



A Humintell Workshop
Threat Assessment
 Introduction to Hostile Intent and
 Suspicious Behavior

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Goal and Outline

<p>Outline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of TA and NVB • Identification - Who becomes a Terrorist? • Motives and Behavioral Signatures • Planning and Preparation • Perimeter Scanning • Baselines • Engagement with Security Personnel • Engagement in Attack • Behavioral Signatures of Imminent Attack • Disengagement 	<p>Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a broad overview of threat assessment using NVB • Introduce and describe the background about one particular behavioral indicator of threat
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Overview and Perspective

**OVERVIEW OF THREAT
 ASSESSMENT AND
 MANAGEMENT**

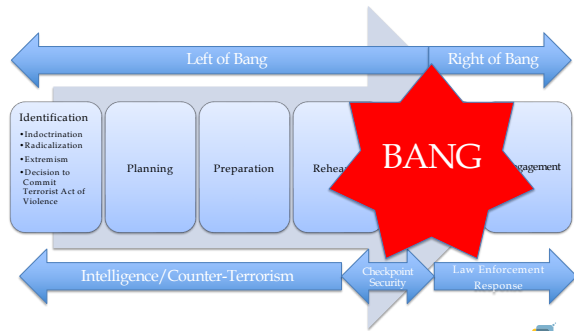
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A Perspective

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Be Left of Bang



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Indocctrination and Radicalization


IDENTIFICATION - WHO BECOMES A TERRORIST?

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FBI Study (June 2018)

IDENTIFICATION - WHO BECOMES AN ACTIVE SHOOTER?

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Behavioral Signatures of Radicalized Groups and Individuals

MOTIVES

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The ANCODI Triad

- Understanding Anger, Contempt, and Disgust
- Universal Emotions
- Relevant in Narratives and Stories across Time, Cultures, and Languages
- Relevant Research

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Summary

- Anger – the FUEL
- Contempt – the JUSTIFICATION
- Disgust – the GOAL

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Also, Decrease in Cognitive Complexity

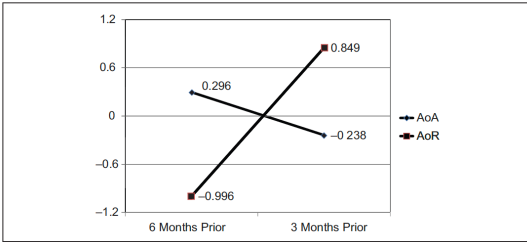


Figure 1. Changes in cognitive complexity across time for acts of aggression (AOAs) and acts of resistance (AORs).

Matsumoto, D., & Hwang, H. C. (2013). The language of political aggression. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 32, 335-348. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X12460626>

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PLANNING AND PREPARATION (TERRORISTS)

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TRAP-18 (Reid Meloy) - Proximal Features

- Differentiates intentional behaviors closely related in time to the violent act from other more chronic and distant characteristics correlated with general violence (e.g., a history of violence and drug abuse)

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TRAP-18 (Reid Meloy) - Proximal Features

- **Pathway***
- **Fixation***
- **Identification***
- **Leakage**
- Novel Aggression*
- Energy Burst
- Last Resort*
- Directly Communicated Threat

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Pathway

- Research, planning, preparation for, or implementation of an attack.
- Evidence of these behaviors indicates that the person of concern (POC) has moved into operational space and the is intent to be violent.

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Fixation

- An increasingly pathological preoccupation with a person or a cause, accompanied by a deterioration in social life, occupational life, or both.
- A preoccupation of thought, usually on a person or a cause.
- A simple key to the presence of a pathological fixation—beside the deterioration in work and love—is the disjuncture between the social setting in which it is voiced and the fixation itself.

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Identification

- A desire to be a pseudocommando or a warrior;
- closely associate with weapons or other military or law enforcement paraphernalia;
- identify with previous attackers or assassins;
- in the case of the individual terrorist, identify oneself as an agent to advance a particular cause or belief system.
- Fixation is what one constantly thinks about; identification is what one becomes.
- In the context of terrorism, the key is a shift from fixation to identification, as the pathological preoccupation metamorphizes into a self-identity

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Leakage

- Communication to a third party of an intent to do harm to a target through an attack;
 - the third party might be an Internet audience or any social media audience.
- A majority of such individuals will leak their intent to third parties, lone actor terrorists more frequently than non-ideologically motivated mass murderers

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TRAP-18 – Distal Features

- More distant risk factors than the more immediate warning behaviors.

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TRAP-18 – Distal Features

- **Personal Grievance and Moral Outrage**
- **Framed by an Ideology**
- **Failure of Sexually Intimate Pair-Bonding and the Sexualization of Violence**
- **Changes in Thinking and Emotion**
- Failure to Affiliate with an Extremist Group
- Dependence on the Virtual Community
- Thwarting of Occupational Goals
- Nexus of Psychopathology and Ideology
- Greater Creativity and Innovation
- Predatory Violence

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Personal Grievance and Moral Outrage

- The joining of both personal life experience and certain historical, religious, or political events.
- Often defined by a major loss in love or work, feelings of anger and humiliation, and the blaming of others.
- Moral outrage is typically a vicarious identification with a group that has suffered, even though the lone actor terrorist usually has not experienced the same suffering.

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Framed by an Ideology

- The presence of beliefs that justify the subject's intent to act.
- Can be a religious belief system, a political philosophy, a secular commitment, a one-issue conflict, or an idiosyncratic justification.
- Beliefs are usually superficial and selected to justify violence.

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Failure of Sexually Intimate Pair Bonding

- The historic failure to form lasting sexually intimate relationships.
- The sexualization of violence is a secondary component.
- A sexual attitude or behavior in the subject that appears to substitute for the absence of a sexual pair bond, such as the sexualization of weapons, the anticipation of unlimited sexual gratification in the afterlife, the exclusive use of prostitutes and other unbonded sources of sexual gratification, or compulsive use of pornography.
- All of these behaviors can be rationalized by the ideology.

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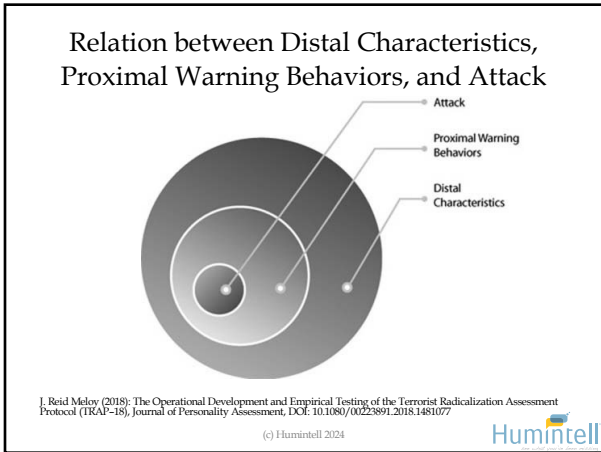


Changes in Thinking and Emotion

- Over time thoughts and their expression become more strident, simplistic, and absolute.
- Argument ceases and preaching begins.
- Persuasion yields to imposition of one's beliefs on others.
- There is no critical analysis of theory or opinion, and the mantra, "Don't think, just believe," is adopted.
- Emotions typically move from anger and argument to contempt and disdain for others' beliefs, to disgust for the outgroup and a willingness to homicidally aggress against them.
- Violence is cloaked in self-righteousness and the pretense of superior belief.
- Humor is lost.
- Engagement with others in virtual or terrestrial reality might greatly diminish or cease once the subject has moved into operational space.

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TERRORIST PLANNING SUMMARY

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PLANNING AND PREPARATION (ACTIVE SHOOTERS)

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Key Findings

- The shooters examined did not appear to be uniform in any way to be readily identified prior to attacking *based on demographics alone*.

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Key Findings

- On average, each active shooter displayed **4 to 5** concerning behaviors over time that were observable to others around the shooter.
- When concerning behavior was observed by others, the most common response was to communicate directly to the active shooter (**83%**) or do nothing (**54%**).
- Therefore, just because concerning behavior was *recognized* does not necessarily mean that it was *reported* to law enforcement.

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Key Findings

- In those cases where the active shooter's primary grievance could be identified, the most common grievances were related to an adverse interpersonal or employment action against the shooter (**49%**).
- In the majority of cases (**64%**) at least one of the victims was specifically targeted by the active shooter.

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Considerations

- Active shooters generally take some time to plan and carry out the attack.
- Can be days, weeks, and sometimes months getting ready to attack.

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Considerations

- Active shooters tended to attack places already familiar to them, likely as a result of a personal grievance which motivated the attack and/or as a result of operational comfort and access.
- Pre-attack site surveillance by an outsider may be one observable behavior in physical or online worlds indicative of planning and preparation activities.

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Considerations

- Active shooters were typically experiencing multiple stressors in the year before they attacked.

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Considerations

- What appears to be noteworthy and of importance to threat assessment professionals is the active shooters' lack of ability to navigate conflict in the face of challenges.

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Considerations

- Formally diagnosed mental illness is not a very specific predictor of violence of any type, let alone targeted violence.

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Considerations

- Not all warning signals lead to violence
- There is no single warning sign, checklist, or algorithm for assessing behaviors that identifies a prospective active shooter.

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Considerations

- Rather, there appears to be a complex combination of behaviors and interactions with bystanders that may often occur in the days, weeks, and months leading up to an attack.

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Considerations

- Many people have grievances and never act violently. What caused the active shooters in this study to act the way they did cannot be explained simply by the presence of a grievance.
- There was likely the interaction of a variety of operational considerations and psychological stressors that eventually crystallized in the decision to ignore non-violent options and choose to attack.

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Considerations

- However, the types of grievances most commonly experienced by the active shooters in this study may be important considerations for the many threat assessment teams and law enforcement professionals who work each day to assess a subject's progression along the pathway to violence.

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Considerations

- One-third of active shooters victimized only random members of the public; most active shooters arrive at a targeted site with a specific person or persons in mind.

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Considerations

- When an active shooter’s grievance generalizes – that is, expands beyond a desire to punish a specific individual to a desire to punish an institution or community – this should be considered to be progression along a trajectory towards violence and ultimately a threat-enhancing characteristic.

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Concerning Communications

- **Threats/Confrontations**
 - *Direct communications to a target* of intent to harm and may be delivered in person or by other means (e.g., text, email, telephone, in person confrontations intended to intimidate or cause safety concerns).
 - More than half of the 40 active shooters who had a target made threats or had a prior confrontation.
 - When threats or confrontations occurred, they were almost always in person and only infrequently in writing or electronically.

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Concerning Communications

- **Leakage**

- Occurs when a person intentionally or unintentionally reveals clues to a *third-party* about feelings, thoughts, fantasies, attitudes or intentions that may signal the intent to commit a violent act.
- Indirect threats of harm are included as leakage, but so are less obvious, subtle threats, innuendo about a desire to commit a violent attack, or boasts about the ability to harm others.

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Concerning Communications

- Leakage can be found not only in verbal communications, but also in writings (e.g., journals, school assignments, artwork, poetry) and in online interactions (e.g., blogs, tweets, texts, video postings).
- Prior research has shown that leakage of intent to commit violence is common before attacks perpetrated by both adolescents and adults, but is more common among adolescents.

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Concerning Communications

- **Legacy Tokens**

- A communication prepared by the offender to claim credit for the attack and articulate the motives underlying the shooting.
 - Examples include manifestos, videos, social media postings, or other communications deliberately created by the shooter and delivered or staged for discovery by others, usually near in time to the shooting.
 - In 30% ($n = 19$) of the cases included in this study, the active shooter created a legacy token prior to the attack.

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Considerations

- Although more than half of the active shooters with pre-attack targets made threat, in the majority of the overall cases no threats were made to a target
 - The absence of a direct threat should not be falsely reassuring to those assessing the potential for violence raised by other circumstances and factors.
 - Nor should the presence of a threat be considered conclusive.
- There is a significant amount of research and experience to demonstrate that direct threats are not correlated to a subsequent act of targeted violence.

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Conclusions

- What emerges is a complex and troubling picture of individuals who fail to successfully navigate multiple stressors in their lives while concurrently displaying four to five observable, concerning behaviors, engaging in planning and preparation, and frequently communicating threats or leaking indications of an intent to attack.
- As an active shooter progresses on a trajectory towards violence, these observable behaviors may represent critical opportunities for detection and disruption.

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UNDERSTANDING BASELINES

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Baselining Individuals

- Verbal Style
 - Pauses or filled pauses
 - Jargon
 - Stuttering and repetitions
 - Pronouns
 - Tone of voice
 - Verbal hedges
 - (Cultural issues)
- Nonverbal Style
 - Emotional style
 - Illustrator usage?
 - Expressive or reserved?
 - Yes/no/I don't know emblems?
 - Signs of cognition?

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Decision Tree for Evaluating Behavioral Indicators for Deception

C
High Cognition, with Lying

B
High Cognition, No Lying

A
Minimal Cognition

Changes in Behavior


The better comparison for detecting deception is B v. C, not A v. B or A v. C

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PERIMETER SCANNING


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ENGAGEMENT WITH SECURITY PERSONNEL

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Story Indicators

Indicator	Veracity	Deception
Plausibility	Story basically makes sense	Something is off
Response length	Length appropriate to story	Either too short or too long
Self-corrections	Can and does occur	Does not occur
Consistency	Key points of the story are consistent	Key points of the story are contradictory
Details	Specific details concerning who, what, when, where, etc. provided	Story lacks specific detail

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Nonverbal Indicators

Indicator	Deception
Facial expressions of emotion	Facial expressions, especially fear, sadness, contempt
Vocal expressions	Trembling voice, voice pitch changes
Bodily expressions	Signs of nervousness, stress, fidgeting, trembling
Motor movements	Exaggerated movements or rigid posture with minimal body movements, clenched hands
Physiological Reactions	Dry mouth, facial flushing, adams apple jump, increased breathing rate, panting, noticeable or inappropriate sweating
Expressions of Cognition	Changes in blink rate, confused, disoriented
Gestures	Rubbing back of neck, touching of face, running and wringing of the hands, grooming gestures

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SA Indicators

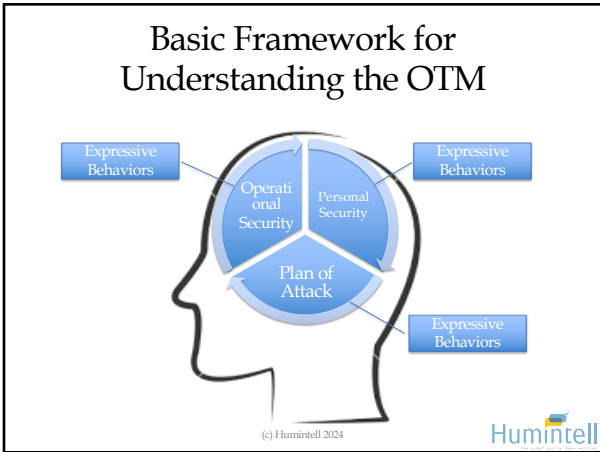
Indicator	Veracity	Deception
Petty fogging		Repeats back questions
Non-prompted negation		More non-prompted negation
Equivocation		Equivocates answers
Extraneous Information		Doesn't really answer the question
Moderating Adverbs	Editing adverbs	Indicates that something is left out
	Intensifying adverbs	Indicates that person is trying to convince you of something
	Minimizing adverbs	Minimizes actions or thoughts

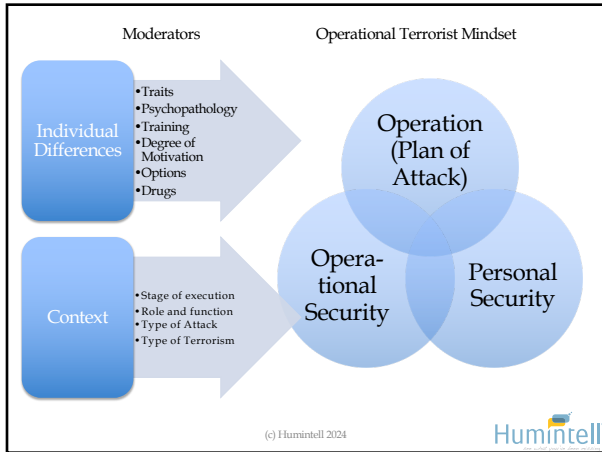
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Perimeter and Checkpoint Security

ENGAGEMENT IN ATTACK

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OPERATIONAL SECURITY


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PERSONAL SECURITY: ATTACKS BY NON-TRAINED ACTORS

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**PERSONAL SECURITY: ATTACK
BY TRAINED ACTORS**

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**PERSONAL SECURITY:
SUICIDE BOMBERS**

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Can you identify the face of imminent attack?

**BEHAVIORAL SIGNATURES
OF IMMINENT ATTACK**

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DISENGAGEMENT

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**THE NATURE OF INSIDER
THREAT**

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**SECURITY PROCEDURES
RECOMMENDATIONS**

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