

Anonymous threats involving bomb threats towards a South African company

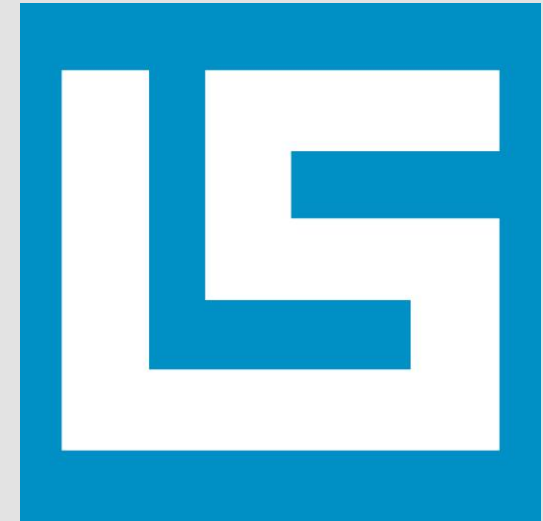
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L&S Threat Management



Threat Management
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No pictures of this
presentation

Thanks

ei kuvia



01

Problems on
the police
investigation
side

02

Difficult
clients

03

Multifaceted
cases

04

Integration of
information

Teaching points

What will we cover?

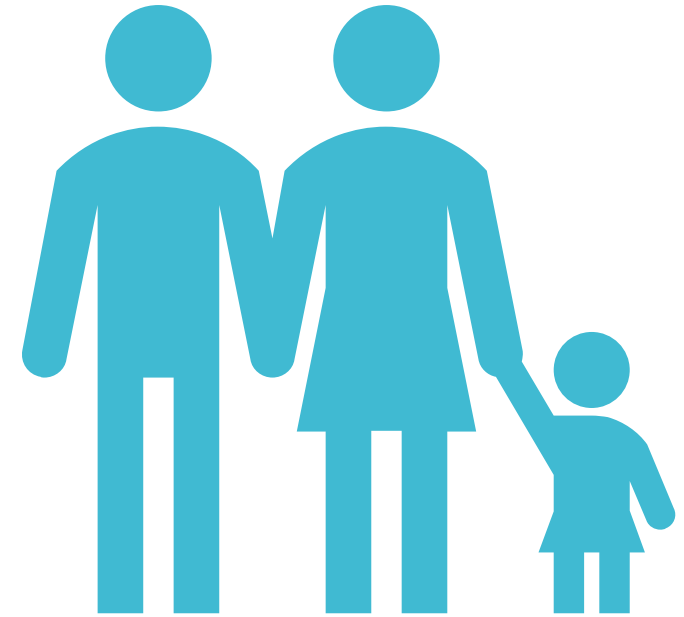
- Brief background of case
- Company background
- Impact
 - Family
 - Community
- Threats to the family members
- Bomb threats
 - In South Africa
- Reputational acts
- SAM SPG
- Anonymous threats
- Mental health?
- Difficulties

Case background

- August-December 2016, the following people were subjected to a campaign of threats, as well as a defamatory smear campaign:
 - CEO of *PropDev** and members of his family,
 - employees,
 - business partners
 - acquaintances
 - the local community they reside in
 - unrelated individual's assets and shopping centres
- By electronic means
 - 12 email addresses
- 27 People in total were directly affected

Family impact

- Children taken out of school
- Sold some of their businesses
- Close protection increased



Community impact

- Shopping centres suffered financial loss due to bomb threats
- Increased tension between community members instigated

Threats to family members

Invoked
private military
companies like
Blackwater



Bomb threats



Purpose of bomb threats in general

- Cause financial harm to an organization
- Disrupt activities for a secondary gain
 - e.g. prevent exams from taking place
- Sow fear and anxiety.
- In rare cases - pleasure from witnessing the response of emergency services.
- Testing response times can be a motive; however, it is more often that those wanting to test the emergency services want to test their full capabilities

Offender typology of bomb threats

- **Current or former employee**

Tends to be aimed at a specific person

- **Competitor, sub-contractor, or person who has done business with the company**

Tends to be more general about the company, but can be personally damaging against a specific person from the company. This is the most common suspect in these types of business threat cases.

- **Person who has been personally or professionally affected by the company's business practices**

Can include a wide range of persons or groups ranging from environmental groups, unions, or persons whose homes have been affected by the business dealings of the company, or who may have lost their business as a result of competition.

- **Relatives or friends of the above**

These persons feel aggrieved on behalf of the person with the grudge and take action on their behalf.

Bomb threats in South Africa



1973

Since 1973 in South Africa there have been approximately 6-8 bomb threat incidents where an actual explosive device was found.



2016

For 2016 from January to December a total of 114 bomb threats were reported to the SAPS nationally



early 2000s

The last such device found, after a bomb threat was made, was in the early 2000s.

Modus operandi of bomb threats in SA

- Typical MO is bomb threat by phone, using email is highly uncommon.
- All the bomb threats in Gauteng Province reported to SAPS between 01 January 2016 & 01 September 2016 amounted to 32 incidents.
 - Twenty-six/32 were telephonic threats.
- Remaining 6/32 were written on the premises of the incident, made in person, text message, and emails



What bombs are
we seeing in
South Africa?



ATM bombings using stolen mine explosives





Stolen mining explosives



Pipe bombs used by PAGAD in early 2000's



- PAGAD = community members from a Cape Town townships who decided to organize public demonstrations to pressure the government to fight the illegal drug trade and gangsterism more effectively
- Became a vigilante group, murdering drug dealers
- 1996 mob set *Hard Livings* gang leader Rashaad Staggie on fire
- Mid 1990s PAGAD became more religiously radicalised and politicised
- 1998-2002 bombing campaign
- Targets: Police, Magistrates, Moderate Muslims, Synagogues, Gay Night Clubs, Western Restaurants including Planet Hollywood

Car Bombs

- Car bombs, where the vehicle is an integral part of the explosive device, are a rare phenomenon in South Africa.
- The last car bomb in South Africa occurred in the late 1990's, and was done by PAGAD in the Western Cape.
- High degree of technical skill to make a car bomb





Who else makes bombs in SA?

Random joes
Kids experimenting
Right wingers



Bomb threats received

- In the current scenario seven email addresses were used to send bomb threats, relating primarily to *ProDev*.
 - Some were created addresses, some were hacked
- The threats were not conditional, and were almost exclusively statements that bombs had *already* been placed
- 14 entities received bomb threats
- One shopping mall received 7 bomb threats

- Two senders, who make references to Islam in some of their emails, and make bomb threats, also regularly refer to Mr CEO's allegedly dodgy business dealings.
- It is unlikely that ISIS or any extremist organisation would be interested in Mr CEO's business dealings.
- Therefore, the references to ISIS and Islam are more likely intended as threat enhancers, and to misdirect the investigation.
- These points lower the credibility of these threats.

Reputational threats





Email to sister of CEO

Other dynamics

Other dynamics

- Difficulty in getting police motivated to investigate
- Linkage blindness

Structured professional guideline: SAM

Nature of the stalking

- N1. Communicates about victim
- N2. Communicates with victim
- N3. Approaches Victim
- N4. Direct contact with victim (no)
- N5. Intimidates victim
- N6 – Threatens Victim
- N7- Violent toward victim (no)
- N8- Stalking is persistent
- N9- Stalking is escalating
- N10- Stalking involves supervision violations (no)

Perpetrator risk factors

- Unidentified so no feedback in this area

Anonymous threats



Anonymous threats

- Anonymous threats complicate the threat assessment process in that a traditional threat assessment relies on a holistic review of a communicator's:
 - *personal (e.g. relationships status)*
 - *historical (e.g. criminal history)*
 - *contextual (e.g. current stressors)*
 - *clinical (e.g. mental health) factors*
- Information that is typically absent when the communications are anonymous

Motives in anonymous communications

- financial gain
- punishment
- instilling fear and anxiety
- relief
- manipulating or forcing the victim to take a desired action
- excitement
- attention
- warning of a future violent act

Important factors to assess

- Indication of surveillance or close observation?
- Willingness or ability to be in close proximity to the target?
- Knowledge of victim's history, behaviors, opinions, affiliations, hobbies, future plans and the like?
 - *This is specifically relevant if the information is not information that was/is publicly available.*
- Does language rise to the level of disgust, betrayal, or contempt, thus suggesting feelings often noted in failed intimate relationships?

Imminence of the communication

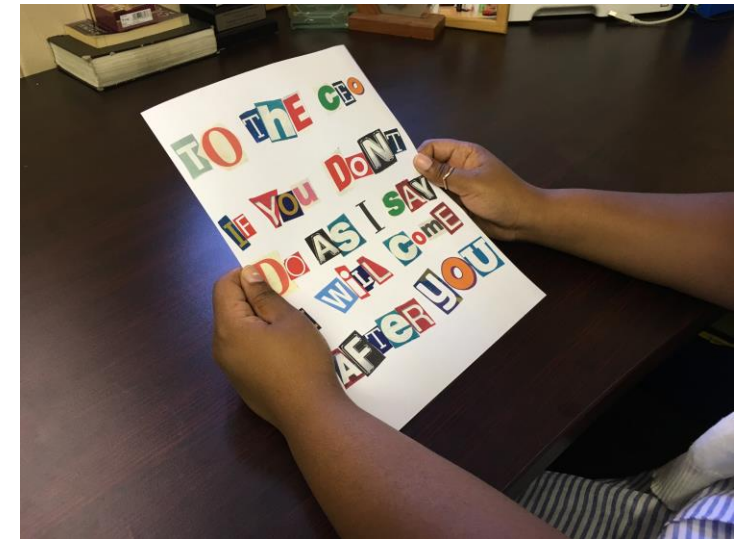
- Evidence of evaporating patience or intolerance for delay (e.g. "*I can't take it any longer*")
- Disappearing window of opportunity for the threatener to act
- Indications of last resort verbalisations, such as "*I have no other options*"
- Evidence of logistic or psychological preparations for violence

Linguistic staging

- An attempt to mislead the target and investigators as to their true identity
- This can include spelling and grammar usage
- Linguistic staging has also been noted to occur in cases of self- victimization

- **Pronouns:** These are: *I, me, we, us, he, she, you, they*. Using pronouns like *I, me, we* and *us* suggest ownership and accountability. Sometimes an author may accidentally slip back into using the pronoun *I* after having specifically using *us, our* and *we* in the communication.
- **Group invocation:** Some threat assessors regard the invocation of a group of threateners, or an inflation of numbers, as a compensatory action, and this is often associated with false threats with low credibility.
- **Bolstering:** This is an attempt by the author to convince the reader of the seriousness or dangerousness of the threat. These often include "*This is not a joke*" or "*I am serious*".
- **Dumbing down:** The intentional misspelling of words or the inclusion of glaring grammatical errors, commonly referred to as 'dumbing-down' the language, is one method of linguistic staging.

- **Cut-and-paste spelling:** Cut-and-paste letters from newspapers to form words is often noted in cases of self-victimization.
- **Contra-indicators:** This is the use of false biographical information inserted into the communication.
- **Claims of special skills:** Sometimes threateners claim to have special skills like being former military or police special forces. These almost always tend to be false.



What can we say about
the unknown threatener?

This grudge would have been voiced in other contexts before, with increasing frustration, to the point where the offender felt it necessary to engage in death and bomb threats.

Letters of complaint, outbursts at public meetings, or even lawsuits may have preceded the current events. It is therefore more likely that the offender is already well known to the victim.

More likely:

- **Current or former employee**
- **Competitor, sub-contractor, or person who has done business with the company**

It is likely that the speaker is a first language English speaker

It must be kept in mind that the offender may even be one of the 'victims'.

Some offenders target themselves in an attempt to divert any attention away from themselves in an investigation and to be included (because of their 'victim' status) in the investigation and information process

Mental health?

- There are no obvious signs of mental illness such as bizarre delusions (fixed false beliefs) in the writings.
- This however does not exclude other emotional difficulties that the author may be having, such as depression, and bi-polar mood disorder.
- Generally sophisticated *modus operandi*



Scenarios



What made this
difficult?



What made
this difficult?

- The client
- Numerous police stations involved

Kysymyksiä?

* This should be “questions?” in Finnish, if not, blame Google translate

Kiitos (Thank you)

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