



NYC Stabbing Was Act of Domestic Terror – A 66-year-old man collecting bottles on a Hell’s Kitchen street last week was fatally stabbed with a sword simply because he was black, according to a man who turned himself in for the crime. Prosecutors indicted James Harris Jackson, a 28-year-old former Army intelligence analyst, on rare state charges of murder as terrorism, as he confessed that he stalked and targeted black men, and that he intended to kill many more in nearby Times Square in order to send a message against interracial relationships. Jackson told a reporter that he had been thinking about carrying out some type of race-based attack for years, and travelled from Baltimore to New York to execute the planned attacks in Times Square because NYC is the “media capital of the world.”



26-inch Sword Used in Fatal Stabbing

Assessment: Racial attacks are a leading motivation for domestic terror, such as the killings at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C. in 2015, in where the killer sought to “ignite a race war.” According to one [report](#), by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at Cal State University, San Bernardino, hate crimes rose 13 percent in 2016 in 15 major regions. The killing and plot in this Manhattan case highlight the continued desire to commit acts of terror for its perceived importance on the world stage. Times Square will continue to be perceived as the nation’s primary stage, and not just for New Year’s Eve.

School Plots Uncovered in Maryland, New Jersey – An 18-year-old female honors student stockpiled weapons and planned to execute a “Columbine-style” attack on her Maryland high school on April 5th, according to the Frederick County sheriff, who said the young adult’s arrest “averted disaster.” Police discovered a shotgun with ammunition, and materials for making pipe bombs in her house, as well as a journal which detailed her plans for the attack. Also, in New Jersey this week, two high school students—one male and one female—were arrested and charged with making terrorist threats after it was discovered that they had made a “kill list” and had planned a “Sandy Hook-style attack” on their former elementary school; no weapons were found when their homes were searched. The arrests come a week after a student at another N.J. high school was questioned about a “kill list” and bomb threat.

Assessment: While school shootings seem to come irregularly, plots, whether merely aspirational or moving toward operational, are much more common, as proven with recent cases. Given the potential, every threat must be reported and investigated. Responders should avoid complacency in this area of preparedness, as the threat is perpetual. The DHS “Active Shooter Preparedness” [webpage](#) provides links, by category, for citizens, security professionals, workshops and responders. For school staff and responders, the salient question is whether evacuation or shelter-in-place in most appropriate. Those answers are not clear cut and will depend on many factors, such as status of the shooter(s), security presence, etc.

Terrorists, Gangs Linked to ‘Parallel Economy’ – A Washington, D.C.-based think tank has released a report stating that [oil theft](#) is financing a variety of terrorist groups and drug cartels from around the world. For example, insurgents (likely referring to Boko Haram) are profiting from the third of Nigeria’s oil that is lost to theft. Also, Mexican drug gangs, primarily Los Zetas cartel, control 40 percent of the illegal oil market in Mexico. The problem has reached Europe, which lost an estimated \$1 billion in revenue from illegal petroleum shipments from Libya, the country with the largest oil reserves in Africa. As part of an investigation into the Brussels 2016 attacks, a minister in Belgium said that terrorist cells are connected to criminal networks in a “[parallel economy](#),” allowing terrorists a support a system that can go undetected, citing the Molebeek neighborhood of the capital.

Assessment: Besides the movement of goods, the finance sector is another important, and busy, front against terrorism. In the past few days, several banking-related actions have been carried out by various countries: the U.S. Treasury Department has imposed sanctions [against](#) a Kuwait-based financier for al-Nusrah Front and al Qaeda; for the first time, Qatar Central Bank has [issued instructions](#) against money laundering; a company in Australia was hit with a \$90 million penalty for failing to adhere to anti-money-laundering laws; the U.K. is setting up a [tougher](#) money laundering watchdog; and, and Indonesia announced during a meeting of G20 finance ministers, regarding investment and trade in Africa, that it is [seeking](#) nation-state support for its “Financial Action Task Force (FATF).” (Assessment links sourced from NYSIC’s banking, finance open source review.)



Fire Adds to Chaos during Monte Carlo Heist – A trio of armed robbers stormed the Cartier jewelry store in Monte Carlo and were involved in a shootout with police as they attempted to make their getaway while the fire set to their “getaway” car raged in a nearby tunnel. It is unclear in the reporting whether the fire was set prior to the heist as a distraction, or as the robbers fled police, but it added to the mayhem as the city center went into lockdown, the casino shut and shopkeepers pulled their security gates as shots rang out. About ten hours earlier, another armed robbery by four masked men took place at a high-end jewelry store in the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, also creating a chaotic scene and terrifying tourists.

Assessment: Responding firefighters and EMS should be alert to dispatch information as well as other sources of situational awareness, as demonstrated in the car fire tangent to the armed robbery. For example, dispatch location may give a clue, as in both of these armed robberies, occurring in high-end casino jewelry stores. Also, be alert to additional resource needs, including those involving civilian injuries and safety. As the saying goes, “avoid tunnel-vision,” such as, in this case, a car fire in the tunnel.

Parliament Attacker Used WhatsApp Two Minutes before Rampage – Khalid Masood is certainly not the first terrorist to use the encrypted text phone application WhatsApp, which was linked to the Paris and San Bernardino attacks in 2015, among others, but this latest assault has brought renewed concerns to police, security and intelligence professionals on how to track suspected terrorists. The parliament attacker used WhatsApp [two minutes](#) before his driving rampage and stabbing death of a police officer, which leads to more questions on whether or not he was directed by remote handlers. The British government has asked tech firms to figure out a way to give security services better access to encrypted texts and other media.

Assessment: During the investigation of the San Bernardino attack, Apple Inc. refused a request from the FBI to unlock one of the attacker’s iPhones, which was eventually cracked with special software that cost the government \$1 million. Just over a year ago, during the Brussels attacks, problems with emergency service communications [forced](#) some police officers to use WhatsApp to communicate. “Orders were not received and no one knew what was being done,” one officer said. “Fortunately, WhatsApp was still working. Without the app we wouldn’t have been able to communicate at all.” During any large-scale emergency, responders can expect that cellular towers will be overwhelmed by calls and texts from the public. FCC’s Wireless Priority Service ([WPS](#)) may be one option.

Picture Doesn’t Look Rosy for One Crayola Color – Crayola has chosen National Crayon Day (March 31) [to announce](#) which color from its 24-pack of crayons it will retire, the first such a change in a century. The most basic colors in the visible-light spectrum are likely safe, but odds are that some of the more obscure offerings may be out, such as dandelion, apricot or cerulean. The announcement will be made in Times Square, which many see as a media and cultural capital (see top story above). The public has not sat silent as #Shareyourfave and #whosleaving are trending in social media.



Assessment: How agencies deal with obsolete components is a challenge in the face of institutional memory and member apprehension. Many innovations in emergency response were first seen as disruptive, such as SCBAs, bunker gear, thermal-imaging cameras, medical gloves, and the slow shift to electronic reporting, or even procedural changes related to ventilation and air pressurization at certain fires. A century ago, a tectonic change in the fire service was the transition from horse-drawn apparatus to motorized fire trucks and engines; after great resistance, the durability and cost of mechanization won out. Identifying today’s equivalent of horse-drawn steam pumpers, whether in equipment or procedures, will help propel an organization into the future.

Watchline@fdny.nyc.gov - (718) 281-8399