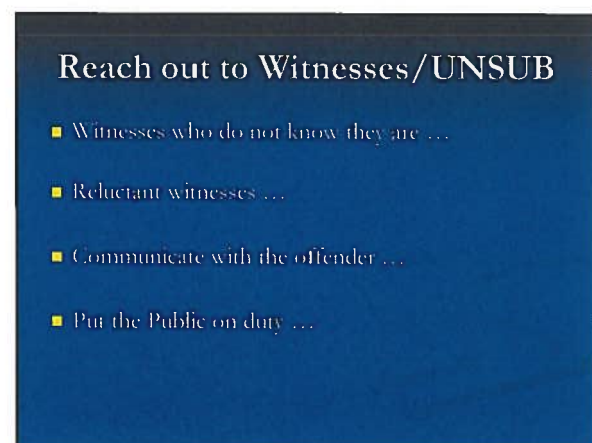
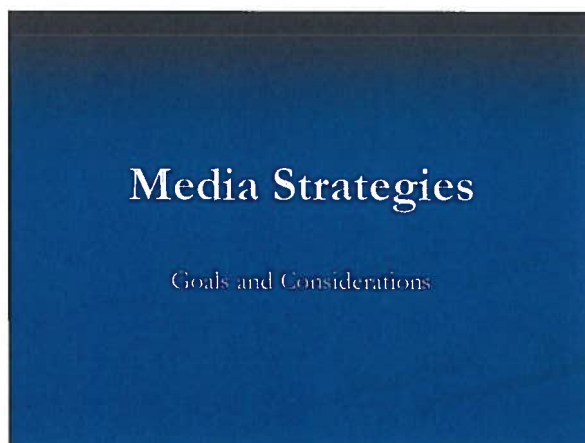
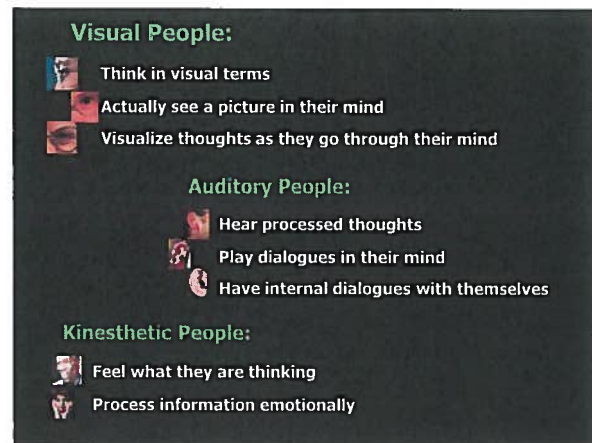
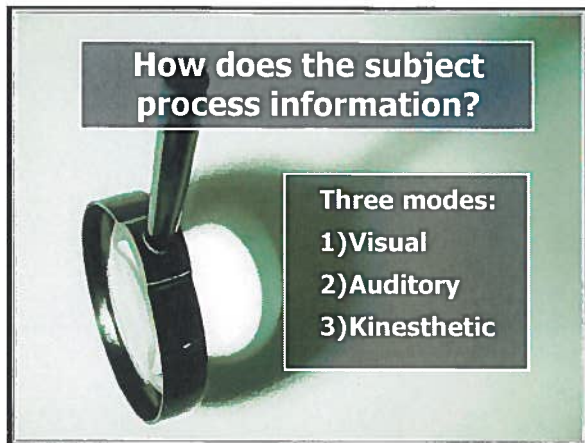
“The probability of violence for severe mental illness alone is approximately the same as for subjects with no severe mental illness...”

Elbogen, E. & Johnson, S. *The Intricate Link Between Violence and Mental Disorder*. Archives of Gen. Psychiatry, Vol. 66 (No. 2) Feb 2009

Severe mental illness
 +
History of any violent act
 +
Substance use

Level of Veracity

- Statement Analysis as a tool in assessing threats
 - Test of Pronouns
 - Details
 - Bona Fides
 - Passive Voice
- Statement Analysis as an investigative technique
 - “Listening with your eyes”
 - VIEW Questionnaire



Reach out to Witnesses

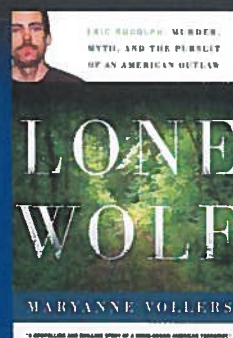
- Witnesses who do not know they are ...
 - Remind them of the event
 - Orient them back in time and place
 - Motivate them
 - Provide them multiple means to communicate
- Reluctant witnesses ...
 - Give them noble reason to testify
 - Sweeten the pot

Reach out to the Offender

- Motivate him to communicate
 - "We're willing to listen to his grievance ... "
 - "We'd like to know what is bothering him ... "
 - "We're willing to listen ... "
- Get him to correct a mistake
- Keep him from offending
- Motivate him to act under controlled sit.

Get the Public Thinking

- Provide aspects from the profile
- Operationalize it to the citizen level
- Discuss post-offense behavior
- Give a timeline
- Remind them not to "screen" information



Case Study: Eric Rudolph

Eric Robert Rudolph

- Born 09/19/1966
- Brief affiliations with Christian Identity church in NC and white supremacist Church of Israel in Missouri
- Joined the Army and aspired to Special Forces, but was court-martialed for marijuana use
- Conducted bombings at two abortion clinics, a gay nightclub and the 1996 Summer Olympics
- Killed three people and wounded 112
- Claimed bombings were done for the Army of God



Eric Rudolph: Case History

- **Centennial Olympic Park bombing** (7/27/1996): Atlanta, GA (kills one and injures 111)
- **Northside Family Planning bombing** (1/16/1997): Sandy Springs, GA (injures 6)
- **The Otherside Lounge bombing** (2/21/1997): Atlanta, GA (injures 5)
- **New Woman All Women bombing** (1/29/1998): Birmingham, AL (kills one and injures one)
- **Fugitive Years** (1998 – 2003)
- **Capture** (5/31/2003): Police locate Rudolph digging through trash in Murphy, NC

J A C A

The Conscious or unconscious decision to use violence usually boils down to how a person perceives four fairly simplistic issues:

- **Justification**
 - Does the person feel justified using violence?
- **Alternatives**
 - Does the person feel he has the available alternatives to violence that will move him toward the outcome he wants?
- **Consequences**
 - How does the person view the consequences associated with using violence?
- **Ability**
 - Does the person believe he can successfully deliver the blows, bullets, bombs, etc.

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US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives

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