



16 April 2020

## (U//FOUO) 25th Anniversary of Oklahoma City Bombing Highlights Persistent and Evolving Domestic Terrorism Threat

### (U) Scope

(U//FOUO) This *Joint Intelligence Bulletin (JIB)* is intended to highlight the upcoming 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing and provide information on the domestic violent extremist (DVE) threat environment in the United States.<sup>a</sup> The FBI, DHS, and NCTC advise federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government counterterrorism and law enforcement officials and private sector security partners to remain vigilant in light of the persistent threat posed by DVEs and their unpredictable target selection. This *JIB* is provided to assist federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial counterterrorism and law enforcement officials to effectively deter, prevent, preempt, or respond to incidents and terrorist attacks in the United States.

---

<sup>a</sup> (U//FOUO) FBI and DHS define a **domestic violent extremist (DVE)** as an individual based and operating primarily within the United States or its territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or other foreign power who seeks to further political or social goals wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute extremism, and may be constitutionally protected.

IA-43722-20

(U) **Warning:** This document is UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (U//FOUO). It contains information that may be exempt from public release under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552). It is to be controlled, stored, handled, transmitted, distributed, and disposed of in accordance with DHS and FBI policy relating to FOUO information and is not to be released to the public, the media, or other personnel who do not have a valid need to know without prior approval of an authorized DHS official. State and local homeland security officials may share this document with authorized critical infrastructure and key resource personnel and private sector security officials without further approval from DHS and FBI.

(U) **Warning:** This product contains US person information that has been deemed necessary for the intended recipient to understand, assess, or act on the information provided. It has been highlighted in this document with the label USPER and should be handled in accordance with the recipient's intelligence oversight and/or information handling procedures. Other US person information has been minimized. Should you require the minimized US person information on weekends or after normal weekday working hours for exigent and time sensitive circumstances, contact the Current and Emerging Threat Watch Office at 202-447-3688, CETC.OSCO@hq.dhs.gov. For all other inquiries, please contact the Homeland Security Single Point of Service, Request for Information Office at DHS-SPS-RFI@hq.dhs.gov, DHS-SPS-RFI@dhs.gov, DHS-SPS-RFI@dhs.ic.gov.

## (U//FOUO) Continued DVE Interest in Conducting Attacks 25 Years after Oklahoma City Bombing

(U//FOUO) The prevalence of lethal DVE attacks in the 25 years following the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City highlights the continued threat they pose. On 19 April 1995, the Oklahoma City bombing attack conducted by DVE Timothy McVeigh to advance his anti-government violent extremist ideology resulted in 168 deaths and several hundred injuries, making 1995 the most lethal year for DVE attacks.<sup>b</sup> In 2019, attacks by DVEs were responsible for at least 31 deaths—23 of which were linked to racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVEs) advocating for the superiority of the white race—making it the second most lethal year for DVE attacks.<sup>c</sup>

### (U) Drivers and Targets for DVEs Remain Similar but Continue to Evolve

(U//FOUO) While threats from DVEs have continued to evolve since the Oklahoma City bombing, many of their significant drivers have remained constant. These drivers include perceptions of government or law enforcement overreach, socio-political grievances, reactions to world events or legislation, such as immigration and firearms legislation, as well as associated anti-government violent extremist sentiment, and the perception of threats against those advocating for the superiority of the white race. The FBI, DHS, and NCTC assess racial minority groups, religious groups, law enforcement, and government personnel and facilities will likely continue to be targets for DVEs, who collectively pose a persistent threat of violence and economic harm to the United States. While decentralized DVE groups continue to exist, most lethal violence is conducted by lone offenders who are not directed by or affiliated with groups.<sup>d</sup> The current decentralized nature of DVE threats is also driven by the spread and consumption of ideological content—often First Amendment protected speech—which is shared across online platforms. DVEs also use these platforms to promote potentially radicalizing hate speech. There have been multiple instances in which DVEs in 2019 posted on such platforms prior to their attacks. Additionally, the FBI, DHS, and NCTC are concerned online sharing of livestreamed attack video footage could amplify viewer reaction to attacks and possibly incite similar attacks.

- » (U//FOUO) In February 2020, FBI investigations led to the arrests and pending trials of five members of Atomwaffen Division<sup>USPER</sup>, a Neo-Nazi RMVE group formed in approximately 2015, which has targeted racial minorities, the Jewish community, the LGBTQ community, the US government, journalists, and critical infrastructure. In January 2020, the FBI arrested seven members of “The Base”<sup>USPER</sup>, which emerged as a primarily online RMVE group in July

<sup>b</sup> (U//FOUO) FBI, DHS, and NCTC define **anti-government/anti-authority violent extremism** as threats encompassing the potentially unlawful use or threat of force or violence, in furtherance of political and/or social agendas, which are deemed to derive from anti-government or anti-authority sentiment, including opposition to perceived economic, social, or racial hierarchies; or perceived government overreach, negligence, or illegitimacy.

<sup>c</sup> (U//FOUO) FBI, DHS, and NCTC define **racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism (RMVE)** as threats involving the potentially unlawful use or threat of force or violence, in furtherance of political and/or social agendas, which are deemed to derive from bias—often related to race or ethnicity—held by the actor against others, including a given population group.

<sup>d</sup> (U//FOUO) FBI, DHS, and NCTC define a **lone offender** as an individual acting alone or without the witting support of others to further social or political goals, wholly or in part, through activities that involve unlawful acts of force or violence. Lone offenders may act within the context of recognized domestic violent extremist ideologies, their own interpretation of those ideologies, or personal beliefs. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute extremism, and may be constitutionally protected.

2018 with the objective of uniting members of like-minded groups worldwide, regardless of differing ideological nuances, to commit acts of violence against minorities and the US government to lead to a white ethno-state in the United States. The subjects are awaiting trial.

- » (U//FOUO) On 3 August 2019, Texas-based Patrick Crusius<sup>USPER</sup> allegedly killed 22 people in an attack using semi-automatic rifle at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, before surrendering to authorities. Crusius' manifesto included anti-immigration, anti-corporate, and ecofascist themes, according to open source reporting. He was indicted by a federal grand jury in February 2020.
- » (U//FOUO) In July 2019, now-deceased anarchist extremist Willem Van Spronsen set fire to the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington, and to a vehicle using incendiary devices, according to press reporting. Van Spronsen engaged responding Tacoma Police Department officers with a semi-automatic rifle and was killed during the encounter.
- » (U//FOUO) Similar to March 2019 New Zealand mosque attacker Brenton Tarrant—who also broadcast a livestream of his attack online—various DVEs have posted manifestos online shortly before conducting their attacks, including Crusius and the alleged April 2019 synagogue attacker in Poway, California.

### **(U//FOUO) Some DVEs Continue to Attempt Explosive Attacks**

(U//FOUO) In recent years, lethal DVE attacks have been primarily perpetrated by lone offenders or a few individuals acting without a clear group affiliation or guidance, primarily using firearms. Despite this, law enforcement continues to encounter and disrupt some DVEs intent on using or creating improvised explosive devices for an attack plot.

- » (U//FOUO) On 24 March 2020, the FBI disrupted Missouri-based Timothy Wilson's plot to attack a Missouri medical center using a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) in furtherance of his RMVE ideology. Wilson, now-deceased, cited the likely increased impact and media attention on the health sector during the coronavirus pandemic as a reason to accelerate the timing and selection of a healthcare facility.
- » (U//FOUO) On 23 March 2020, DVE Jerry Drake Varnell<sup>USPER</sup>, who espoused an anti-government violent extremist ideology, was sentenced to 25 years for attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction in downtown Oklahoma City in 2017. The FBI arrested Varnell in August 2017 after he attempted to detonate a 1,000-pound VBIED. The FBI received information Varnell initially wanted to blow up the Federal Reserve Building in Washington, DC, with a device similar to the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing device, due to his grievances with the government.
- » (U//FOUO) On 10 February 2020, Kansas City-based RMVE Jarret Smith<sup>USPER</sup> pled guilty to Distribution of Information Relating to Explosives, Destructive Devices, and Weapons of Mass Destruction. Smith was arrested on 21 September 2019 after an investigation revealed he was providing bomb making instructions and target tailored follow-up online. Smith is awaiting sentencing.

- » (U//FOUO) On 10 February 2020, Las Vegas-based RMVE Conor Climo<sup>USPER</sup> pled guilty to Possession of an Unregistered Firearm/Explosive Device. Climo was previously arrested on 8 August 2019, after the FBI executed a federal search warrant on Climo's residence, where firearms, explosive materials, and hand-drawn schematics were found. Climo is awaiting sentencing.

## (U) Outlook

(U//FOUO) The mass shooting attacks and violent hate crimes<sup>e</sup> perpetrated in the United States since January 2019 and the multiple disrupted plots thus far in 2020 underscore the continued threat by DVEs to select targets of opportunity or personal significance which are challenging for law enforcement to identify pre-attack. While most DVEs time attacks based on individualized operational readiness, some have sought to conduct attacks at times of personal or historical significance. We have no information indicating there is current attack plotting related to the Oklahoma City bombing anniversary. The FBI, DHS, and NCTC remain concerned that high-profile attacks utilizing explosives or firearms, coupled with effective messaging and calls to target specific minorities, groups, or institutions, may inspire individuals to conduct similar attacks or take retaliatory actions.

## (U) Indicators

(U//FOUO) Due to the highly personal nature of radicalization<sup>f</sup> and mobilization to violence, it is difficult to determine definite indicators that are indicative of DVEs' intent to commit violence at home or abroad. Some observed activities that may be suspicious may include constitutionally protected activity. No single indicator should be the sole basis for law enforcement action. Speech, actions, beliefs, appearances, or way of life does not, in and of itself, equate to a suspicious individual. These activities should not be reported absent articulable facts and circumstances that support the source agency's suspicion that the observed behavior is reasonably indicative of criminal activity associated with terrorism.

(U//FOUO) Absent a specific, actionable threat, the FBI, DHS, and NCTC are providing indicators to aid law enforcement and first responders in identifying and mitigating threats. The totality of behavioral indicators and other relevant circumstances should be evaluated when considering any law enforcement response or action. (Note: behaviors associated with the below indicators can include constitutionally protected activities. The FBI does not initiate any investigative activity based solely on the exercise of First Amendment activities or on the race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity of the subject, or a combination of only such factors.)

<sup>e</sup> (U//FOUO) The FBI defines a hate crime as a criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender's bias against a race, religion, ethnicity/national origin, disability, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. For purposes of this JIB, domestic violent extremists and US persons who perpetrate hate crimes are referred to as domestic actors.

<sup>f</sup> (U//FOUO) The FBI, DHS, and NCTC define radicalization as the process through which an individual changes from a nonviolent belief system to a belief system that includes the willingness to actively advocate, facilitate, or use unlawful violence as a method to affect societal or political change.

(U) *Possible indicators of pre-operational surveillance or attack planning include:*

- » (U//FOUO) Unusual or prolonged interest in or attempts to gain sensitive information about security measures of personnel, entry points, peak days and hours of operation, or access controls such as alarms or locks;
- » (U//FOUO) Unusual observation of security reaction drills or procedures without a reasonable alternative explanation, or multiple false alarms or fictitious emergency calls to the same locations or similar venues;
- » (U//FOUO) Discreet use of cameras or video recorders, sketching or note-taking consistent with pre-operational surveillance;
- » (U//FOUO) Unusual interest in speaking with building maintenance personnel without a reasonable alternative explanation;
- » (U//FOUO) Unusual observation of or questions about facility security measures, including barriers, restricted areas, cameras, and intrusion detection systems without a reasonable alternative explanation;
- » (U//FOUO) Unusual observations of or questions about facility air conditioning, heating, and ventilation systems without a reasonable alternative explanation;
- » (U//FOUO) Suspicious purchases of dual-use items which could be used to construct an explosive device, including hydrogen peroxide, acetone, gasoline, propane, or fertilizer;
- » (U//FOUO) Suspicious activities in storage facilities or other areas which could be used to construct an explosive device;
- » (U//FOUO) Attempted or actual unauthorized access to rooftops or other potentially sensitive areas;
- » (U//FOUO) Unusual or bulky clothing that is inconsistent with the weather; and
- » (U//FOUO) Theft of private security, law enforcement, or first responder uniforms and/or equipment.

### **(U) Suggested Protective Measures**

(U//FOUO) We encourage state and local law enforcement, as well as security personnel, to conduct a risk assessment and consider the following protective measures:

- » (U//FOUO) Report suspicious activity to proper authorities, to include missing or stolen weapons;
- » (U//FOUO) Install secure locks and protection on all external and internal doors and windows with quick-release capability from within for emergency and fire escape;

- » (U//FOUO) Train security personnel to watch for suspicious or unattended vehicles on or near facilities; watch for repeated visitors or outsiders who have no apparent business in non-public areas; watch for abandoned parcels, suitcases, backpacks, and packages and any unusual activities;
- » (U//FOUO) Consider establishing safe areas within the facility for assembly and refuge during crises;
- » (U//FOUO) Consider installing closed-circuit television systems, intruder detection systems, and lighting to cover key areas;
- » (U//FOUO) Ensure that emergency communications equipment is present and operable. Practice emergency communications plans and systems;
- » (U//FOUO) Ensure personnel receive training on active shooter, improvised explosive device (IED), and threat awareness, emergency communication, response actions, and reporting of suspicious activity; and be vigilant of secondary devices, specifically at anticipated evacuation routes.

### (U) Related Products

(U//FOUO) A recent product may provide additional context on the threats to the Homeland referenced in this JIB. All products listed are available on HSIN:

- » (U//FOUO) “Disruption of a Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremist’s Plot to Attack a Missouri Medical Center” (*Joint Intelligence Bulletin*, published 30 March 2020)

#### (U) Report Suspicious Activity

**(U) To report suspicious activity, law enforcement, Fire-EMS, private security personnel, and emergency managers should follow established protocols; all other personnel should call 911 or contact local law enforcement.** Suspicious activity reports (SARs) will be forwarded to the appropriate fusion center and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for further action. For more information on the Nationwide SAR Initiative, visit <http://nsi.ncirc.gov/resources.aspx>.

#### (U) Administrative Note: Law Enforcement Response

(U//FOUO) Information contained in this intelligence bulletin is for official use only. No portion of this bulletin should be released to the media, the general public, or over nonsecure Internet servers. Release of this material could adversely affect or jeopardize investigative activities.

(U) For comments or questions related to the content or dissemination of this document, please contact the Counterterrorism Analysis Section by e-mail at [FBI\\_CTAS@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:FBI_CTAS@ic.fbi.gov).

**(U) Tracked by:** HSEC-8.1, HSEC-8.2, HSEC-8.3, HSEC-8.5, HSEC-8.8

Product Title: 

All survey responses are completely anonymous. No personally identifiable information is captured unless you voluntarily offer personal or contact information in any of the comment fields. Additionally, your responses are combined with those of many others and summarized in a report to further protect your anonymity.

1. Please select partner type: \_\_\_\_\_ and function: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the highest level of intelligence information that you receive?

3. Please complete the following sentence: "I focus most of my time on:"

4. Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following:

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A
Product's overall usefulness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product's relevance to your mission	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product's timeliness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product's responsiveness to your intelligence needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. How do you plan to use this product in support of your mission? (Check all that apply.)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drive planning and preparedness efforts, training, and/or emergency response operations | <input type="checkbox"/> Initiate a law enforcement investigation       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Observe, identify, and/or disrupt threats   | <input type="checkbox"/> Initiate your own regional-specific analysis   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share with partners   | <input type="checkbox"/> Initiate your own topic-specific analysis      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allocate resources (e.g. equipment and personnel)                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Develop long-term homeland security strategies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reprioritize organizational focus   | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not plan to use                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Author or adjust policies and guidelines  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="text"/>                    |

6. To further understand your response to question #5, please provide specific details about situations in which you might use this product.

7. What did this product not address that you anticipated it would?

8. To what extent do you agree with the following two statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
This product will enable me to make better decisions regarding this topic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This product provided me with intelligence information I did not find elsewhere.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. How did you obtain this product?

10. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up conversation about your feedback?

To help us understand more about your organization so we can better tailor future products, please provide:

Name:   
 Organization:   
 Contact Number:

Position:   
 State:   
 Email:

**Submit Feedback**

[Privacy Act Statement](#)