
Protective Intelligence

Identifying the Potentially Dangerous Subject

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Not all information is intelligence, but all intelligence is information.

We must get into the opponent's decision loop and move through it faster. When we do so, we will win. When we win, we are secure.

—Col. John Boyd (1927–1997), twentieth century military strategist

Intelligence is derived from information or raw data but is not “intelligence” until it has been “analyzed”. Analysis means assimilating information to its “lowest common denominator” and rendering it useful for the intended purpose. It is a way to establish a basis for rational decision making and planning. [Protective] intelligence analysts, in looking to make sound judgments and predictions, are always under the obligation of “making sense” of complex issues. Intelligence is basing a conclusion upon the facts; not making the facts fit the conclusion.¹

Introduction

“He was always a very quiet, stay-to-himself private person, a good neighbor, but we never socialized and, in fact, hardly ever saw him. He is the last person you would think would do something like this.” If this sounds familiar, it is because this is a frequently reported quote made in the aftermath of a workplace violence scenario, an assassination attempt, or an outrageous act of man-made violence.

Less frequently reported but just as telling is, “It doesn’t surprise me. I always thought he was a ticking time bomb, just waiting to explode. He was wound tighter than a cheap alarm clock, always unfriendly, never smiling, always ‘grousing’ about something. He just seemed, you know, ‘different’, sulking, always by himself, a loner. He was a student that was basically invisible; he had few friends.”

Then we sometimes hear, “He was so pleasant, maybe a little depressed, but he said that one day he would ‘make it big’. He was always working on some angle.”

These are after-the-fact observations. In many cases the attack or violent act might have been prevented if the early warning signs had been recognized or if particular personality traits had been correctly interpreted. What follows is not meant and in no way intends to become a psychological profile or to make readers diagnosticians. This chapter serves as a general guideline for the novice or layman on how to recognize those issues inherent in circumstances occasioned by a volatile and potentially dangerous person. He may be a co-worker, neighbor, or even family member. A second purpose is to bring to the attention of security professionals ways to spot a potentially dangerous person in a crowd. A third objective is to recognize and evaluate the elements of a sociopathic (antisocial) personality who may have an intention to hurt or embarrass a protectee. This discussion also centers on methods used by the aggressive person to bring violent conduct to a workplace setting.

One thing we do know is that prevention is often possible. Here's why²:

- [Attackers] typically don't just snap. Instead, they usually plan their attacks in advance, for weeks, months, or even years. This planning behavior is often observed by, and causes concern to, those around them. If we can uncover someone's plans for attack, we can often stop them before they do harm.
- Typically [they] tell other people about their violent plans beforehand, in advance of their attack. Sometimes they share their plans in conversations, other times in journal entries sent to others. In some cases they discuss their plans on social media sites, where a lot of people can see them. When someone hears a friend talk about hurting other people or hurting themselves—and passes that information along to those who can help—we can often prevent an attack.
- [Attackers] are typically not psychopaths or sociopaths. Instead, they are usually individuals who are desperate or despondent—whether because they have experienced multiple losses, or unbearable situations, or have some underlying mental health conditions—and they reach a point where they feel that violence is the best way—or perhaps the only way—to solve their problems.

Identifying the Human Danger Factor

Every day, letters and telephone calls are received at the White House making either direct or implied threats against the life of the president by those who would wish him harm. Each letter and telephone call is thoroughly investigated by the Secret Service. An evaluation is made of the potential risk factors and threat level. If necessary, appropriate protective measures are taken, but there are still those who would attack the president without warning.

A person in the private sector is also the target of written and oral threats, and each threat should be considered and judgmentally weighed to determine the viability of the threat. A protection specialist should develop skills in analyzing information developed through media coverage and other available resources and look for indicators of motivations that will provide him with an edge when making his risk assessment and planning his security coverage.

There are early warning signs or red flags (indicators) that, if recognized and reacted to as possible sources of violence, may herald the coming hurricane. Co-workers and immediate supervisors (or fellow students and teachers³) have the best opportunities to recognize initial unacceptable behavior or questionable problem areas. Training of co-workers, supervisors, and managers in appropriate ways of dealing with a variety of situations and to recognize and report a shift in attitude, substance abuse, etc. before they escalate is a critical element.

An early symptom of aberrant employee (or student) behavior is a developing poor attendance and dependability history. For example, a person has an excellent record of dependable and appropriate service over a specified period of time but, "lately he has been late with assignments, fails to meet deadlines, arrives late to work, leaves early, or not showing up at all because of sickness or some other excuse." Taking sick days off, missing deadlines, and not completing assignments may be unusual because the person might never have taken any time off for sickness, never missed a work assignment or deadline, even when walking around with pneumonia.

Other out-of-character behavior may be exhibited in expressing direct or implied threats and/or intimidations preceding the actual incident of violence. There are prevalent behaviors or commonalities of potentially dangerous people that the protection agent must become familiar with. Historically, perpetrators have demonstrated obvious unacceptable behavior, unusual or bizarre demeanor, and emotional instability that went unrecognized even by those closest to him. Perhaps his personality slowly changes from a gregarious individual to a sulking vindictive person. He begins reading gun magazines, taking shooting lessons at a local firing range, talks about getting even someday, or mentions they are out to get him. He becomes secretive, laughs at or takes offense at meaningless comments, etc.

It is theorized that at the root of most emotional motivations toward anger and violence is distress or depression. A good rule of thumb to remember is *depression manifests anger; paranoia manifests fear; fear and anger equal violence*. Depression leaves a person weepy and gloomy; anger makes the person feel empowered. To escape the feelings brought about by depression, anger—the lion of emotions—becomes the answer. The anger grows in proportion to the person's need to be in control. Being in control, or believing he is in control, provides him the power he is seeking over his assumed target. This has been evidenced by workplace violence and school shootings where the perpetrator attacks those he believes are responsible for his unsatisfactory social affirmations, his misguided decision making, or mental instability.

A quiet, downhearted person may suddenly erupt into rage and destructive violence, usually with no warning or readily apparent motive. For weeks, perhaps months or years, he has maintained his own counsel, keeping to himself, often disengaging himself from office activities other than his assigned duties. He may have no effective support system such as a family or social contact outside of his workplace. If he has a family, he may retreat from them or direct his frustration and anger toward them. "There is a strong relationship between job stress and incidents of harassment and violence in the workplace and home. Over 25% of violence incidents in the workplace are carried over from domestic violence. The violence cycle continues as workplace problems are carried over to the home."⁴

Stress, anxiety, and boredom are constant companions, infecting him with resentment and suppressed anger over real or imagined slights such as being passed over for promotion or being assigned meaningless jobs. His isolation and resentment festers over time until the bubble bursts, and his actions, so out of character, result in human misery, pain, perhaps death. The typical potentially dangerous person's behavior can be diagrammed as in [Figure 6.1](#).

Working up to the vortex of his stress, anger, and resentment may take several months or years, lending itself to being easily overlooked by the ones, like family, co-workers, or supervisors, who should take note of the changing pattern. In retrospect, after the violent act, various levels of progression leading to the event can be identified by friends, family, co-workers, and supervisors.

Drastic Changes in Habits

He exhibits symptoms of burnout such as drastic changes in his work performance, appearance, attitude, and demeanor; changing from being a hard charger or heavy hitter to a "round to it" (I'll do it when I get around to it). Where he was once punctual, meeting deadlines, and always at work either on time or early, often staying late, maybe working on weekends, he begins a trend toward absenteeism, lowering his production and dependability.

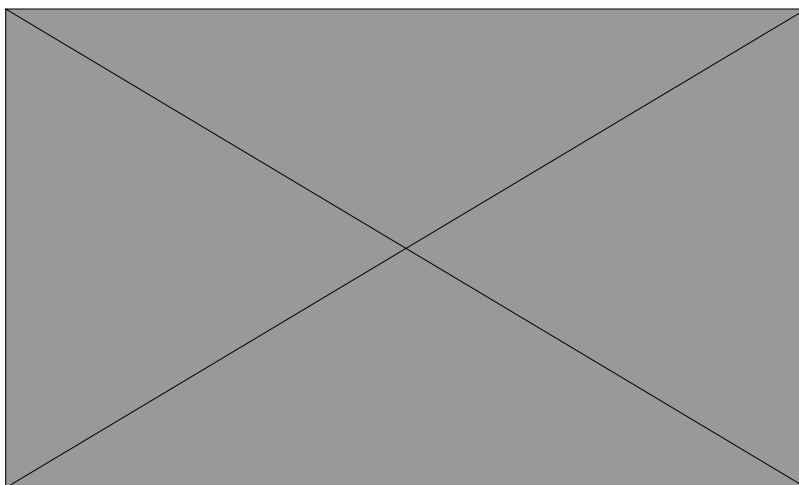


Figure 6.1 The buildup from a normal baseline to the explosive or action stage may take a long time to develop, going through several build up states including lower production and a negative change in attitude and an increase in excuses and absenteeism. The return to baseline comes quickly, including remorse and relief.

His attitude toward his work and co-workers changes to anger and resentment, often complaining and nitpicking or moaning about trivial matters, expressing impatience with co-workers, and displaying paranoid allusions about supervisors. His paranoid behavior drives him to acting secretly and defensively, often to the point of overt hostile actions or becoming argumentative and physically aggressive, perhaps focusing aggression or special interest on another employee, manager, or supervisor. He begins to hear voices, see images, or imagine someone or something is out to get him.

Talk about Guns, Weapons, Violence, or Getting Even

He never had much, if any, interest in guns, other weapons, or combatives (martial arts), but within the last year or so has begun talking about guns or other weapons, reading gun magazines at work, and talking about hunting or other gun- or defense-related topics. He exhibits inappropriate anger or explosiveness, directing attention to focus on one person or organization, sometimes speaking of suicide or hurting someone. He may compile a jail record for violence, assault, or other aggressive behavior and begins (or continues) to abuse drugs or alcohol.

Emotional Trauma

He may have experienced trauma in his life such as a divorce, job termination, financial hardship, death of a loved one, or bullying. The person could display episodes of depression, alienation, or isolation. Without a supportive and understanding person(s) in his life, he becomes a loner, changing personal habits, hygiene, and attitude toward life (perhaps drifting into depression, which could lead to anger and hostility). His mood swings often are apparent, ranging from empowerment to feeling unappreciated.

Over time, if not treated, he may build up resentment, hostility, and paranoia, eventually erupting into an act of violence. After the act, he may not show remorse, shame, or

guilt, but usually those emotions, especially remorse if he feels it, will rapidly drive him to his baseline, replacing the devastating passion that drove him. He may not initially feel guilt or remorse but may rationalize his actions as something others drove him to.

Protective Intelligence Investigation

It's not enough to identify the person making the threat or the extent of the possibility of being able to carry it out. Something must be done to neutralize the threat. Intelligence is raw data (information) after it has been deciphered, examined, analyzed, and exposed to the light of critical assessment and transformed into a usable form for either strategic or tactical planning.

Every bit of communication is routinely inspected for implied, potential, and real threats. Each word is scrutinized for double meanings that can spell anger, suicidal thoughts, warnings, and intentions. If analysis dictates to reasoning and logical thinking that the correspondent might present a clear and plain danger, an investigation is warranted.

The first step, naturally, is to identify the letter writer or caller. The usual procedure calls for comparing the words, phrases, style, tenor, and tone with other correspondence received previously. Often a match can be made that will lead the investigator to make an identification. Forensic or scientific examination of the ink, paper, envelope, postmark, etc. can often lead to determining the source. Once an identification is made, further background checking must be conducted to determine the level of threat posed by the correspondent. For example, one writer may make extremely viable sounding threats, such as, "I am going to kill (the protectee). He is a (profane words). I am coming and will (shoot, stab, etc.) him."

Background investigation reveals the subject has a military background, qualified in several types of weapons, proficient with explosives, and other relevant aggressive expertise. Perhaps he has a criminal record and has been under psychiatric care. To further instigate the person to violence, he has recently been abandoned by his wife, lost his job, and is in deep financial debt. This person sounds like a very likely candidate to be capable of fulfilling his threats. He would be classified as a 1-A threat level.

On the other hand, a personal visit to the person may reveal him to be a bedridden paraplegic, destined to live within the confines of his bedroom, always attached to his oxygen bottle. His threat level suddenly drops to a 4-F level. More often than not, a serious attacker won't be known or heard from until the instant he triggers his plan. But just because a person makes his threat known does not mean he is incapable of carrying out his scheme. In other words, nothing must ever be taken for granted when it comes to determining threat levels of those who would wish harm to a protectee. In more than 50 years of Secret Service protective intelligence, not once has a presidential attacker made his intentions known in advance. But to say it hasn't happened doesn't mean it won't. So every threat must be taken seriously.

Written Threat Analysis

The tenor and tone of the writing is very often a clue to the person's mental condition. Professor and former U.S. Senator S. I. Hayakawa discusses the role of language in human

life, “the many functions of language, and how in Thought language—sometimes without our knowing—shapes our thinking” in his classic book, *Language in Thought and Action*.⁵

Like the spoken word, written communication must be evaluated not only for what is said but also how it is said! According to Senator Hayakawa, you can learn much of what a person is thinking simply by the words he uses. The writer translates his thinking, action, and emotion into an experience of feeling. Feeling comes from expression and sincerity. An angry report will be slashed with exclamation points, short stabbing sentences, and slashing angry words. A humorous or friendly writing will use words in a light, playful manner.

In the above paragraph, note the use of the words *slashing* and *stabbing* describing an angry report. (Can you not see Marvin Bates in the Alfred Hitchcock thriller *Psycho* as he plunges the butcher knife again and again through the steamy shower curtain? The viewer never sees the knife actually striking the surprised victim but he feels her shock and helplessness as we see the blood begin to trickle with the water spiraling down the drain.) That is the definitive use of *slashed* and *stabbing*. The writer is no longer watching. He is part of the action. He *feels* it! He *experiences* it! He *is* it!

This type of writing is identified with psychopathic personalities exemplified in serial killers, perpetrators of workplace violence, and stalking cases leading to homicide.

Word repetition is a commonality of many threatening letter writers. It indicates a limited vocabulary and hints of amateurism or carelessness. Frequently a writer has a favorite catchphrase or word that he will use over and over and will not edit out anything he has written. It's not always what is said but the words a person chooses to use. It will often denote the writer's level of education, sophistication, experience, interests, perhaps personality, and even his thought process.

Voice, Tenor, and Tone

Important considerations must be given to the tenor and tone of the article. *Tenor* refers to the inflection of the sound of the writing. *Tone* hints to the mood or emotions of the writer. It gives a manner of voice. Is the writer angry? Is he being reflective? Is he excited and trying to excite the reader? Is he being expressive, moving the language into a crescendo of demonstrative emotion gradually increasing in loudness and intensity, working into a climax? Is he telling the story in a professor's monotone, a show business monologue, or simply announcing the events as they unfold, perhaps in a businesslike manner? Or is the writing incoherent and rambling?

What is being told may be based on actual experience—maybe not the writer's experience necessarily, but someone's. If the objective is to rise to the level of galvanizing action or to stir the emotions, the writer will use short, powerful words or phrases—coming in rapid succession! Or piled onto the next! Not stopping for a breath! Punctuating them with exclamation points! It's a boxer using a series of quick sledgehammer jabs to the solar plexus emphasizing his intent to knock out the opponent. Very much like this paragraph! *Take that! And that! And this!* Even the words in the last phrase connote violence.

A monotone is page after page of seemingly nondescriptive or passive-voice sentences woven together in a manner that informs but not necessarily excites. The sentences are marked with an ordinary period rather than the exciting exclamation point. This type of writing is usually found in writings by depressed persons and the mentally ill.

Motivation

There are several motives for writing a letter to the object of the threatener's attention. Motivation is relative to topic selection. An essay or letter is usually written to advance one's opinion, feelings, or establish a position in a social matter. To many people, writing is a form of therapy. The writing may be a threat, an implied threat, or a method of venting. Writing requires a certain amount of passion. It is left to the reader to identify that passion.

Topic

The writer simply engages his imagination, selecting something in which he has a special interest, or to express himself—which is the most common. Topic selection is closely tied to the feelings, thoughts, interests, and knowledge of the author. To frighten the reader, the writer must include bits of information showing his knowledge regarding the reader. The writer seeks out data and facts from documents, surveys, and interviews. He may be an insider.

A letter may have a religious theme, indicating that the person to whom the letter is directed is sinful, lusting, a harlot, etc. This type of writer is usually very prolific. To him the words are messages from God revealed to him as commands and wishes of God but are usually incoherent, nonsensical, disjointed, and rambling. "The wages of sin is hell!" "Burn in the fires of hell." "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." The religious writer may also include Bible verses of violence⁶:

2 Chronicles 15:13—That whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.

Romans 13:4—For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Psalms 55:15—Let death seize upon them, [and] let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness [is] in their dwellings, [and] among them.

Jargon

Jargon is a clue to the background of the writer. For example the expression *yardbirds* refers to a person working in a train yard. In today's vernacular a yardbird may also refer to a prisoner spending time in the yard. A *screw* is a prison guard, etc. Every job or occupation has its own special language. This is known as jargon. Many writers have a fixation and will focus on a specific topic. For example, a religious fanatic will ramble about the wages of sin, the wickedness of sex, and everlasting damnation. As exemplified by the glossary in Appendix F, personal protection has its own language.

Flowery words are used by egocentric persons who think they are being profound. Flowery words connote a sense of insincerity. They are used by the flatterer, the con artist, anyone who is trying to convey his message through overwhelming the reader with a false sense of intellect. The writer most clearly will use words and vocabulary that best fits his style, personality, level of maturity, and education.

The Ending

The first order of business is to read the entire piece, making sure to grasp its content. Upon completion of reading the material, the next step is to utilize critical thinking skills or analysis. Perhaps new thoughts have arisen and new ideas might be presented. Words should be checked for subtle meanings to ascertain the subconscious or hidden meanings.

The second and third readings should be to look for critical mistakes or mechanical errors. This could include those little words like *and*, *but*, *like*, *however*, *whereas*, *inasmuch*, *for example*, and also spelling mistakes, misuse of words, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar. All of these words and mistakes help form a pattern that could lead to the identification of the writer.

It is not unusual for the threat—be it overt, implied, or conditional—to be revealed only at the end of the written message. Sometimes this may necessitate reading pages and pages of unconnected thoughts and reasoning. Even the closing signature line may contain the threat, such as “Yours in death,” or “We’ll soon meet in hell,” or “Best wishes for a beautiful funeral.”

The Unidentified Maker of a Threat

Identifying an unknown threat maker is very difficult, especially if he is not of record or known by any agency with a file of known and unknown writers of threat letters. The next step, after checking files and indexes, is similar to solving any other type of crime—interviewing the intended target and determining any potential suspects, and then in widening circles, interviewing associates including employees, friends, and family.

The Intelligence Analysis

The process of taking raw data and obtaining intelligence that can be acted upon from it involves careful analysis and is an integral part of protective intelligence work. Intelligence means digesting information or data to its lowest common denominator and rendering it useful for its intended purpose. It is viewing a particular set of circumstances from a number of sources and perspectives to form an inference and premise based on analysis, reasoning, logic, training, and experience. Intelligence decision making is a way to consider all significant consequences (long term/short term, subtle/obvious, direct/indirect, physical/emotional, intended/unintended, immediately obvious/not revealed for a long time) while establishing a basis for rational planning and strategic and tactical action. The summation or conclusions, rooted in reasonable deductions from all available information, and consideration of the reliability of the source and the weight of the information, result in proving or disproving the data. In other words, analysis is another name for critical thinking (previously discussed).

Opinions are like noses, everyone has one. The formation of opinions comes from many sources, internal and external stimuli, influences of others, conscious and unconscious bias, facts and rumors, experience. Opinions are thoughts. Opinions are not like facts. Facts are indisputable and cannot be changed. They have been proven by laws of nature, physics, math, and common acceptance. Opinions, on the other hand, are subject to feelings, moods, prejudices, and wrongful conclusions. An analyst bases his conclusions on

his facts only after closely examining all the data, information, and knowledge. We know that rumors are almost always either unfounded or, if grounded in fact, distorted beyond the original truth. Therefore, conclusions based on rumors are unreliable. Feelings, as well, are unreliable for determining the trustworthiness of decisions based strictly on hunches, intuition, or the physical or emotional state of the person making the decision.

In an example of how feelings are unreliable for making judgments, a young wannabe gang member or a simple bully walks down the street and for no apparent reason strikes an old lady in the face with the force of his fisted hand. As the old lady falls out of her wheelchair and drops her cane, she begins bleeding severely from the nose and mouth. When asked why he struck the woman, the young punk replies, "Because I felt like it." He did not consider the feelings of the other person or the consequences of his action. He was directed by his own feelings.

Therefore, we might say that opinions formed merely on feelings are most probably unreliable.

Opinions are often clouded by the error of the double standard. In other words, "better you than me." It is often referred to as the "not in my backyard" syndrome. This means that a matter affecting someone else might be a minor matter, but if it affects the holder of the opinion it becomes a major matter. For example, the person has a close personal or emotional interest in the matter and his judgment or opinion is prejudiced by his personal interest.

An analyst cannot make his decision on feelings. It is permissible to express an opinion, especially in a conclusion, but the opinion must be sustained by facts, reasonable deduction, and thoughtful consideration.

Does the analysis tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth? The Rule of Contradiction states that nothing can be true and false at the same time, in the same place, in the same way. As in a true-or-false question, if one word in the question is wrong, the answer to the question will be false. Leaving out words, poor word selection, and misleading words and context will change the entire meaning of the statement, giving erroneous implications, meaning, and false information. An analyst has an ethical duty to be honest and truthful. Manipulating language to hide facts, present false data, or leave out unfavorable information is dishonest and can very likely have adverse consequences, for the analyst, his organization, the subject of the report, or all.

The analyst must regard the interests of anyone who will be affected by the report. His moral duty is to report facts, not allowing his prejudices, biases, or presentation color the facts and skew the conclusions. The best interest does not include coming to a conclusion then writing the facts to fit the conclusion. Fitting the facts to the conclusion will not be in the best interest of everyone and is one-sided and on the same level as lying.

Psychological Perspectives

Certain psychological pathologies have implications for security, and by looking into an opponent's mind we can gain a better understanding of his behavior and how to control or prevent the behavior from developing into an actual assault. The protective agent should understand the importance of being able to identify aberrant human behavior

and its consequences to effectively work with mental health professionals and local officials to develop a means of mitigating the actions of potentially dangerous mentally ill persons. The protection agent must learn to recognize the dangerous person, assess the degree of dangerousness, and develop methods and procedures for working with the dangerous person.

The experienced protection professional learns to be able to understand the importance of reading nuances of body language and developing familiarity with available mental health services and general legal requirements for detaining or hospitalization of the mentally ill person. People with personality disorders believe they are right and that the rest of the world is wrong. They fail to recognize that it is they who have a problem.

An experienced protective agent soon learns to recognize and deal with various psychological personalities and disorders. It becomes a matter of reading body language, listening to words and expressions used during an outburst, or studying the person of interest manipulating others. Of course, not all potentially dangerous persons display any of the recognizable or diagnostic symptoms of a psychiatric disorder. A person may have the symptoms but not the inclination toward violence. That is the fine line a protective intelligence agent must walk and not cross. He must be careful not to label someone and find that he misread the person. Many traits may not be actual psychiatric disorders at all; they may simply be the person's developed personality.

Major Depressive Episode

Manifestations of major depression are weeping, distress, agitation, somber and unreasonable concerns about health problems, outbreak of anxiety attacks, phobias, and often, drug or alcohol abuse. Occasionally the person will burst through the depression and weepy feeling (sometimes after alcohol or drug abuse, which, without provocation, usually leads to anger and violence) to come into a frenzied storm of anger (anger produces power) directed at his environment and anyone in it. A person in a depressed state should be considered potentially dangerous because the transformation from depression to aggressive and violent anger can occur without warning.

Manic Depression—Bipolar Disorder

From the dark depths of nearly immobilizing depression to unstoppable energy and experiencing rapid-fire thoughts, the manic depressive experiences a wide range of emotions and instability. One minute they are calm and low-key; the next instant they are raging with anger, fear, and anxiety. People who are in their presence generally do not know how to approach this type of person because of his mood instability. Being around people like this is often referred to as walking on eggshells because if they feel they are being mistreated or misunderstood, they may suddenly experience a mood swing and become a raging lunatic, completely out of control of their emotions.

Anger and depression are joined. Anger, like elation, is active, strong, and powerful and can make a person feel very good. Depression is passive, weak, tearful, and fragile. Depression makes a person feel empty, alone, and resentful. Conversion of depressed feelings into angry ones is a short therapeutic step for alleviating despair. Depressed persons are frequently angry people, leading them to acts of hatred and violence. Violent behavior is the acting out of feelings that make them feel powerful and good. Commonly this is seen as cyclical.

An explosive temper and fluctuation, or mood changes, between anger and passiveness may be a sign of manic depression or bipolar syndrome in its conventional sense.

Antisocial Personality Disorder

A notorious example of an antisocial narcissistic personality is the serial killer Ted Bundy. This is a type of personality that can be colloquially described as a glad hander, a back slapper. To a person's face he is the picture of sociability. Smiling and charming, he will easily and quickly win the confidence of other people. Greeting someone with a smile, a handshake, and a pat on the back, he will quickly put the other person at ease and make them feel warm and comfortable in his presence. In actuality he is a remorseless back stabber, exhibiting temperamental and threatening behavior, with real or imagined grievances against others he encounters. This personality type is either charming and cunning for their own purposes or surly and uncaring. Often they alternate between the two extremes, depending upon the instant mood or need. A narcissistic person, having no sense of personal responsibility, lacking insight and compassion, is very egocentric and does everything out of self-interest. The antisocial personality is typified by various criteria:

1. A lack of empathy for others—They cannot put themselves in the shoes of others and feel what others feel. They generally have no remorse about the effects of their actions on others and are often unfeeling, standoffish, or cynical, and contemptuous of the feelings, rights, and suffering of others. They may rationalize or even feel justified in having hurt or mistreated others. They do not possess an ability to confess to wrongdoing nor to apologize for hurting others. They may take perverse pleasure in hurting others. When others show what is perceived as weakness or emotional hurt, the antisocial personality will play to that weakness and exploit it. They tend to bully and blame others for their own inadequacies. They may blame the victim for being stupid or deserving of what he got—a sort of “It's his fault, I had to hurt him. He knew I like to be the first one to the coffee pot in the morning.”
2. Possessing an arrogant and unjustified inflated opinion of himself, he may often be unemployed because he knows it all and believes he should be in charge as the supervisor. He feels he is always being bossed by an incompetent or inferior supervisor who is not qualified to be in charge. He is cocky and self-assured when there is no reason for him to have such high opinions, which may be contrary to the opinions of others. He uses his charm to his advantage in a variety of situations, including those with whom he has a sexual interest, potential employers, and victims. He is capable of conning others for profit or fun and using technical terms, jargon, or slang words to impress someone unfamiliar with a topic with no thought of the future or consequences. Because of his arrogance, he believes his actions are justified, giving him the right to use force if necessary to get whatever he wants.
3. Functioning under the assumption that friends should be used and competitors destroyed, they are offensive to those who show fear of them but are dutiful and unassertive to those they fear or who have power over them, often masking the resultant resentment until the most advantageous time when, in one way or another, they will ruin or destroy their competition.

4. According to this personality, their actions are rationalized as entitlements or rights, often trampling the entitlements and rights of others with total disregard. As long as they feel their rights are being met and sustained, they will remain under control, being gregarious, smiling, and happy. But when they feel they are being overlooked, offended, or slighted or when someone becomes a threat (either to them or their rights), they will not control themselves and let their aggressive anger impulses take over. If asked, after carrying out some act of rudeness, cruelty, or intolerance, why they did it, the answer will simply be, "Because I felt like it," displaying total disregard for what the offended or harmed person feels. They come to believe they are innocent victims of some imagined injustice and have a right to defend themselves or their rights. The person who gets in his way is the victim of his belief that the other person is guilty of some encroachment and he must fight them (or in some instances kill) in self-defense. They often develop unreasonable paranoia and suspect or "know" they are being watched or persecuted.
5. Experiencing unpleasant moods, including complaints of stress, boredom, and depression, they may be impulsive, ill-tempered, and belligerent, as indicated by repeated verbal and/or physical assaults. They are often dangerously indifferent regarding their own safety and the safety of others. This indifference is often exemplified by risky behavior, frequenting dangerous places, and associating with others with whom they can experience high-risk sex and drug/alcohol abuse.
6. Consistent in their course of irresponsibility in all aspects of their life, they fail to hold jobs (as pointed out above), pay debts, or pay child support and meet other routine responsibilities. They are inconsiderate and abusive in sexual partnerships and may have a history of being sexually promiscuous (or may be celibate as a way of keeping a clean spirit). They may never have sustained a truly loving relationship with a partner of either sex. If a parent, they will be negligent in this relationship as well, often verbally and physically abusing the child. Their own childhoods may include abuse and neglect, unstable or erratic parenting, and either too lax or too stringent parental discipline. They are typically indifferent to having hurt, abused, or otherwise mistreated someone else and have a record of failure to be self-supporting. They may be destitute or homeless and may have spent considerable time in prison.

The Power Syndrome

The power syndrome is sometimes referred to as the Napoleon reflex. To overcome their feelings of impotence and ineffectiveness, they exaggerate their own importance and, if given a little authority, they translate the power of the position into a weapon against those they resent and dislike, turning their feelings of resentment, scorn, and insecurity into aggressive, often violent, behavior. They are jealous of powerful and potentially dangerous adversaries (as they see it). Feelings of jealousy combined with inherent insecurity are a frequent cause of hatred and violent behavior. Violent behavior can give the illusion of power. People become elated when feelings of weakness and helplessness are replaced with feelings of power. Power elation drives them to consummate acts of violence, degradation, and control over others while depression makes them feel weak and powerless.

Intermittent Rage Disorder (IRD)

There are instances wherein a person suddenly blows up, exploding in rage, often colloquially referred to as flying off the handle. This person may have an explosive emotional makeup but generally appears docile, even subservient, until he can no longer control his impulse to express his anger. All people have negative and destructive emotional impulses; it is the ability to control these impulses that is critical. An effective analogy would be a large pressure cooker: The steam inside continues to boil until it must be released or the pot explodes. When it does explode, anyone and everything in the near vicinity becomes a target of the boiler contents. The same can be said of a human with IRD; anyone in his vicinity becomes a target.

IRD is sometimes suggested as a type of road rage. The IRD person goes along on cruise control until that awful instant when another driver cuts him off and moves ahead of him or gives him a social salute with one-fifth of a hand. Overreacting in an uncontrollable rage, the IRD person may drive his car into the offender's or in some other way seek vengeance.

In some rare instances the IRD person could be suffering from a physical ailment having nothing to do with his emotional makeup that causes the IRD. Neurosarcoidosis, though extremely rare, is one such disease that attacks the central nervous system, making the person a threat to himself and others. A person with neurosarcoidosis may be gentle and well in control, then suddenly and with no visible symptoms verbally and physically attack anyone in their presence.⁷

Alienation or Isolation

This may be a distant cousin of depression. The person harbors feelings of loneliness, helplessness, and dissatisfaction, maybe desperation. He feels he has little control or decision-making power in his work world and his life. His life is controlled by higher-ups. It may be the bosses, his family, or his circumstances setting him apart from others. He builds a protective cocoon or emotional wall around himself until eventually he is driven to some act of desperation, often resulting in violence.

It has been demonstrated that an alienated person may find solace with a similar person or group. Together they reinforce each other's loneliness, isolation, standards, and beliefs, which may eventually lead one, both, or all to commit a murderous act.

Borderline Personality Disorder

Every day is a bad hair day to a person with borderline personality disorder. Something or someone always causes them to misfire. These people are self-destructive, with suicidal tendencies, but often will commit some act to sabotage themselves as they near a goal, be it employment, educational, or family centered. Recurrent job losses, interrupted education, and broken marriages are common. In other words, their usual personality is described as chronic instability.

Indicative of this behavior is an emotional instability and unpleasant mood most of the time manifested in anger, panic, and despair. Their profound anger at inappropriate times makes it difficult for them to control sudden outbursts of anger, temper, and physical fights. They are prone to display extreme sarcasm, bitterness, or verbal outbursts. They may

experience stress-related feelings of suspiciousness and the belief they are being harassed, persecuted, or treated unfairly. Often their self-destructive behavior leads them to slash themselves with razor blades.

Schizophrenia including Paranoia

Paranoia schizophrenia is perhaps the most potentially dangerous mental personality because the person may be suffering from hallucinations and/or delusions, believing that everyone is a potential threat, and may take the preemptive action of hurting before being hurt. The most common and dangerous of the delusions are those of the person believing he is being attacked, watched, harassed, cheated, persecuted, or conspired against. They feel that their feelings, thoughts, and impulses are under the control of some external force or person. This personality illness must be considered as potentially harmful or dangerous to the object of the schizophrenic's interest.

Identifying the Dangerous Person in a Crowd

Look for the small things that appear out of place. The best observation can be of the thing that doesn't fit or is out of place; if it doesn't belong, it is wrong. An unsmiling, unfriendly looking person in a crowd of well-wishers, for example, may seem out of place. A very pale person with heavy clothing in a tropical or subtropical setting may be a person who has traveled from a colder region to see the protectee would be a possible cause for concern. A person seeming to innocently be at all public functions the protectee attends may be a stalker or person intent on some harmful action. A person sweating nervously or uncontrollably when others are either not sweating or have very little perspiration may indicate that the individual is plotting to do something malicious in a surprising manner. A person jamming his hands deep into his pockets when everyone else in the crowd is waving and extending their hand to shake hands with the person being protected might be holding a gun or other weapon.

These are a few indicators that may reveal a potentially harmful personality. Each must be weighed in the full context of the assessment and evaluated on its own merits.

Assessments

A. Five Categories of Probability

1. Virtually certain—The highest percentage of likelihood. There is always a possibility of something not occurring but the percentage is so infinitesimal that it is considered in the thousandths of a percentage. Chances are, without an intervening event, the event will occur.
2. Highly probable—Very likely
3. Moderately probable
4. Improbable
5. Unknown and undeterminable

B. Four Areas of Considerations

1. Evaluate the occurrence (what is the likelihood of happening)
2. Determine the impact of an occurrence

3. Identify the countermeasures necessary to reduce the threat
4. Implement effective security controls

An *expressed* threat is a direct correlation to an actual pending danger, such as a threat made by an individual or group having the motivation and means to carry out the threat. An *implied* threat is contingent on certain conditions that may or may not occur, for example, *if this or that happens*, or, *if you do or don't...*

Summary

There is no such thing as a specific profile of a potentially violent person. There are commonalities we can look for and analyze, but it is not a perfect science. Each person travels a different path with emotions, ideology, environment, social settings, and psychological mind-sets that make each person different with various personalities. It is circumstances, mental conditioning, and social framework that form his personality. Most personalities are healthy and present no possible hurt to anyone. On the other hand, there are personalities that drive an individual to commit some act to either direct attention to himself or to bring injury to innocent people. Being able to identify and correctly interpret the meanings of certain personal actions and demeanor can mean the difference between making a life-saving decision or not seeing the warning signs until it is too late.

Review Questions

1. Describe indicators or red flags of a potential workplace violence aggressor.
2. What is intelligence?
3. Why should intelligence be based on fact, not feelings?
4. Explain the role of opinion in determining the threat level of a person.
5. What are the steps to identifying a letter writer, and how would you determine his threat level?
6. Why should a protection (security) specialist be familiar with psychological pathologies, and what are the symptoms of a psychological pathology?
7. Describe the five categories of probability when making an assessment.
8. What four areas of consideration must be taken into account when making an assessment?
9. Explain the method(s) of analyzing written communications and determining the potential threat level of the writer.
10. Is it more prudent to attempt a profile or to look for commonalities in constructing a picture and threat level of a letter writer?
11. Using the following letter as a reference, analyze it to determine if the writer may be a threat. Note any errors, jargon, slang, phrases, or other typology that could lead to identifying the source and if there are any specific direct or implied threats.

Dear Loving Friend,

I have been moe than your fan fo several years. I have seen evey movie you have ever made and watched you fom afar. I have pictures of you with all those so called lovers. You sent me auto-graphed photos signed with love. If you love me, why do you have all those other lovers? You know you love is tue to me. I will see you at tomorrows concert. If you don't sing our song where you expess you love to me, no one else will eve love you or hear you sing again!!!!!!

Endnotes

1. From a university course outline “Analysis of Raw Intelligence” by Dale L. June.
2. Marisa Randazzo, managing partner, SIGMA Threat Management Associates, “Is There Anything We Can Do to Prevent Mass Shootings?” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marisa-randazzo/is-there-anything-we-can-_b_2331319.html, retrieved December 21, 2012.
3. For clarity, the information discussed here is as applicable to students in high school and college as it is to employers, employees, and workplace violence.
4. From data according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.
5. S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action*, Harcourt, 1963.
6. <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Bible-Verses-About-Violence/>. Retrieved October 5, 2014.
7. The author had a client (Dr. Bernadette Kutcher, a trained medical doctor—family practitioner) who was diagnosed with neurosarcoidosis. She hired personal protection agents to keep her from harming others. Obviously she had to give up her medical practice. Sometimes at night she would have to be chained or handcuffed to her bed so she would not sneak out and hurt someone. See Chapter 14.