Costuming, Misogyny, and Objectification as Risk Factors in Targeted Violence

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This work hypothesizes that the costuming and objectification of targets provide insight into the motivation for a rampage violence attack. These risk factors are then useful for members of behavioral intervention and threat assessment teams to observe as potential leakage prior to an attack. The article presents dozens of incidents of mass casualty shootings and highlights the targeting of women and the process of objectification of the targets. The clothing and accessories used by the attackers are investigated not only for their tactical significance, but also in affiliation with societal archetypes of antiheroes. In addition, the authors present a review of mass shooters who focused on female targets in an attempt to find a catharsis from their past negative experiences, irrational thoughts, and misogynistic philosophies.

Author Note

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Research Article

Costuming, Misogyny, and Objectification as Risk Factors in Targeted Violence

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Abstract

This work hypothesizes that the costuming and objectification of targets provide insight into the motivation for a rampage violence attack. These risk factors are then useful for members of behavioral intervention and threat assessment teams to observe as potential leakage prior to an attack. The article presents dozens of incidents of mass casualty shootings and highlights the targeting of women and the process of objectification of the targets. The clothing and accessories used by the attackers are investigated not only for their tactical significance, but also in affiliation with societal archetypes of antiheroes. In addition, the authors present a review of mass shooters who focused on female targets in an attempt to find a catharsis from their past negative experiences, irrational thoughts, and misogynistic philosophies.

June 7, 2013, 2 PM Pacific Time, Santa Monica, California

WITNESSES SAID HE WAS DRESSED in black, wore body armor and a helmet, and brandished a military-style assault rifle, a shotgun, a handgun, and an ammunition belt. In a staff parking lot, college employee Joe Orcutt said he saw the gunman standing calmly with his weapons, looking as though he was trying to determine who to shoot.

''I turn around and that's when he's just standing there, like he's modeling for some ammo magazine,'' Orcutt said. ''He was very calm just standing there, panning around, seeing who he could shoot, one bullet at a time, like target practice'' (Winter and Cummings 2013).

A woman who witnessed the attack saw a house engulfed in flames. A man standing in front of the house was dressed all in black with an ammunition belt around his waist and a large rifle in his hands. ''He looked like a SWAT officer,'' she recalled later (Fig. 1) (Blankstein et al. 2013). Twenty three-year-old John Zawahri set his house on fire and killed his brother and father before hijacking a car and killing three others on his way to the Santa Monica College library. Two facts in this case stand out clearly and resonate closely with other cases of mass casualty violence—the shooter was male, and he was dressed in all black (Van Brunt 2012).

The iconic black trench coats worn by Klebold and Harris forms a particularly vivid image recalled from their April 20, 1999, Columbine attacks (Gibbs et al. 1999). This aesthetic pattern is repeated by shooters such as Biswanath Halder (Mortland 2003), Kimveer Gill (Payne 2006), Asa Coon (Raymond 2007), Senug-Hui Cho (Flynn and Heitzmann 2008), Steven Kazmierczak (Vann 2008), Jiverly Wong (Harris 2009), Anders Brevick (Englund 2011), and Colton Tooley (Renee 2011).

Further promoting the images of the dark knight are numerous examples from movies, television, literature, and video games. Neo, the protagonist in *The Matrix,* is an example of this image. Clad in black, he drops a bag full of weapons and begins his assault in the lobby of an office building. In the movie *The Lord of the Rings,* the ring wraiths chase the hobbits. In the *Star Wars* movies, Darth Vader and Darth Maul embrace the dark side of the force. Meanwhile, Lord Voldemort and the Death Eaters hold close to the forbidden magic in the *Harry Potter* series. Each of these characters cloak themselves in a uniform designed for transformation as they complete their mission. They become the antihero. Even in Batman, the ''Dark Knight'' is a revenge-driven figure—the ultimate antihero of sorts—and he, of course, dons all black.

Furthermore, rampage violence and targeted aggression are always premeditated (Van Brunt 2012). During this premeditation, many shooters create legacy tokens to shed light on their motivations. This creation process demonstrates the desire of the shooter to become known to a society; a society he perceives as rejecting him, pushing him to the margins. Some examples of killers who left legacy tokens are Robert Flores (Rooney 2002), Senug-Hui Cho (Flynn and Heitzmann 2008), George Sodini (Fuoco and Gurman 2010), Jared Loughner (Roy 2011), and Anders Brevick (Englund 2011).

This article hypothesizes that perpetrators adopt the personas of these dark knight figures as a way to provide refuge from responsibility as well as encouragement and incentive

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FIG. 1. Santa Monica shooter John Zawahri on closed circuit TV.

to carry out the attack. They wear military fatigues and costumes to ready themselves for the attack (Dietz 1986; Knoll 2010). Dressed as a monster, they find a greater meaning in their behaviors and communicate a message to society with their actions. It is a message of revenge, a message of chaos and destruction. It is a stance against good and God; it is a declaration against humanity. We see this in the journals of Kip Kinkel (Curry 2003) as well as Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold (Gibbs et al. 1999). We see this in the YouTube videos left by Pekka-Eric Auvinen (Lyon 2007) and Jared Loughner (Roy 2011). We see this in the social media posts of Clay Duke (Owens 2010) and Matti Saari (Charter 2008). We see this in the video manifestos of Senug-Hui Cho (Flynn and Heitzmann 2008) and thwarted bomber Jared Cano (Vander Velde 2012). We see this in the letters written after the deaths of Robert Flores (Rooney 2002) and Wellington Menezes de Oliveira (Barbassa 2011).

Anders Breivik offered one of the clearest insights into the staging and preparation of an attack through detailed journaling left as an appendix in his 1500-page manifesto prior to killing 77 and injuring more than 300 on July 22, 2011 in a bombing attack in Oslo and subsequent shooting rampage on Utoya island in Norway (Englund 2011). He created a fabricated military uniform with medals, unit insignia, and other regalia. He fantasizes about starting a movement in his country against the Muslim faith. He saw his actions as a crusade (Fig. 2). The donning of a militaristic façade perhaps serves as technique designed to reaffirm the rampage shooter's dedication to his mission and to help overcome any residual hesitancy prior to the attack. They become the Joker from Batman, mercenaries, or the Knights Templar. They are called to a greater mission. They become a martyr for their cause.

Very few mass casualty shooters are women. These events occur predominately with male attackers (Van Brunt 2012). Three exceptions include Amy Bishop, Brenda Spencer, and Jillian Robbins. In February 2010, Amy Bishop shot six people, killing three, following a faculty meeting. Sixteen-year-old Brenda Spencer killed two and injured nine during her January 1979 shooting at Grover Cleveland Elementary School. In 1996, Jillian Robbins hid herself in a large group of bushes outside Penn State's Hetzel Union building before firing five shots from this crouched position, killing one and injuring another. None of these attacks involved the same tendency for costuming to the extent seen in the male counterparts.

FIG. 2. Anders Breivik from Norway bombing and shooting in simulated military uniform.

Mass casualty shootings are an overwhelmingly male-produced phenomenon. They are an expression of rage against a society that has no place for them. Perpetrators fantasize and romanticize their ultimate valediction from humanity. They rain down revenge on those who they see as responsible or complacent in their aching discomfort. In the remainder of this article, we will consider the function of societal archetypes, the process of objectification, and the targeting of women during attacks.

Societal Archetypes

The archetypes, or old patterns, are well discussed in Carl Jung's psychoanalytic theory. Jung believed these human motifs or universal mythical characters reside in our collective unconscious. We resonate with these images and philosophies held by the nurturing earth mother, the consummate trickster, and the questing hero.

The Jungian notion of what drives people's attention is one of several psychological theories related to understanding the motivation for behavior (Fiest and Friest 2009). This is a particular area of interest, as it seems to offer an explanation for why so many shooters seem drawn to incorporating this imagery into their costuming prior to an attack. As the holiday of Halloween gives us an opportunity

to play the role of another, and the creation of an avatar within a video game becomes a fantasy of how we would like to be seen, the Jungian archetype draws an interesting parallel to the clothing and apparent motivations of those who engage in mass casualty violence.

These archetypes for the stories we seek out in popular literature, movies, and video games. Most of us briefly escape into these as a respite from our everyday existence and to heighten our own sense of meaning. We escape from our spouses, term papers, quizzes, work responsibilities, and everyday sameness to find an emotional connection to something that matters.

This concept is all around us. Many successful films and pieces of literature play with the concepts of light vs. dark, as well as themes of the wounded hero, the outcast, and the devil. Examples include

- Darth Vader and Darth Maul in the *Star Wars* movies
- Neo in the film *The Matrix*, firing his weapons in flowing black leather with dark sunglasses
- Sauron, the ringwraiths, and the orc hordes in the *Lord of the Rings*
- Stephen King's character of Walter (the Man in Black) in *The Dark Tower* series
- J.K. Rowling's Lord Voldemort and the Death Eaters in *The Harry Potter* series
- Batman in the movie the *Dark Knight*
- Todd McFarlane's character *Spawn*, adorned in red and black surrounded by flames
- Brandon Lee in *The Crow*
- The school shooting in season one of the television show *American Horror Story*
- Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (or any vampire for that matter; see Lestat and Marius from Ann Rice's novels, the *Twilight* series, etc.)

The conflict between good versus evil/light versus darkness is well understood as a universally symbolic image. Light implies hope, renewal, and innocence. Darkness leaves us with images of despair, chaos, and the unknown. Some mass casualty shooters are drawn to defining themselves through the darkness. They become more than themselves as they escape into their violent fantasies (Van Brunt 2012). They lack balance, and the dark side becomes ever dominant. Jung writes, ''The unconscious is not just evil by nature, it is also the source of the highest good: not only dark but also light, not only bestial, semihuman, and demonic but superhuman, spiritual, and, in the classical sense of the word, 'divine''' (Jung 1985, p. 364).

Kimveer Gill, responsible for the 2006 shooting at Dawson College in Montreal where he killed one and injured 19, described himself in great detail as a Death Knight, clothed in black and seeking to slaughter the human creatures as they flee (Payne 2006; Rondi 2006). T.J. Lane shot several students at Chardon High School on February 27, 2012. Prior to the attack, Lane had been involved in several fights and posted the following story with themes of power and control, objectification and destruction, to his Facebook page on December 30, 2011.

> In a time long since, a time of repent, The Renaissance. In a quaint lonely town, sits a man with a frown. No job. No family. No crown. His luck had run out. Lost and alone. The streets were his home. His thoughts would solely consist of ''why do we exist?'' His only company to confide in was the vermin in the street. He longed for only one thing, the world to bow at his feet. They too should feel his secret fear. The dismal drear. His pain had made him sincere. He was better than the rest, all those ones he detests, within their castles, so vain. Selfish and conceited. They couldn't care less about the peasants they mistreated. They were in their own world, it was a joyous one too. That castle, she stood just to do all she could to keep the peasants at bay, not the enemy away. They had no enemies in their filthy orgy. And in her, the castles every story, was just another chamber of Lucifer's Laboratory. The world is a sandbox for all the wretched sinners. They simply create what they want and make themselves the winners. But the true winner, he has nothing at all. Enduring the pain of waiting for that castle to fall. Through his good deeds, the rats and the fleas. He will have for what he pleads, through the eradication of disease. So, to the castle he proceeds, like an ominous breeze through the trees. ''Stay back!'' The Guards screamed as they were thrown to their knees. ''Oh God, have mercy, please!'' The castle, she gasped and then so imprisoned her breath, to the shallow confines of her fragile chest. I'm on the lamb but I ain't no sheep. I am Death. And you have always been the sod. So repulsive and so odd. You never even deserved the presence of God, and yet, I am here. Around your cradle I plod. Came on foot, without shod. How improper, how rude. However, they shall not mind the mud on my feet if there is blood on your sheet. Now! Feel death, not just mocking you. Not just stalking you but inside of you. Wriggle and writhe. Feel smaller beneath my might. Seizure in the Pestilence that is my scythe. Die, all of you (Pappas 2012).

Those who are lost in society strive for a voice, a sense of meaning and purpose. It often happens that their goals, careers, loves, and even daily existence take on a cold and distant dimness (Van Brunt 2012). Robert Flores talked of this in his letter published after his death about his lack of career and future options driving his attack (New York Times 2002; Rooney 2002). They lose sense of their larger part in society and strive to find some sense of greater meaning and purpose. After choosing to withdraw from Pima College rather than completing a mental health evaluation, Jared Loughner found his lost purpose months later by attempting to kill representative Giffords in Tuscon, Arizona (Roy 2011). These attackers find their lost purpose in creating violence so powerful that society must stop and pay attention to them. They no longer are the forgotten or ignored. They become infamous.

James Holmes, no longer enrolled in school, sought to create a new purpose in his life (Fig. 3) (Elliot 2013). During his 2012 attack in Aurora, Colorado, Holmes selected a movie theater as the stage for his performance. He dressed as the Joker character in *The Dark Knight* movie and slaughtered dozens while dressed in military black fatigues and body armor. As he fired into the darkness, characters on the silver screen did the same. The explosions of gunfire blasting from the theater's Dolby surround sound system offered a resonant background for his AR-15 exploding into flesh, bone, chairs, and concrete. The Batman movie provided a ghostly echo to his actions. For a young man having lost his career, lacking a sense of purpose or place, he defined himself through violence.

On Valentine's Day in 2008, Steven Kazmierczak stood in front of a terrified group of Northern Illinois students in a classroom in Cole Hall. He had horrific images of a skull impaled with a knife tattooed on one arm and a depiction of the Jigsaw killer from the torture film *Saw* on the other (Keen 2008; Sander 2008; Vann 2008, 2009). He fired his

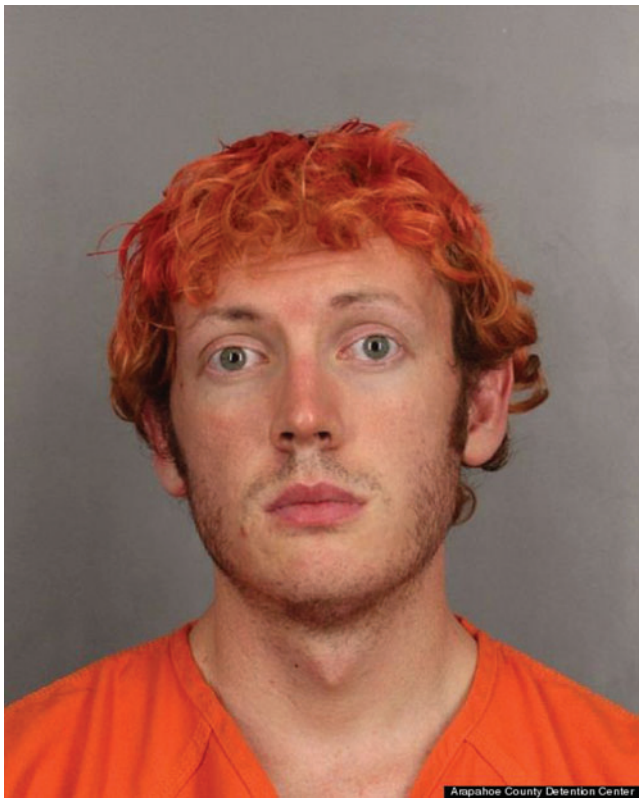

FIG. 3. James Holmes, Aurora, Colorado movie theatre shooting suspect.

shotgun with a blank look on his face. It was his moment of fame, his moment of meaning. People watched him. Attended to him. He was present, noticed, and important. He had done something that mattered (Fig. 4).

Holmes and Kazmierczak took to the stage to define themselves, to find some twisted meaning and purpose after failing to find their own place in the world. Both clothed themselves, literally and figuratively, in the image of the dark warrior, the punisher. They would no longer be forgotten, lost, or ignored.

Objectification

Distancing oneself from a target is a common technique used to avoid any lasting emotional connection that might distract from completing the mission at hand. This technique is used by the U.S. military and law enforcement to train soldiers and officers when shooting to avoid seeing the target as a person, but rather focusing on center-mass. Grossman (1996) discusses these techniques as related to training in his book *On Killing*. He argues that soldiers are loath to kill—remember, humans are not ''hardwired'' to hurt one another without cause or provocation—yet this aversion instinct has been overcome by sophisticated training methods.

Senug-Hui Cho's writings, as well as the video manifesto left following his attack, contain this objectifying language (Virginia Tech Review Panel 2007). Cho chose vivid images of himself with guns and a hammer demonstrating, prior to his attack, his desire to destroy those he held responsible for his pain (Fig. 5). Jared Loughner, from the Tucson shootings, attacked Giffords as a representation of the illegal system of government he ranted against (Roy 2011).

Pekka-Eric Auvinen in 2007 and, following in his steps, Matti Saari in 2008 took part in two separate devastating attacks in Finland. Both wrote extensively about their disdain for humanity and their desire to harm those they held responsible (Van Brunt 2012). Auvinen wrote in his manifesto, ''I have had enough. I don't want to be part of this fucked up society. Like some other wise people have said in the past, human race is not worth fighting for or saving … only worth killing. I am ready to die for a cause I know is right, just and true … even if I would lose or the battle would be only remembered as evil. I will rather fight and die than live a long and unhappy life'' (Boyes 2007).

Saari left notes saying he had a hatred for mankind, for the whole of the human race, and that he had been thinking about what he was going to do for years. He posted

FIG. 4. Northern Illinois University shooter Steven Kazmierczak's tattoos.

FIG. 5. Virginia Tech killer Senug-Hui Cho brandishing a hammer.

YouTube videos where he pointed a gun at the camera and said ''You will die next,'' and ''Whole life is war and whole life is pain. And you will fight alone in your personal war'' (Charter 2008).

The following list of cases serves to highlight in greater detail the tendency toward the objectification and depersonalization that the shooters engaged in prior to their attacks. All provide evidence of their difference and desire to harm others they find different from themselves.

1. On April 16, 2007, 32 people (27 students and 5 faculty members) were killed by Senug-Hui Cho, a 23-year-old senior English major, on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). The attacks occurred in two separate locations about 2 hours apart: West Ambler Johnston Hall dormitory, where two were shot dead, and Norris Hall, where the remaining 30 were shot in an attack lasting 9 minutes. Cho committed suicide in a classroom after law enforcement officers breached the main entrance doors of Norris Hall, which Cho had chained shut. Police reported that 25 others were injured, some in the Norris Hall shooting, while others were hurt when they jumped from second-story windows to escape. The attack is the deadliest peacetime shooting incident by a single gunman in U.S. history, on or off a school campus (Gibbs et al. 2007; Thomas et al. 2007; Virginia Tech Review Panel 2007; Flynn and Heitzmann 2008).

   Cho's case demonstrates objectifying speech in the package containing a video he sent to NBC news. He said, ''You had everything you wanted. Your Mercedes wasn't enough, you brats. Your golden necklaces weren't enough, you snobs. Your trust fund wasn't enough. Your Vodka and Cognac weren't enough. All your debaucheries weren't enough. Those weren't enough to fulfill your hedonistic needs. You had everything … '' (Johnson 2007).
2. In May 1998, 15-year-old Kipland Kinkel was suspended pending an expulsion hearing from Thurston High School for being in possession of a loaded, stolen handgun. He killed his parents to ''spare them the embarrassment'' before returning to school. He parked two blocks away from school and hid several weapons and 1,127 rounds of ammunition under his trench coat. He shot 2 students while entering the school and then shot another 24 in the cafeteria. After firing 50 rounds, accumulating 27 hits and 2 deaths, Kinkel was tackled by another 7 students and then arrested by police (Hammer 1998; Hornblower et al. 1998; Sullivan 1998; Curry 2003).

   Kip left some writings prior to the killing spree that shed some light on his romantic frustrations. In his journal he wrote, ''I don't understand any fucking person on this earth. Some of you are so weak, mainly, that a four-year-old could push you down. I am strong, but my head just doesn't work right. I know I should be happy with what I have, but I hate living … I am evil. I want to kill and give pain without a cost. And there is no such thing. We kill him—we killed him a long time ago. Anyone that believes in God is a fucking sheep.'' (Van Brunt, 2012, p. 22.)
3. On October 27, 1975, Robert Poulin raped and killed a fellow classmate in his home and burned his house to the ground in Ottowa, Ontario. He then arrived at St. Pious X High School, where he attended, and killed one and injured five others with a shotgun. Poulin was born with a chest deformity and eyesight problems that prevented him from becoming a pilot. During his childhood, he was shy and had difficulty socially. It is reported he had an addiction to pornography, often experienced depression, and was suicidal. He trained in a Canadian militia and learned combat skills. He kept a diary outlining his plans to burn down his parents' home and make them suffer (Cobb and Avery 1977; Langman 2010).

   Poulin objectifies women as a target useful only for his sexual pleasure. He wrote, ''I don't want to die before I have had the pleasure of fucking some girl.'' In the midst of the rape and subsequent stabbing and murder of his female classmate, he went upstairs from his basement bedroom and had a peanut butter sandwich with his mother.
4. On September 23, 2008, Matti Saari used his Walther P22 and opened fire on a group of students taking a business studies exam at the Kauhajoki school in Finland. He then lit another classroom on fire with a flammable liquid (Charter 2008). Saari started several other fires in the school, burning several students' bodies badly. A police spokesperson said, ''Saari left notes saying he had a hatred for mankind, for the whole of the human race, and that he had been thinking about what he was going to do for years.'' Saari followed in the footsteps of 2007 Finland killer Pekka-Eric Auvinen. Both wrote and spoke on their hatred for humanity and their desire to kill.
5. On October 1, 1997, sixteen-year-old Luke Woodham stabbed and beat his sleeping mother before taking her car and driving to Pearl High School in Mississippi. He wore an orange jumpsuit and a trench coat. He carried a .30-caliber rifle. He fatally shot his former girlfriend and one of her friends and injured the nearby band instructor. He wounded seven others before the assistant principal subdued him with a .45 from his

desk. Woodham was attempting to head for the Pearl Junior High School to continue shooting. The assistant principal asked, ''Why did you shoot my kids?'' Woodham responded with, ''Life wronged me, sir'' (Chua-Eoan and Monroe 1997; Hewitt and Harmes 1997).

Woodham planned the shooting with six other friends who were in a satanic cult called ''the Kroth.'' From his manifesto, he writes, ''I am not insane! I am angry. This world has shit on me for the final time. I am not spoiled or lazy, for murder is not weak and slow-witted, murder is gutsy and daring. I killed because people like me are mistreated every day. I did this to show society 'push us and we will push back!' I suffered all my life. No one ever truly loved me. No one ever truly cared about me.''

Woodham leaves several journal entries that demonstrate his anger and objectification of others:

> … I am the hatred in every man's heart! I am the epitomy [sic] of all Evil! I have no mercy for humanity, for they created me, they tortured me until I snapped and became what I am today! My advice to any man who has been tortured by humanity is this: Let these words ring through our heart, mind, and soul! Hate humanity! Hate humanities! … Hate what humanity has made you! Hate what you have become! Most of all, hate the accurssed [sic] god of Christianity. Hate him for making humanity Hate him for making you! Hate him for flinging you into a monsterous [sic] life you did not ask for nor deserve! Fill your heart, mind, and soul with hatred; until it's all you know (Courier-Journal 2008).

Misogyny

There are numerous rampage shooters who focused their attacks on women. These attacks are often motivated by failed romantic advances and frustrations at the killer's inability to establish an intimate relationship (Van Brunt 2012). George Sodini was frustrated that women 30 years his junior weren't interested in him romantically, leading to his rampage shooting at an LA Fitness gym (Greenwood 2009; Leinwand 2009; Fuoco and Gurman 2010). Duane Morrison entered a high school with a bomb threat killing one teenage girl and sexually molesting another five (Maxwell 2006). Robert Flores, leading up to his execution-style attack on two professors in front of a class full of students, became enraged at his female professors for being dismissive of him as a student (New York Times 2002; Rooney 2002). Mark Lépine killed six women in a university classroom, explaining his attacks were designed to ''fight feminism'' (Turque and Colin 1989; U.S. News & World Report 1989; New Post Staff 2006). Robert Benjamin Smith took seven women hostage at a beauty school and proceeded to execute four women and a three-year-old girl (New York Times Staff 1966).

Frustrated, irrational, alone, and hopeless, several male shooters ultimately took out their vengeance on the women who they perceived to have wronged them. Woodham and Kinkel left lengthy journals behind after their shootings. These journals provide insight into their frustrations toward women, which contributed to the rage behind their attacks. Luke Woodham writes in his journal the summer prior to his school shooting, ''This night (June 3, 1997) is a monumentous [sic] night. With this writing, I do swear, that I shall never get myself in a position where I can be hurt by a woman ever again. To myself I swear this, and to the higher powers I swear this.'' (Van Brunt, 2012, p. 22.)

Kip Kipland writes in his journal before his gruesome attack:

> Every time I talk to her, I have a small amount of hope. But then she will tear it right down. It feels like my heart is breaking. But is that possible. I am so consumed with hate all of the time. Could I ever love anyone? I have feelings, but do I have a heart that's not black and full of animosity. … I gave her all I have, and she just threw it away. Why? Why did God just want me to be in complete misery? I need to find more weapons. My parents are trying to take away some of my guns! My guns are the only things that haven't stabbed me in the back. … Every time I see your face, my heart is shot with an arrow. I think she will say yes, but she doesn't, does she? She says, ''I don't know.'' The three most fucked up words in the English language. (Van Brunt, 2012, p. 22).

While Kip's attack was not directly aimed at women, his writing provides evidence of his loneliness and romantic frustration that contributed to his attack. It would be an overstatement to say these thoughts single-handedly fueled his attack, yet it would be reasonable to see them as contributing factors.

These haunting adolescent frustrations offer a glimpse into the misshapen minds of those who target women. The following cases provide additional insight into those who are driven to commit mass casualty violence motivated by their hatred of and frustrations with women.

1. In August 2009, forty-eight-year-old George Sodini entered an LA Fitness gym in Pennsylvania and shot seven women in an aerobics class, killing three, before committing suicide (Greenwood 2009; Leinwand 2009; Fuoco and Gurman 2010). He had previously taken online workshops on how to date younger women to try to deal with his inability to successfully date women in their young twenties. Sodini attended a workshop by Ron Steele designed to teach older men how to meet and date young women. The curriculum is taught through videos, role-plays at hotel seminars, and Steele's video blog. Not surprisingly, Sodini ran into trouble achieving his goal of dating women 30 years his junior. This frustration and hopelessness contributed to his targeted attack on a women's aerobics class. He wrote in his blog prior to the attack, ''No girlfriend since 1984, last Christmas with Pam was in 1983. Who knows why. I am not ugly or too weird. No sex since July 1990 either (I was 29).'' The day before the shooting he writes, ''I took off today, Monday, and tomorrow to practice my routine and make sure it is well polished. I need to work out every detail, there is only one shot.'' (Van Brunt, 2012, p. 22.)

   It is Sodini's irrational thinking here that drives his anger and frustration toward women. As a 48-year-old man, he seeks to date women in their early twenties. When he becomes frustrated by his lack of success, he turns this feeling into rage projected at the women he most desires. He slays seven women during an aerobics class. They are the embodiment of untouchable youth and beauty; objectified and distanced from him—they are forever outside his grasp.

2. On September 27, 2006, Duane Morrison entered Platte Canyon High School in Bailey, Colorado claiming to have a bomb. He carried a backpack containing duct tape, handcuffs, knives, a stun gun, rope, scissors, ammunition, and two sex toys. He took six female students hostage and sexually assaulted them, later releasing four. When police broke open the classroom's door with explosives, Morrison opened fire with a semi-automatic pistol before shooting a hostage. He committed suicide prior to law enforcement taking him into custody (Kelley 2006; Kirk 2006; Maxwell 2006).

   Not much is known about the motivation behind these killings other than Morrison's own potential abuse and depression, outlined in his suicide note. The reasons behind the sexual abuse suffered by the survivors has not been explored; however, the objectification of these high school girls as his personal toys clearly points to his disregard for their personhood and suggests they were seen as objects for his possession.
3. Flores, a gulf war veteran, went into a nursing school on October 28, 2002, and killed a nursing professor in her office before finding two other female professors and executing them in front of a class taking an exam (New York Times 2002; Rooney 2002). Students described him as ''aggressive and mean'' and said he would get into confrontations by challenging the faculty. He bragged to classmates that he received a concealed weapons permit. He had failed a class in nursing and had to retake it. A year and half before the attack he threatened to ''end it all'' and said that he ''might put something under the college.'' Before killing himself he confronted his ethics teacher and said he was, ''going to give her a lesson in spirituality.'' Witnesses said Flores fired two shots into her chest and stood directly over her as he shot her in the head. In a note left after the attack, he writes, ''I guess what it is about is that it is a reckoning. A settling of accounts … and arrogance of authorities. The University is filled with too many people who are filled with hubris. They feel untouchable.''
4. On December 6, 1989, Mark Lépine obtained a mini-14 rifle and hunting knife and entered a university classroom at École Polytechnique in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. He separated the men from the women and killed six women, saying he was ''fighting feminism.'' He moved through the halls, another classroom, and the cafeteria looking for women to shoot. His suicide note claimed political motives and blamed feminists for ruining his life (Turque and Colin 1989; U.S. News & World Report 1989; New Post Staff 2006).

   No example so clearly demonstrates a mass killing driven by the misogynistic and objectifying nature of the shooter. Lépine focused his attack solely on women, ignoring male targets in search of those who so offended his personal beliefs. Lépine saw women as responsible for his past pain, and objectifying the females in the school became the receptacle for his hatred.
5. On November 12, 1966, Robert Smith took seven people hostage at Rose-Mar College of Beauty, a school for training beauticians. His plan was to bind the women, tie plastic bags over their heads, and watch them while they suffocated. The bags turned out to be too small. Smith instead ordered the hostages to lie down on the floor in a circle. He then proceeded to shoot them in the head with a .22-caliber pistol. Four women and a three-year-old girl died; one woman and a baby were injured but survived. Police arrested Smith after the massacre. Smith announced, ''I wanted to get known, just wanted to get myself a name.'' During his childhood he was teased in school for his lack of coordination and developed an interest in serial killers and mass murders. He was sentenced to two 99-year sentences and four life sentences for the murders (Mackey and Killings 1966; New York Times Staff 1966; Daily News Staff 2007).

   Smith clearly describes his motivations for the attack as his own personal infamy. He targets a female-dominated beauty school and, with his original sadistic suffocation plan thwarted, kills the women in a ritualistic manner.

The Costuming of the Martyr and the Antihero

There are two explanations for the type of clothing and accessories mass shooters choose. First, is this an individual who is dressing tactically to complete his/her mission? Few online stores or military surplus shops sell tactical vests, kneepads, thigh rigs, and harnesses in colors such as red, pink, or yellow. Choices are more typically black, olive drab, and camouflage. Colors and styles are designed to allow for easy access as well as to blend into surroundings. Shooters may choose these items for similar reasons, or they may be limited in their choices due to what colors and types are available.

An additional reason shooters outfit themselves in this style of tactical gear is more psychological in nature. Meloy refers to this as ''identification warning behavior.'' He writes, ''Identification warning behavior—any behavior that indicates a psychological desire to be a 'pseudo-commando' (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 identify oneself as an agent to advance a particular cause or belief system'' (p. 265). Kimver Gill demonstrates this as he poses as a self-described, ''Angel of Death,'' brandishing his Berretta Storm 9 mm rifle (Fig. 6).

We saw these pseudo-commando and warrior mentalities played out in the recent June 2013 shooting in Santa Monica, California. John Zawahri is just the latest manifestation of a pattern of males who outfit themselves in a costume that reflects their desire to be known. If they fail at being the hero, they can only transform into the antihero. This donning of the archetype creates a sense of meaning and purpose for these lost individuals. It gives them a brief escape from their lives of failure and broken connections and allows them to rise and become something more powerful.

Few images of the antihero resonate as strongly as Jared Loughner. He shaved his head and left us with an iconic mugshot of himself as a killer. While the mental health and sanity of these individuals is always called into question,

FIG. 6. Dawson College shooter Kimver Gill showing off his Berretta Storm 9mm carbine.

one might argue that Loughner, in changing his appearance (similar to Holmes), speaks more to the very disturbing clarity of thought (Fig. 7).

The following cases demonstrate killers who took great lengths to adorn themselves in a manner that identified them as martyrs or antiheroes, a tactic that also distanced them from the event.

1. On July 22, 2011, Anders Breivik detonated a bomb, killing 8 young people, and then killed an additional 69 youths on Utoya Island in Norway. Breivik believed his attack was justified, and he wrote a 1500-page manifesto about the evils of the Muslim population and how it should be eradicated from Norway. Prior to his attack, Breivik assembled an intricate military dress uniform complete with medals. Breivik acquired a Ruger mini-14 along with ten 30-round magazines and a rapid fire trigger modification. He named this gun Gungnir, after the spear of Odin (Breivik Manifesto 2011; Englund 2011; Shane 2011).

   In this case, we see the degree to which Breivik collected military style weapons and clothing, going so far as to create a fictitious uniform for himself, emulating a modern-day Knights Templar. He named his weapon after the spear Odin hurled to begin the Æsir-Vanir War.
2. On September 28, 2010, Colton Tooley rode the bus to the University of Texas at Austin campus. He wore a ski mask and black business suit while firing his AK-47 around campus, before taking his own life on the sixth floor of the campus library (Associated Press 2010; Ulloa 2010; Renee 2011). Not much is known about Tooley or the nature of his attack and subsequent suicide, but running through the campus library wearing a dark suit and ski mask leaves quite a haunting image.
3. In 2006 in Quebec, Canada, Kimver Gill went on a shooting spree outside of Dawson College. Images of Gill emerged from social media with him wearing a black leather trench coat and brandishing a 9 mm Beretta storm rifle as well as large hunting knives. The social media trail left by Gill provides a rare first-hand account of how he saw himself. A profile description from a website he frequented called www.vampire-freaks.com follows:

   > His name is Trench. You will come to know him as the Angel of Death. He is male. He is 25 years of age. He lives in Quebec. He finds that it is an O.K [sic] place to live. He is not a people person. He has met a handful of people in his life who are decent. But he finds the vast majority to be worthless, no good, conniving, betraying, lying, deceptive, motherfuckers. Work sucks … School sucks … Life sucks … What else can I say. Metal and Goth kick ass. Life is like a video game, you gotta die sometime (Van Brunt, 2012, p. 22).

   Gill refers to his darkness and as someone who will punish others. He describes his avatar as, ''Head to toe, all black. Boots as black as tar. Cloak lashing to and fro with the wind.'' His hatred for those around him, for humanity in general, comes through in his writings as well. He offers this as a chilling, prophetic revelation prior to his attack: ''The disgusting human creatures scream in panic and run in all directions, taking with them the lies and deceptions. The Death Knight gazes at the humans with an empty stare, as they knock each other down in a mad dash to safety. He wishes to slaughter them as they flee'' (Payne 2006; Rondi 2006).
4. Harris and Klebold shot and killed 12 students and a teacher and injured 21 other students and a teacher at Columbine High School. Both had several pipe bombs, napalm, knives, and other homemade explosives. Two bombs were set in the school cafeteria. They recorded hours of video calling others to follow in their footsteps. The video begins with a reference to another shooting—''Do not think we're trying to copy anyone,'' they tell some future, unseen audience. ''We had the idea before the first one ever happened. Our

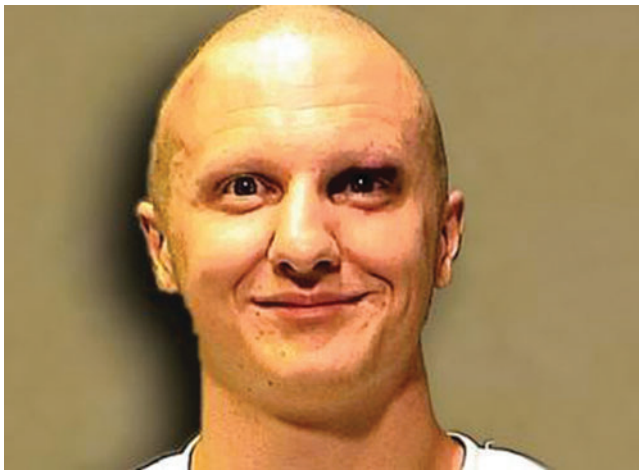

FIG. 7. Tucson Arizona shooter Jared Loughner during his police mug shot.

FIG. 8. Columbine shooters Harris and Klebold practicing one month prior to their attack.

plan is better, not like those fucks in Kentucky with camouflage and .22s. Those kids were only trying to be accepted by others.'' There was a shooting, the Johnson and Golden shooting in Arkansas in 1988, that seems to match the description, or perhaps they were referring to the Michael Carneal shooting in Kentucky that involved a .22 (Fig. 8) (Gibbs and Roche 1999; Gibbs et al. 1999; Glick et al. 1999; Pooley et al. 1999; Prendergast 2006).

5. On November 7, 2007, Pekka-Eric Auvinen entered Jokela High School armed with a .22 pistol. Prior to his attack, he posted a picture of himself online in a ''humanity is overrated'' t-shirt. He killed eight people (including the school nurse, who tried to treat some of the students). He poured two-stroke engine fuel (a gasoline and oil mixture) in the hallways on the walls and floor, but did not succeed in lighting it. He wounded one person in their toe before shooting himself in the head. Police confirmed that he was frequently bullied at school and was interested in philosophy. He had a history of taking antidepressant medication (Boyes 2007; Lyon 2007; Turula 2008).

Conclusion

Many of the shooting cases reviewed in this article demonstrate a desire on the part of the perpetrator to use dark popular culture imagery and the archetype of the Dark Knight, a vigilante set on seeking revenge for past wrongs, as factors associated with their attacks. Whether this is a causal relationship or natural correlation between the imagery in culture and the imagery co-opted by the killers is an area of further exploration that more systematic research might eventually support. The challenge here, of course, is doing this well given the infrequency of these events and the difficulty of understanding the killer's motivations because of the death of the attacker or the lack of publicized details due to ongoing court proceedings.

Dr. Peter Langman describes the challenges of studying these kinds of violent attacks and drawing definitive conclusions this way, ''First, the sample size is extraordinarily small. Second, the perpetrators sometimes kill themselves, which limits researchers to a retrospective review of the perpetrators' lives and/or interviews with people who knew the perpetrators. Third, in cases where the perpetrators are apprehended they are not available to be part of a standardized assessment or research project'' (Langman 2009, p. 1)

If cultural factors are indeed contributory to the violence cases discussed in this article, we face a difficult path ahead of us. The United States struggles with the balance between the rights of individuals and the rights of the community. For example, these concepts conflict when one person finds an image pornographic and contributing to the objectification of possible rape culture, while another finds the same image erotic and uses it with his or her consenting sexual partners. These concepts conflict when one person wishes to purchase a firearm for enjoyment, target practice, or self-defense, and another finds civilian ownership of firearms as an opportunity to harm others. The balance between the freedom of the individual and the safety of the community is often in conflict.

To conclude, we have explored several risk factors in this article that should be considered when identifying potential violence—costuming, misogyny, and objectification. It should fall to our law enforcement and behavioral international teams in educational settings to attend to individuals who seek to acquire tactical clothing and accessories, or engage in other behaviors that support (or begin to support) an image of themselves as a dark warrior. Likewise, the use of objectifying or misogynic language should draw our attention and demand further exploration by those responsible for preventing violence. Those who commit these horrific events often feel disempowered, a state over which they are attempting to regain control. Objectification of women is one means to that end.

The challenge becomes looking for costuming behavior amidst those who enjoy hunting, or engage in tactical shooting/roleplaying games with paintballs, airsoft guns, or live action role-play. The challenge becomes separating those who dislike women or use objectifying, depersonalized language yet have no plans to implement an attack. Calhoun and Weston's (2008) concept of Howlers versus Hunters is useful here. Those who are the loudest draw our attention while those carefully planning an attack work toward their ultimate goal. If you see similar behaviors outlined in this article occurring around campus or your workplace, we can only determine the true nature of the risk of these potential ''red flags'' through careful investigation and threat assessment.

Addressing these issues requires those in violence prevention to engage students, faculty, staff or workplace employees who may be planning violence, in order to assess for potential leakage. There is no substitute for a careful, research-based assessment of risk to better identify the risk factors and develop case management plans to reduce the risk of violence and increase the stabilizing factors in the aggressor's life. The structured professional judgment (Hart 2013; Hart and Logan, in press) model provides some useful starting strategies when it comes to assessing threat and leading at-risk individuals away from their potential violence.

Woodham epitomizes the desire, on the part of many of these mass killers, to be noticed and take revenge on a world

they believe has left them behind. He writes, ''It was not a cry for attention, it was not a cry for help. It was a scream in sheer agony saying that if I can't pry your eyes open, if I can't do it through pacifism, if I can't show you through displaying of intelligence, then I will do it with a bullet'' (Newman 2004).

We must attend to these individuals, whether they are screaming loudly or quietly gathering materials for an attack. We must remain aware of potential risk factors and coordinate an intervention that breaks down the information silos that are so prevalent in educational settings and mitigates the overall risk to the community.

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