

PROTECTED "A"



**BC Sheriff Services:  
Integrated Threat Assessment Unit**

**THREAT RISK EVALUATION REPORT**

**Open Information Project:  
Ministers' and Deputy Ministers'  
Calendars**

Report date: 2011-05-09

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- s.15
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### Caveat

Threat Assessment requires deductive reasoning and subjective opinions and as such, violence may be over predicted or under predicted in some cases. Accuracy of the assessment is highly dependent on completeness, currency and accuracy of the information provided for analysis.

Threat Assessment requires the examination of individual traits, historical factors and situational indicators that are known to be consistent with violence. Factors, traits and indicators are evaluated based on their potential to affect the risk. It is important to be mindful that "risk" is dynamic; it can change with any variation in the subject's thinking or circumstances, as well as with any intervention strategies attempted.

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The purpose of this assessment is to address the safety concerns of employees. Nothing in this report is to be used by anyone, for any other purpose without the express written permission of the writer

The resulting assessment is based upon a review of materials submitted and the investigative experience and training of the evaluation team members and upon materials related to the Open Information Project provided by Mr. Mark Tatchell.

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## Background Summary

Mr. Mark Tatchell, Ministry of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government, is the Project Manager for the Open Information Project; an initiative to make certain categories of Government information readily available on the internet. The three categories of information are: 1) Records released under a general FOIPPA request; 2) Minister's and Deputy Minister's calendars; and 3) Minister's and Deputy Minister's salaries and travel expenses.

Mr. Tatchell has engaged the BC Sheriffs Integrated Threat Assessment Unit (ITAU) to assess risk associated to category 2; the routine release of Minister's and Deputy Minister's calendars. The scope of this report is specific to what risk, if any, exists with the release of Minister's and Deputy Minister's calendars and what recommendations can be made to mitigate any possible risk.

## Threat Assessment Discussion

In assessing the risk to proactively disclosing calendars for Ministers and Deputy Ministers, the reader must first have a basic understanding of threatening behaviour and targeted violence.

In 2003, Dr. Fred Calhoun and Mr. Steve Weston conducted research on targeted violence which led them to the creation of the "Path to Violence" concept which is outlined in their book; *Contemporary Threat Management*<sup>i</sup>.

On the path to "targeted" or "intended" violence (as opposed to violence for gain such as robbery, or impulsive acts of violence) a potential perpetrator follows often observable stages or steps leading up to an attack. The base of these stages is a **grievance**, or a feeling of having been wronged in some way. The perpetrator feels a sense of injustice or loss and desires revenge or recognition. The thinking about committing an act of violence or "**ideation**" is the next stage. This stage often becomes evident in discussions the perpetrator may have with others. The next stage is **research** on the intended target and/or **planning** an attack. Signs of this stage include information gathering, suspicious inquiries, surveillance, etc. on the target. This is followed by **preparation** on the part of the perpetrator by such activities as acquiring a weapon, arranging transportation, assembling equipment and the like. If this path is uninterrupted, a "**breach**" or approach to the target, followed by an **attack**, may occur.

In addition to the "Path to Violence", Calhoun and Weston describe threateners as either "hunters" or "howlers" to assist in categorizing the type of threat posed. The premise of this description is that "*hunters hunt and rarely howl*" and "*howlers howl and rarely hunt*".

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In more specific terms, those who threaten, harass or annoy, generally cause concern or fear due to their often overt behaviour and therefore receive the focus of security and police. Those who are truly intent on doing harm do not typically make their intentions known. These "hunters" use research, planning and preparation prior to approaching their target but do not necessarily threaten. They may reveal themselves through "leakage" or expressing their intent to individuals other than the target. Threat assessors may focus more attention on the examination of behaviours exhibited by these individuals.

Although "hunters" are more covert, they may exhibit behaviours which can be discerned and analyzed. In some instances, they may also make a threat to, or contact the target. Behaviours must be analyzed in totality in order to accurately assess risk.

In a 2011 German study on public figure attacks<sup>ii</sup>, (Hoffman et al, 2011) which included celebrities and political figures, it was found, in the 14 case sample, that "stalking" behavior was only present in 2 of the celebrity cases but was not present in any of the political figure incidents. Twelve subjects approached or tried to approach the public figure some time before the actual attack but were not persistent. In the remaining 2 cases, the victim was contacted; one in person and one via letter, but no threats were made. In virtually every attack, whether lethal or non-lethal, multiple steps along the Path to Violence were readily identifiable however research and planning phases were probably under-reported at the time, since identifiers for these stages are often covert.

These findings support previous studies including the Exceptional Case Study<sup>iii</sup> (Fein and Vossekuil, 1997, 1998, 1999) in which it was found that less than 10% of those who approached a US public figure with intent to attack, communicated a direct threat to the target beforehand; and none who successfully attacked did so.

The recent incident in Tucson Arizona, wherein Rep. Gabrielle Giffords was shot, further validates the findings of research into public official attacks; evidence indicates that the attacker; Loughner conducted research on Gifford; he did not threaten her previously but did have contact with her; and she had posted the scheduled event on the internet.

The Gabrielle Giffords shooting is an example of the extreme end of the Path to Violence continuum. "Howlers" typically remain at the lower end of the continuum but present problems nevertheless.

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These individuals can be problematic because of their concerning, often alarming behavior, and the fact that violence potential cannot be completely discounted.

As an example,

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the ability to circumvent security due to his glib demeanour, his appearance which allows him to "blend in", and his confident attitude.

In addition to individuals, protest groups

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For those individual who hold public office, being in the public eye is an essential component of their jobs. However being in the public eye inevitably attracts the attention of persons who may want to cause them harm. This unfortunate "occupational hazard" requires special strategies to assist in minimizing risk.

## Assessment

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## Options

### Option 1:

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**Option 2:**

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**Option 3:**

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## Summary and Recommendations

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The following recommendations are submitted for your consideration;

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This analysis is based upon probabilities noting that no two individuals or situations are exactly alike. The opinions and suggestions offered are based on information known at the time of writing and any significant change therein could alter those opinions and suggestions.

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BC Sheriff Service**

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**BC Sheriff Service**

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- <sup>i</sup> Calhoun, F. S. and Weston, S.W. (2003) Contemporary Threat Management. Specialized Training Services, San Diego, California.
- <sup>ii</sup> Hoffman, J, Meloy, J.R., Guldemann, M.A. and Ermer, A. (2011) Attacks on German Public Figures, 1968-2004: Warning behaviors, Potentially Lethal and Non-lethal Acts, Psychiatric Status and Motivations. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 29, 155-179
- <sup>iii</sup> Fein, R. & Vossekuil, B. (1999). Assassination in the United States: An operational study of recent assassins, attackers, and near lethal approachers. *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 44, 321-33.

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**APPENDIX A: Provincial Government Officials and Employees – Threat Awareness Training**

Approximately 4 hour training session which covers:

Path to Intended Violence explained – Steps Grievance, Ideations, Research and Planning, Preparation, Breach and Attack

Path to Impromptu Violence explained – Grievance, Ideation, Breach and Attack

Types of Attacks

- Impulsive
  - Reactive in Nature
  - Immediate and impulsive
  - Grievance, Ideation, Breach and Attack
- Opportunistic
  - Primarily financially motivated, violence is secondary and may be used of further the main goal
  - Usually property or robbery type offences
- Targeted
  - Person with a specific motivation
    - Includes
      - Stalking
      - Violence
      - Social Engineering

Hunters and Howlers defined

- Hunters vs Howlers
  - 90% of people who attacked a high-profile public figure did not directly communicate a threat
  - Majority leaded their intention to a third party (leakage)
    - Wrote in journals or letters
- US Marshals studied 3096 inappropriate communications toward the Federal Judiciary between 1980 – 1993
  - 3% resulted in violence
- "Suspicious activity" was 40 times more likely to result in violence than any other form of communication with the victim

Perception is Key to prevention.

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- Be aware of what makes you vulnerable
  - Pay attention to the environment and context, predict what the environment may develop into
  - Watch for warning indicators

#### Personal Safety and Security

- Successful personal security plans are key to assist in mitigation of threats and will help enhance your safety, and the safety of your family
  - Ultimately, you are responsible for your own personal safety security

In your role as a provincial government official, you may be subject to unwanted attention, harassment, and threats or violence in all venues; office, at home, or in public areas or events.