Assessing the Risk of Lone-Actor Terrorism

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Behavioral Intervention Team Leadership Council
Lake Arrowhead, January 14, 2016
Dec. 2, 2015, San Bernardino, CA
Lone Terrorist (actor, offender)

- Research, planning, preparation, and implementation of an act of terrorism without any external command or control

- May operate in pairs, but usually alone
A Lone Wolf?
TRAP-18: Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol

• What it is:
  – An investigative template

• What it is not:
  – A validated risk assessment instrument (SPJ)
  – Why not?
  • Lack of sufficient validity research at present
TRAP-18:
Proximal Warning Behaviors (8)

- Pathway
- Fixation
- Identification
- Novel aggression
- Energy burst
- Leakage
- Directly communicated threat
- Last resort behavior
TRAP-18:
Distal Characteristics (10)

- Personal grievance and moral outrage
- Framed by an ideology
- Failure to affiliate
- Dependence on the virtual community
- Thwarting of occupational goals
TRAP-18: Distal Characteristics (10)

- Changes in thinking and emotion
- Failure of sexual pair-bonding
- Mental disorder
- Creative and innovative
- History of criminal violence
TRAP-18: Warning Behaviors

- Pathway
- Fixation
- Identification
- Novel aggression
- Energy burst
- Leakage
- Directly communicated threat
- Last resort behavior
Warning Behaviors

- Patterns of behavior rather than individual risk factors: *pattern analysis*
- Origins in German gestalt psychology (Wertheimer, Koffka, Kohler)
- Proximally related to violence
Gestalt Psychology

• Hw cn I rd ths wrds wtht ny vwls?
Pathway warning behavior

Any behavior that is part of research, planning, preparation, or implementation of an attack (Fein & Vossekuil, 1998, 1999; Calhoun & Weston, 2003)
Pathway to Targeted or Intended Violence

- The "Grievance"
- Violent Ideation
- Research & Planning the Attack
- Pre-attack Preparation
- Probing & Breaches
- Escalation
- De-Escalation
- Decision
- Final Acts
- Attack

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Fixation Warning Behavior

Any behavior that indicates an increasingly pathological preoccupation with a person or a cause (Mullen et al., 2009). It is measured by: a) increasing perseveration on the person or cause; b) increasingly strident opinion; c) increasingly negative characterization of the object of fixation; d) impact on the family of the object of fixation, if present and aware; e) angry emotional undertone. It typically causes deterioration of social and occupational functioning.
Pathological Fixation

• During psychiatric residency and fellowship (2003-2009) at Walter Reed in June, 2007: “The Koranic World View as it relates to Muslims in the Military,” was his medical psychiatric presentation

  – “We love death more than you love life!”
  – “Fighting to establish an Islamic state to please God, even by force, is condoned by the Islam.”
  – “Muslim soldiers should not serve in any capacity that renders them at risk to hurting/killing believers unjustly.”
Pathological Fixation

• Complained bitterly at mosque about U.S. Army’s treatment of Muslims

• Sought legal advice to be discharged from the U.S. Army

• Lived frugally despite salary

• Even men at mosque viewed him as strange and never fully accepted him

• Never had a girlfriend, women not pious enough
Pathological Fixation

• Became increasingly vocal in his opposition to the wars; strident and argumentative

• Gave a psychiatric presentation during his MPH fellowship, “Why the War on Terror is a War on Islam”

• Began communicating with Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen in December, 2008
  – He was asking about killing American soldiers and officers...whether this is a religiously legitimate act” (Al Jazeera interview of Awlaki after failed attack)
Identification Warning Behavior

Any behavior that indicates a psychological desire to be a “pseudocommando” (Dietz, 1986; Knoll, 2010), have a “warrior mentality” (Hempel et al., 1999), closely associate with weapons or other military or law enforcement paraphernalia, identify with previous attackers or assassins, or to identify oneself as an agent to advance a particular cause or belief system.

Timothy McVeigh
THE TREE OF LIBERTY

must be watered from
time to time with the blood of
parents and children.

[Tree of Liberty]
Is there a problem?

- Soldier of Allah (Glory to Him the exalted)
- Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala
Anders Breivik
Novel aggression Warning Behavior

An act of violence which appears unrelated to any targeted violence pathway warning behavior which is committed for the first time. Such behaviors may be utilized to test the ability (de Becker, JACA, 1997) of the subject to actually do a violent act, may be a measure of response tendency, the motivation to act on the environment (Hull, 1952), a behavioral tryout (MacCulloch, Snowden, Wood & Mills, 1983), or proof of kill (G. Deisinger, personal communication, 2011).
Michael Zehaf-Bibeau
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

- October 22, 2014
- Killed Cpl. Nathan Cirillo, injured three others
- Stormed Canadian Parliament and killed by Sgt. at Arms
- History
  - 32 yo loner, drifter, mentally unstable, drug addict, nonviolent criminal, then radical Islamist
  - Automobile killing of Canadian soldier by Martin Couture-Rouleau two days earlier near Montreal
December, 2011

• Walked into RCMP in Burnaby, said he committed an armed robbery a decade earlier and wanted to be arrested; but no record.

• The next night, he tried to rob a McDonald’s restaurant with a sharpened stick, and waited for the police to arrive:
  – “I’m a crack addict and at the same time a religious person, and I want to sacrifice freedom and good things for a year maybe, so when I come out I’ll appreciate things in life more and be clean.”
Energy burst Warning Behavior

An increase in the frequency or variety of any noted activities related to the target, even if the activities themselves are relatively innocuous, usually in the days or weeks before the attack (Odgers et al., 2009).
Energy Burst Warning Behavior, January 7-8, 2011

- Drops off 35 mm film at Walgreen’s evening of Jan. 7 before midnight
- Checks into Motel 6 shortly after midnight
- Searches web for “assassins” and “lethal injection”
- 0219 picks up photos, makes a purchase
Jared Loughner

- Leaves telephone message with friend
- 0412 posts to Myspace page photo of Glock 19 and words, “Goodbye friends.”
- 0600 visits Walmart and Circle K stores
Unable to purchase ammunition at first Walmart, purchases 9 mm full metal jacket ammo and diaper bag at 0727

Stopped by police officer for running a red light

Confronted by father at home, runs away

Returns to Circle K, gets a cab, goes to supermarket where he insists on getting correct change for cab ride
Sixteen minutes later, opens fire at 10:10, killing 6 and wounding 13 people

Tackled by 3 senior citizens when he attempts to reload
Leakage Warning Behavior

The communication to a third party of an intent to do harm to a target through an attack (Meloy & O’Toole, Behavioral Sciences and the Law, 29:513-527, 2011).
“Greetings!...I am in USA now but we don’t have any arms. But is it possible to commit ourselves as dedicated martyrs anyway while here? What I’m saying is to shoot Obama, and then get shot ourselves, will it do? That will strike fear in the hearts of infidels.”

• Abdurasul Juraboev, Hilofatnews.com, Aug. 8, 2014
Evidence of a violent “time/action imperative” (Mohandie & Duffy, 1999). Increasing desperation or distress through declaration in word or deed, forcing the individual into a position of last resort. There is no alternative other than violence, and the consequences are justified (de Becker, 1997). The subject feels trapped (S. White, personal communication).
“I have no choice. I am not in the position to, alone, go into the ghetto and fight. I chose Charleston because it is most historic city in my state, and at one time had the highest ratio of blacks to Whites in the country. We have no skinheads, no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the internet. Well someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me.”
Directly Communicated Threat Warning Behavior

The communication of a direct threat to the target or law enforcement beforehand. A threat is a written or oral communication that implicitly or explicitly states a wish or intent to damage, injure, or kill the target, or individuals symbolically or actually associated with the target.
“Now, your children--daughters and sisters--will die like our brothers and sisters and children are dying…our actions will speak for themselves. As long as you do not end your war against Islam and the insult against the prophet and your stupid support for that pig Vilks…all mujahedeen…now it’s time to attack. Do not wait any longer. Come forth with whatever you have, even if it is a knife, and I know that you can bring more than knives. Fear no one. Do not be afraid of jail. Do not fear death.”
Taimour al-Abdaly

- 28 year old Iraqi Sunni
- Emigrated to Sweden age 10
- Attended university in UK
- Detonated a car, and a few minutes later, blew himself up with a pipe bomb 200 meters away
نحن فرسان لنا الخيل محور
ان دعى الداعي اجينا للنداء

لفجير السويد
من سيفها
غير فرسان
لدولت العروض الإسلامية

أحد فرسان دولة العراق الإسلامية
الذي ينفذ لفجير السويد

http://occasion.blogspot.com
TRAP-18: Distal Characteristics

- Personal Grievance and moral outrage
- Framed by an ideology
- Failure to affiliate with actual group
- Dependence on the virtual community
- Thwarting of occupational goals
TRAP-18: Distal Characteristics

- Changes in thinking and emotion
- Failure of sexual pair-bonding
- Mental disorder
- Creative and innovative
- History of criminal violence
1. Personal Grievance and Moral Outrage

- Combining of personal grievance and moral outrage concerning historical or contemporaneous religious or political events

- Moral outrage is vicarious identification, i.e., lone terrorist has not personally experienced the suffering of the victimized group: trees, animals, aborted fetuses, taxpayers, religious/ethnic groups, politically oppressed groups, delusional groups
Findings on Timothy McVeigh

- Superior Intelligence
- Abandoned by mother—distrusted women
- Preferred to be alone—became more reclusive in two years before bombing
- Sexualized his interest in weapons
- “Ultimate warrior” identification
- Humiliated by SFASP rejection, the grievance
- Poised, overcontrolled, brooding “intellectual”
- Saw self as first hero of the second American revolution
- Hypervigilant narcissism (Gabbard, 1989)
Timothy McVeigh

- Research, planning, and preparation took about 18 months following moral outrage at Branch Davidian compound assault by FBI and ATF (Apr 19, 1993)
- Engaged in robbery to secure money
- Original cell was composed of McVeigh, Nichols, and Fortier
- Surveillance in Oklahoma City by car
- Bomb was sodium nitrate fertilizer in shaped charge in Ryder truck (4-5,000 pounds)
- Exact detonation device unknown; accelerant was rocket fuel (methane) from race track
2. Framed by an Ideology

• Intent to act is framed by an ideology or belief system: religion, politics, secular commitment, one issue, idiosyncratic

• Violence is sanctioned by an external moral authority: not the valueless violence of the psychopath

• On closer exam, cherry-picked phrases to justify violence toward others

• Morality becomes a simplistic choice between good and evil
Sovereign Citizens (US) or Freemen (Canada)

- Heir to the Patriot Movement in the U.S. and *posse comitatus*—do not believe in federal or state government authority, esp taxes, licenses, control of lands, etc; ideology apparent in Oregon standoff, January, 2015

- Extreme libertarians: government is unlawfully controlling our lives and we have no recourse but to:
  - Complain within the law (protesters)
  - Complain through nonviolent unlawful acts (extremists)
  - Complain through the use of violence (terrorists)
JIHAD WORKS BOTH WAYS...

JOIN THE RESISTANCE, SUPPORT THE RECONQUISTA!
3. Failure to Affiliate with an Extremist Group

- Rejection by an extremist group further isolates and hardens the belief system and intent to be violent.

- Typically due to a lifelong pattern of interpersonal difficulties.

- Will then turn to the internet in search of like-minded violent true believers.
The Lone Terrorist
Kathleen Puckitt, CT FBI, 2001

- Intensive study of primary source material, including clinical interview data, of 10 lone terrorists in the U.S.

- Tim McVeigh, Joseph Franklin, John Salvi, Eric Rudolph, Buford Furrow, Ted Kaczynski, Benjamin Smith, Paul Hill, Michael Griffin, Terry Nichols
Major Finding and Operational Implication

- Major finding: Attempt to affiliate with an extremist group led to rejection and further hardening of radical position and violent intent.

- Operational implication: Be acutely observant of those who attempt to affiliate and are rejected, whether by a real or virtual community of extremists who have bonded under one cause or banner.

- ISIS dilemma: Inspiration, not affiliation, drives motivation.
Paul Hill

- Minister of orthodox Presbyterian Church in Florida

- Excommunicated by church members for his radicalization concerning the anti-abortion movement

- Killed Paul Britton, MD, 3 years later in 1994 with shotgun attack at a rally outside clinic
4. Dependence on the Virtual Community

- Anonymity leads to greater self-disclosure: active exchange not passive viewing

- Most extreme and deviant ideas can find support somewhere on the internet

- Paranoid pseudo-community (Cameron)
  - The fantasy of being persecuted

- Pronoid pseudo-community
  - The fantasy of belonging
Nadir Soofi and Elton Simpson
May 3, 2015, Texas
ISIS Social Media Prompt

The brothers from the Charlie Hebdo attack did their part. It's time for brothers in the US to do their part.

breitbart.com/big-journalism…
ISIS Support

Twitter

AbuHussainAlBritani

@_AbuHus55ain

Kik: Abul Hussain2 (Brothers only)

Allahu Akbar!!!!! 2 of our brothers just opened fire at the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) art exhibition in texas! #TexasAttack

AbuHussainAlBritani

@_AbuHus55ain

They Thought They Was Safe In Texas From The Soldiers Of The Islamic State - #GarlandShooting #TexasAttack

AbuHussainAlBritani

@_AbuHus55ain

Kill Those That Insult The Prophet - #GarlandShooting

AbuHussainAlBritani

@_AbuHus55ain

19m

Allahu Akbar!!!!! 2 of our brothers just opened fire at the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) art exhibition in texas! #TexasAttack

AbuHussainAlBritani

@_AbuHus55ain

17m

The bro with me and myself have given bay'ah to Amrul Mu'mineen. May Allah accept us as mujahideen. Make dua

#texasattack

AbuHussainAlBritani

@_AbuHus55ain

2h
Paris Attacks, January and November, 2015

Explosions near stadium
Restaurant shooting
Hostages at theater
Charlie Hebdo attack
Eiffel Tower
5. Thwarting of Occupational Goals

- Disillusioned with the social order
- Resentful of narcissistic wounding due to history of slights, rejections, failures
- “In-betweeners” (Ollson, 2005; Singer, 1995)
- Identity confusion vs. identity integration (Erikson, 1950)
6. Changes in Thinking and Emotion

• Willingness to argue diminishes

• Becomes more humorless, strident, with dogmatic preaching

• Beliefs become more rigid, simplistic, and absolute

• Embraces a “moral authority:” don’t think, just believe

• Common to all fundamentalist beliefs, regardless of content of the beliefs
Fantasy

- “Narcissistic linking fantasy:” a special and idealized relationship with another (Meloy, 1998)

- Leader, religious figure, political figure, soldier, assassin, warrior, older sibling, father, etc.

- Usually omnipotent, grandiose and violent

- Compensates for chronic real world failures and depleted narcissism in day to day experiences

- Identification warning behavior (Meloy et al., 2012)
Tamerlan's SMS to his mom:

"My dear mom, I will lay down my life for Islam.
I'm gonna die for Islam Insha'Allah"
Emotion

- Sensitized to rejection, leading to anger or rage at blamed object, a defense against shame

- Secrecy leads to “clandestine excitement” (R. Collins, Univ. Pennsylvania)

Moral emotion sequence
  - Anger > contempt > disgust
anger

1. eyebrows down and together
2. eyes glare
3. narrowing of the lips
contempt

① lip corner tightened and raised on only one side of face
disgust

1. nose wrinkling
2. upper lip raised
7. Failure of Sexual Pair-Bonding

- Erotic component of martyrdom (sexual fantasy) (T. Reik & K. Menninger)
  - Flight from the mother
  - Renunciation of actual sexuality
  - Moral masochism
  - Idealization in fantasy
  - Renunciation of actual relations with women as sexual-affectional intimates
  - Women are distrusted, and therefore need to be controlled
  - Women are idealized from a distance
Anders Breivik
Eric Rudolph
Buford Furrow
Timothy McVeigh
Mohamed Atta and Marwan Al-Shehhi
Ted Kaczynski
8. Mental Disorder

• Some terrorism researchers have asserted that terrorists are normal (Post, Sageman)

• Others have shown that lone terrorists have more evidence of psychopathology (Spaaïj, Gill)

• Nexus: ideology may provide a rationalization for symptoms of mental disorder, and intellectually buffer and help manage the anxiety of a decompensating mind
• 119 lone terrorists vs. matched sample of group based terrorists
• 13.49 times more likely to have a mental illness than group based terrorists
• 18.07 times more likely to have a partner involved in the wider movement than group based terrorist
• Proximate upcoming life change
• Victim of recent prejudice
• Proximate and chronic stress
Sirhan Sirhan

- Defense: paranoid schizophrenia and dissociative disorder
- Prosecution: borderline schizophrenia (borderline personality disorder) with histrionic and paranoid features
- Retaliation for betrayal of his person (transference) and of his people (Palestinians-Arabs) by Robert Kennedy
- Avenging the Six Day War in 1967 which Israel won
Ted Kaczynski

- Court-ordered evaluation: paranoid schizophrenia; paranoid personality disorder with avoidant and antisocial features (S. Johnson psych report)
- Identification with the Luddites, 19th century British textile workers who protested technology, and hatred of advancing “technological society”
THE COMPLAINTS ABOUT MY ATTORNEYS ARE DETAILED IN THIS LETTER I'D LIKE YOU TO OPEN.
9. Greater Creativity and Innovation

• No bureaucratic stifling due to need for approval by those in charge of terrorist organization

• Absence of fear of failure

• No need to consider political, military, or social blowback from attack (Simon, Sageman)

• Operational definition: innovative and/or imitated
Bruce Ivins

- Anthrax attacks, two waves, in September and October, 2001: killed 5 people, injured 17
- Most prominent anthrax researcher in USG
- Motivated by:
  - Revenge
  - Need for personal validation
  - Career preservation and professional redemption
  - Loss
  - Also obsessed with and stalked a sorority house
  - Expert Behavioral Analysis Panel (2011)
Lee Malvo and John Mohammad
Washington, DC, Oct., 2002, 10 killed, 3 wounded
Make a bomb in the kitchen of your Mom
The AQ Chef

Can I make an effective bomb that causes damage to the enemy from ingredients available in any kitchen in the world? The answer is yes. But before how, we ask why? It is because Allah says: So fight in the cause of Allah; you are not held responsible except for yourself. And inspire the believers (to join you) that perhaps Allah will restrain the [military] might of those who disbelieve. And Allah is greater in might and stronger in [retributory] punishment (an-Nisâ': 84).
Added more explosive powder and altered detonation device
10. History of criminal violence

• Capacity for predation has been acted upon previously

• Emotion (anger) dissolves as mode of violence shifts to predation, and planning and preparation begins

• Serves tactical success by surprising target

• Morally sanctioned by belief system: superego-driven homicidal aggression; usually not valueless psychopathic predation, but may be
Charlie Hebdo, January, 2015
Does TRAP-18 work in the real world?

**Sensitivity**—does it identify those at risk?

**Specificity**—does it identify those who are not at risk?

- Potentially lethal nonterrorist attackers of public figures in Germany, 1968-2004 ($n=14$)

- All warning behaviors present

- Pathway and fixation most common warning behaviors; leakage and direct threat least common warning behaviors

- First test of ecological validity
Frequency of Warning Behaviors for German Public Figure Attackers (n=14)
Comparison of German School Shooters and Other Students of Concern

- 1999-2010
- All male, ages 15-23
- 37 victims killed, 78% used a firearm
- 56% former students who returned
- Students of concern aged 16-22, 89% current students, none planned to attack
School Shooters (N=9)

Number of Cases

- Pathway: 100%
- Fixation: 100%
- Identification: 100%
- Novel aggression: 56%
- Energy burst: 22%
- Leakage: 100%
- Last resort: 78%
- Direct threat: 11%
Other Students of Concern (N=31)

- Pathway: 6%
- Fixation: 16%
- Identification: 10%
- Novel aggression: 3%
- Energy burst: 0%
- Leakage: 90%
- Last resort: 0%
- Direct threat: 39%

Number of Cases
Comparison of shooters and other students of concern

Shooters, greater frequency of:

• Pathway
• Fixation
• Identification
• Novel aggression
• Last resort

Effect size (phi coefficients)

• 0.61-0.875 (large)
• p < .001
• Fisher exact test due to small sample sizes

*Meloy et al. (2014). J Threat Assessment and Management
“Investigating the individual terrorist in Europe”

N=22 terrorists, 7 of whom were in 3 autonomous cells

Reliability, content validity of TRAP-18; comparison of lone actors and autonomous cells
Interrater reliability

• Kappa mean = .895 (0.69-1.0)
Meloy et al., JTAM, 2:3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 Characteristics of the European Terrorists (N=22)</th>
<th>Individual Terrorist</th>
<th>Autonomous Cell</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Grievance and Moral Outrage******</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framed by an Ideology******</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to Affiliate with an Extremist Group</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dependence on the Virtual Community</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thwarting of Occupational Goals</td>
<td>85,7%</td>
<td>71,40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radicalization Fueled by Structure of Thinking and Change in Emotion******</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure of Sexual-Intimate Pair Bonding</td>
<td>78,57%</td>
<td>28,57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Disorder</td>
<td>53,85%</td>
<td>28,57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Creativity and Innovation</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>71,43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Predatory (criminal) Violence by history</td>
<td>21,43%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warning Behavior Typology (N=22)</td>
<td>Individual Terrorist</td>
<td>Autonomous Cell</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathway*******</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixation*******</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>92.31%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novel Aggression</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Burst*******</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leakage</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Threat</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last resort*******</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Meloy & Gill (N=111 lone terrorists), submitted

- U.S. and Europe
- Convicted of their active planning or died during commission of their attack
- 1990-2014 (25 years)
- “the use of threat or action designed to influence the government or intimidate the public and/or advance a political, religious, or secular cause.”
Method

- Utilized Gill codebook to identify data which would allow for coding of TRAP-18 variables as present or absent
- Coded entire sample
- Compared across ideologies
- Compared across thwarted or successful attacks.
Lone Actor Terrorists

- Pathway 96%
- Fixation 77%
- Identification 77%
- Novel Aggression 59%
- Energy Burst 8%
- Leakage 85%
- Last Resort 28%
- Directly communicated threat 22%
Lone Actor Terrorists

- Personal grievance and moral outrage: 80%
- Framed by an ideology: 100%
- Failure to affiliate with extremist group: 29%
- Dependence on virtual community: 49%
- Thwarting of occupational goals: 55%
- Changes in thinking and emotion: 88%
- Failure of sexual intimate pair bonding: 84%
- Mental illness: 41%
- Creativity and innovation: 28%
- Criminal violence by history: 42%
Operational Application

• 69% demonstrated at least half of the TRAP variables
• The majority had 5 warning behaviors: pathway, fixation, identification, novel aggression, and leakage
Comparison of ideologies

• Jihadist (n=38)
• Extreme right wing (n=43)
• Single issue (n=30)
Comparative Ideologies

• Equivalence across all variables except for four:
  – Personal grievance and moral outrage
  – Dependence on the virtual community
  – Fixation
  – Thwarting of occupational goals
Operational Application

• TRAP-18 appears to be useful regardless of ideology driving the terrorist motivation
Successful v. Thwarted Attackers

- Successful (n=67): carried out the attack
- Thwarted (n=44): plots that were developed by a lone terrorist and then were interrupted/stopped by law enforcement intervention and led to a conviction
Successful Attackers

• More likely to fail at sexual-intimate pair bonding (\(\phi = .293\))
• More likely to be creative and innovative (\(\phi = .190\))
• More likely to be fixated (\(\phi = .204\))
• Less likely to be dependent on the virtual community (\(\phi = .317\))
Operational Application

• More socially isolated, more time to plan and prepare without interruption
• Need to think “outside the box” as threat assessors for innovative (not done before) tactics
• Watch for indications of obsessive preoccupation with a cause, most likely through social media postings
• Less interaction with like minded true believers through listservs, blogs, etc.
Monahan and Steadman, 1996

- Violent storms and violent people. *American Psychologist* 51:931-938

- **Watching**—cluster of distal characteristics > monitor the case

- **Warning**—one proximal warning behavior > actively manage the case

- Code warning behaviors first
TRAP-18: Proximal Warning Behaviors

- Pathway
- Fixation
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- History of criminal violence
Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer*, 1951

“The vanity of the selfless, even those who practice utmost humility, is boundless.”
Thank you

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- www.DrReidMeloy.com