

What method of attack was used?

Firearms were used most often (54 percent, $n = 148$), followed by knives/bladed weapons (21 percent, $n = 57$), a combination of weapons/methods (10 percent, $n = 26$), and strangulation either manually or with an implement (5 percent, $n = 14$). Of those incidents in which a combination of methods was used, most targets were strangled and stabbed. The remaining 27 incidents (10 percent) involved a blunt object, firebomb/incendiary/arson, explosives, poison, a vehicle, or a physical assault without a weapon.

Whom did the subjects harm?

Across all 272 incidents, the subjects caused 281 deaths and injured 247 individuals. Of the deaths, at least 190 were students and at least 72 were employees. Of the injured, at least 144 were students and at least 35 were employees. Not included in these numbers are the subjects themselves who were injured or killed either during or following the incident. In 26 percent ($n = 71$) of the incidents, the subject died of a self-inflicted injury incurred during implementation of the assault or within hours or days of the incident. In 4 percent of the incidents ($n = 11$), the subject survived his self-inflicted injuries and in an additional 4 percent of the incidents ($n = 10$), the subject was killed by law enforcement during or immediately following the assault.

QUALITATIVE OBSERVATIONS

Key elements of a thorough threat assessment include such items as the subject's motive and goal in carrying out an attack, triggering life events, target selection, and/or prior concerning or threatening behavior. These elements are at times difficult to discern due to the availability of information and subjectivity of their interpretation. Information related to these elements is particularly difficult to gather from open-sources, which do not always contain complete and accurate reporting.

Efforts were made to gather as much information as possible to provide an initial description of the motives and triggers, targeting, and pre-incident behaviors of concern. When the information was reported, judgments were made as to its completeness and apparent accuracy. A more in-depth analysis of each of these elements would require additional data other than what is available through open-source.

What factors motivated or triggered the attacks?

Generally, several categories were observed among the incidents regarding the factors that may have played a role in the subjects' decision to carry out the directed assault. These factors fall broadly within areas related to personal relations, academic performance, workplace issues, and/or individual stressors (see Table 7; for definitions, see Appendix C). Although it was recognized that multiple factors may have motivated or triggered the offenders' violent acts, efforts were made to identify the most prominent ones and the incidents were categorized accordingly. In 17 percent ($n = 45$) of the cases, either the motivating and/or triggering factors were completely unknown or they were less apparent as various factors specific to the subject and his/her environment appeared to influence the decision to engage in the violent behavior. Those incidents in which the motive and/or trigger was not apparent were excluded from Table 7.

Table 7: Factors that Motivated or Triggered the Directed Assaults

Categories	$n =$	%
Related to an Intimate Relationship	77	33.9
Retaliation for Specific Action(s)	31	13.7
Refused Advances or Obsession with the Target	23	10.1
Response to Academic Stress/Failure	23	10.1
Acquaintance/Stranger Based Sexual Violence	22	9.7
Psychotic Actions	18	7.9
Workplace Dismissal/Sanction	14	6.2
Need to Kill / Specific Victimology	7	3.1
Draw Attention to Self/Issue(s)	7	3.1
Bias Related	5	2.2
Total	227	100

As noted in Table 7, the most prevalent category identified related to current or former personal relationships between the subject and victim, followed by retaliation for specific actions. Future research should examine primary source materials, which may offer more insight into the underlying motives and triggers related to these incidents.

How did target selection compare with the actual victims?

Regarding the subject's apparent targeting and scope of his or her victims, efforts were made to distinguish those subjects who had specific targets from those who did not, and then designate whether the actual victims who were injured or killed appeared to be the intended victims. Various items were taken into account when determining targeting, including the subject, the setting in which the subject was functioning, the context of the situation with which he or she was faced (e.g., relationship breakup, academic or work suspension, imminent or actual academic failure, loss of job, or delusions), and the subject's relationship to the target (e.g., current or former intimate partner, co-worker, professor, classmate, stranger). Additionally, consideration was given to the subject's reported actions before, during, and after the attack. Specific examples of factors considered in the decision-making process include the following:

- indications of planning,
- method and manner of the attack,
- travel by the subject to a locale where a specific person's presence could reasonably be anticipated,
- apparent triggering event,
- admissions of intent or other communications by the subject reported before, during, and/or after the incident, and
- the nature of the subject's relationship with the victim(s) prior to the attack.

Targeting: Specifically Named Individuals

In nearly three-quarters of the incidents (73 percent, $n = 198$), subjects targeted one or more specifically named individuals. From context, their target selections appeared closely related to triggering events (e.g., romantic breakup, an academic or workplace failure, or a dispute), and, more often than not, were limited to the person or persons whom the subject may have blamed for causing the event. In a small fraction of these cases (2 percent, $n = 6$), there was also some indication that the subjects intended to harm one or more random persons beyond the individuals they blamed. An example of the latter situation includes the following incident:

On April 17, 1981, upset over failing grades and a possible second academic dismissal from the IHE, a 22-year-old student tossed a firebomb into the hallway of a dormitory and opened fire with a sawed-off shotgun as the occupants evacuated. Two students were killed. When police searched the subject's room, they found a gas mask, a second gun, and more than 100 shotgun shells as well as a notepad containing the name of one of the victims in the case. According to reports, this led police to believe that among the subject's random targets, there was at least one specific target whom the subject intended to harm.

In over three-quarters of the incidents where specific individuals were targeted, these individuals were the only ones harmed (79 percent, $n = 156$). In the remaining cases ($n = 42$), the casualties