The FBI’s Behavioral Threat Assessment Center (BTAC), Behavioral Analysis Unit 1 (BAU-1), Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG), offers the following general list of targeted violence tripwires and warning signs of which law enforcement should be aware. This list is not necessarily exclusive, and other behaviors of concern may be observable to investigators.

### Administrative

(U) This product was prepared by members of BTAC. Observations, opinions, and suggestions contained herein are the result of the knowledge drawn from the personal investigative experience, educational background, specialized training, and research conducted by members of BTAC and others. This list and any analysis drawn from it are not substitutes for a thorough, well-planned multidisciplinary threat assessment.

(U) The investigative and operational recommendations herein may assist identifying possible areas of interest associated with escalation or imminence; they are neither intended nor suitable for inclusion in an evidentiary or testimonial document. This document may not be disseminated outside your agency without authorization by BTAC.

### Warning Signs and Tripwires

(U//FOUO) Many offenders who engage in targeted violence may display certain pre-attack behaviors. These behaviors may be observable to persons familiar with the offender, and investigators should keep these in mind during encounters with a person of concern. Some of these behaviors may include:

- **(U) Statements or behaviors suggesting suicidality, homicidality or end of life planning.** Themes of these statements may be, revenge for a perceived injury or grievance; quest for justice (as defined by the offender); desire for notoriety or recognition; desire to solve a problem perceived to be unbearable; or a desire to kill or be killed.
- **(U) Fixation or increased preoccupation with another person, activity, or idea.**
- **(U) Signs of research, planning, and preparation which are contextually inappropriate in the subject's everyday life.** For example, online research, study of former offenders, site security and surveillance, and reconnaissance.
- **(U) Recent acquisition of weapons, ammunition, personal protective gear and tactical clothing, or other items related to a potential attack, which is a departure from the individual’s normal patterns; recent escalation in target practice and weapons training may also be a concern if the individual previously owned weapons and ammunition.**
- **(U) Recent interest in explosive devices, or acquisition of components that may be used in the construction of an improvised explosive device.**
- **(U) Contextually inappropriate intense interest in or fascination with previous active shootings or mass attacks.** This may include identification with known perpetrators of violence, particularly mass violence.

(U) Warning behaviors are changes in patterns of behavior that may be evidence of increasing or accelerating risk.
• (U) Contextually inappropriate drastic changes in appearance such as a shaved head, recent addition of large or multiple tattoos, contextually inappropriate law enforcement or military costuming, sudden weight loss or gain, cessation of hygiene or suddenly unkempt appearance.

• (U) Sudden change in pattern of life, such as retreating to temporary quarters, absence from work without explanation, failing to appear for appointments that are normally kept, increase/decrease in use of social media or other forms of communication, etc.

• (U) Sudden increase/decrease in usage of prescribed medications or other substances.

• (U) Sudden onset of reckless sexual, financial or other behaviors that may suggest a lack of concern for future consequences.

• (U) Preparation of “statement” or farewell writings, to include manifestos, videos, notes, internet blogs, or emails.

• (U) End of life planning, to include communications or actions indicating increasing desperation or distress, or that the person of concern perceives no alternatives to violence.

• (U) Recent and significant personal loss or humiliation, whether real or simply perceived, such as a death, breakup, divorce, or loss of a job, status or self-image.

• (U) Recent acts of novel or experimental aggression including trespass, animal cruelty, assault, firearm discharge, arson or bombing, rehearsed violence with inanimate objects fantasized to be human targets, or even vandalism.

• (U) Any effort to physically approach an apparent target or close associates, evidence of items left for the target to find even if they appear benign (such as flowers), evidence of surveillance without approach, or attempts to breach or circumvent security measures.

• (U) Direct or indirect communications or threats using multiple methods of delivery, such as email, facsimile, hand-delivery, text-message, online videos or posts, etc., escalating in frequency or intensity, or which demonstrate that surveillance of the potential target has occurred.

(U) Leakage: Communication, expressions, or memorializations which do not directly threaten but otherwise reveal clues related to a person’s feelings, aspirations, intentions, or plans about committing violence.

(U) The FBI’s Behavioral Threat Assessment Center (BTAC) is a national-level, multi-agency, multi-disciplinary Task Force focused on the prevention of terrorism and targeted violence through the application of behaviorally-based operational support, training and research. In this unique capacity, the BTAC provides investigative and operational support for the FBI’s most complex, concerning, and complicated international and domestic terrorism investigations. In addition, the BTAC provides threat assessment and threat management support to federal, state, local, tribal and campus law enforcement partners, as well as community stakeholders, working diligently across the United States on targeted violence prevention. Significant lines of effort on targeted violence prevention include persons/adults of concern, potential active shooters, school shootings/threats, stalking and workplace violence. The BTAC’s extensive and broad-ranging capabilities are enhanced through a cadre of BAU coordinators assigned to all 56 field offices across the United States.

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