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2021 - TSAS Working Paper

“One-man war”:

A History of Lone-actor Terrorism in Canada, 1868- 2018

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The Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security, and Society (TSAS) publishes evidence-based, policy-relevant scholarly analyses on topics related to terrorism, security, and society, broadly defined, that touch on Canada, Canadian issues in comparative context, or global issues of interest to a Canadian audience. They are approximately 5000-8000 words in length, and published in an open-access, digital format, on the TSAS website. Working Papers are written with substantial rigour and depth across-disciplinary audience of scholars, policy makers, and practitioners interested in aspects of terrorism, security, and countering violent extremism. They reflect work in progress, however, which may be published later as more refined academic articles or book chapters.

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Introduction

Lone-actor terrorism is not a twenty-first-century phenomenon.² In a Canadian and international context, lone-actor terrorism has existed since at least the nineteenth century, although its historical occurrences remain surprisingly unexamined. The practice itself went formally unnamed until the late twentieth century, when the label of “lone wolf” or “lone actor” began to be applied. The former term, which first emerged in the American law enforcement community in the 1980s to describe growing turns to violence by the far right, particularly through “leaderless resistance” tactics, is now increasingly shunned.³

Since 11 September 2001 (9/11), there have been several high-profile mass casualty lone-actor terrorist attacks in France, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom, the United States and other countries.⁴ Canada experienced a well-publicized attack in 2014 when an individual carried out attacks at the National War Memorial and Parliament buildings, and another in 2017 against worshippers at a mosque in Quebec City. These assaults in the present, combined with the publicity surrounding them in an age of social media and 24-hour news channels, have perhaps contributed to a lack of exploration of the historical dimension of lone-actor terrorism. With the exception of one academic article focusing on anarchist lone-actor terrorism, little scholarly attention has been paid to such violence in the longer past.⁵ Taking an historical approach in a field dominated by social scientists has much to offer, in particular during an era when, as Marc Sageman argues, there is difficulty in accessing records in the present because of restrictions by security agencies. This scarcity, along with other factors, have led, he controversially suggests, to a “stagnation” in terrorism research and to work heavily dependent on theory but limited in terms of evidence.⁶

Using primary source material obtained through archives and other open sources, this working paper examines, through a series of qualitative case studies, nineteen lone-actor terrorist attacks that occurred in



Canada across a 150-year period, specifically between 1868 and 2018. The next section addresses methodological issues, including in connection to definitions. That is followed by an historical overview of lone-actor terrorism in which the nineteen case studies are introduced (full details appear in the appendix). Finally, focusing on commonalities of the attacks and the backgrounds of the perpetrators, along with their motivations and tactics, techniques and procedures, analysis is provided, including through the use of templates from other work on lone-actor terrorism.⁷

This working paper is significant for two reasons. First, it historicizes lone-actor terrorism as a practice and shows that it is not a contemporary phenomenon, even if there has been a greater prevalence of such attacks since 9/11.⁸ By applying a *longue durée* to lone-actor terrorism, the paper reveals that a range of motivations have sparked violence over the 150 years examined and that no single explanation accounts for such an outcome, let alone simple “individual life stories.”⁹ The paper supports sociologist Ramón Spaaij’s contention that the violent extremism of lone-actor terrorists “tends to result from a combination of individual processes, interpersonal relations and socio-political and cultural circumstances.”¹⁰ More significantly, by deploying a longer temporal exploration of lone-actor terrorism, the paper illustrates that violent actors emerge from a variety of communities and backgrounds. This decentring of the present counters the dangers of a short-term approach in which marginalized groups face overrepresentation among perpetrators, consequently fuelling wider political discourses that encourage discrimination and the securitization of “suspect communities.”¹¹

Ultimately, however, the paper argues that one key variable connects eighteen of the nineteen attacks: the perpetrators were men. Normally, when gender emerges as a point of discussion in relation to terrorism it is because a woman or women have been involved. Indeed, in 2014, Public Safety Canada publicly requested proposals related to “[r]esearch into gender dynamics in radicalization to violence and in



countering violent extremism.” The details supplied with the call for proposals made it clear that “gender” did not apply to the vast majority of violent extremists who are, in reality, men:

The general objectives of this research project are:

- to better understand why and under what circumstances women are recruited and the extent to which they become involved in violent extremist movements
- to shed more light on women’s roles in preventing and countering violent extremism in their communities, along with the kinds of support that are important for those looking to play such roles.¹²

According to Michael Kimmel, such an approach represents the “man bites dog” phenomenon, in which only a departure from the normal is considered noteworthy. This has often led to a lack of consideration of the overrepresentation of men in the ranks of terrorists:

It can be easy to shrug off this remarkably skewed gender difference with a bemused eye-rolling nod toward biology. Boys will be boys, right? Man-the-hunter avatars, cavemen in caftans or cargo pants, biologically predisposed toward violent rapacious predation, their eyes glazed over with testosterone-fueled rage. Except that only a tiny fraction of young males, driven by their endocrine systems or their evolutionary imperative, ever remotely consider such extremist violence. Those 99+ percent—are they not men? If we do acknowledge something about the prevalence of men—as men—we’re pretty quick to change the subject. It’s psychological trauma. Political disenfranchisement. Downward economic mobility. Gradual irrelevance in a globalizing world. Religion.¹³

Although this paper does not argue that masculinities as a social construct led directly to the attacks discussed, it proposes that there is some correlation between certain masculinities and lone-actor terrorism, specifically when extreme violence is viewed as an acceptable reply to an intersection of personal and societal grievances. This relationship needs additional and urgent attention, not only by academics, but by politicians, the media and security agencies as well.

There is no question of the significance of lone-actor terrorism in Canada. Since the 1985 Air India bombing, every terrorism-related death in Canada has been the result of lone-actor attacks. Terrorist plots in Canada, such as the Toronto 18, have existed, but such efforts have failed to cause carnage.¹⁴ In turn, as this



paper shows (see Table 1), the death toll from far-right lone-actor terrorism, particularly when misogyny-motivated violence is included, has been considerably higher than through faith-claimed terrorism by Islamists.¹⁵ As Barbara Perry and Ryan Scrivens note, there is a tendency to see lone-actor terrorism differently depending on the motivation and background of the perpetrator.¹⁶ The complexities associated with attacks and attackers in Canada and elsewhere, in the past and present, should encourage a more nuanced debate among the media, politicians and the public as to the complications around terrorism in twenty-first-century Canada.¹⁷

Methodology

This paper is primarily a qualitative work of history, based on primary sources from Library and Archives Canada and other available open sources. It offers detailed case studies of individual attackers and attacks in a methodological style that represents what historian Graham Macklin labels a “collective biographical approach,” although one grounded within the wider social context.¹⁸ Regrettably, in the study of terrorism, there is a dearth of historical studies.¹⁹ The result is that the methods and approaches of some disciplines become viewed as the norm. This imbalance has fuelled or reinforced critiques of terrorism studies, particularly from advocates of critical terrorism studies, who caution that “much terrorism research tends towards ahistoricity and acontextuality.”²⁰ Others echo these concerns. In *Terrorism: A History*, Randall D. Law warns:

the domination of any field of interest by any one discipline produces certain distorting effects. The study of terrorism is an excellent case in point. “Terrorism studies” within academia and the broader debates about terrorism and counter-terrorism raging in our society today have been dominated by social scientists, journalists, policy experts, and political pundits.²¹

He attributes this “domination” to the post-Cold War and 9/11 period, when terrorism came to be viewed as a contemporary issue, combined with historians avoiding examining the extensive history of the topic because the scale is too ambitious.²²



Then there are the definitional issues inherent in the field. For the purposes of this working paper, terrorism is defined as ideologically and/or politically motivated—and this could include via religion or racism or misogyny—violence or the threat of violence by non-state actors (in contrast to state terrorism) against non-combatants.²³ Lone-actor terrorism is also not exempt from controversy around definitions. Despite the prevalence of references to lone-actor terrorism and lone-wolf terrorism in media and political discourses since 9/11, there is no agreed definition as to what constitutes such practices.²⁴ Some research avoids the definitional question and examines instances of lone-actor terrorism in practice.²⁵ Other scholarship provides multiple categories of lone-actor terrorists, including lone-actor terrorists who operate in pairs or small groups, or defines it so broadly that conceivably a bank robber involved in violence for the sake of financial gain might be included within the realm of lone-actor terrorism.²⁶ To counter any tendency to expand the concept and move beyond the key category of “lone,” this working paper is based on a narrow definition of lone-actor terrorists, drawn from the work of Spaaij. He argues that they “(a) operate individually, (b) do not belong to an organized terrorist group or network, and (c) their *modi operandi* are conceived and directed by the individual without any direct outside command or hierarchy.”²⁷ Such a definition does not in any way suggest, as some in the media have, that these individuals emerge out of an intellectual and/or cultural vacuum (although the ideological foundations for some attacks are clearer than for others) instead of from an existing milieu, such as a society where racism or misogyny is widespread.²⁸ There may also be “enablers” who assist lone-actor terrorists “unwittingly...in planning attacks or indirectly [by providing] inspiration for terrorism.”²⁹

Using the Spaaij definition of lone-actor terrorism, nineteen attacks in Canada between 1868 and 2018 were identified through a search of newspapers, the Global Terrorism Database, and existing scholarship on the history of violence and/or terrorism in Canada.³⁰ These are cases where the attacker’s motivation for the



violence matched with the definition of terrorism offered earlier in the paper and where that rationale became apparent either before or after the incident.³¹ There are additional implications pertaining to one of the nineteen attackers. This individual carried out an attack that was described by the trial judge as having been “motivated by...radical religious and ideological beliefs.” However, the judge found him not guilty of terrorism offences because of definitional issues in Canadian law in relation to lone-actor terrorists and not criminally responsible because of “mental disorder.”³² Finally, this paper makes no claim to have produced a definitive list of lone-actor terrorist attacks in Canadian history because the definitional issues around the concept make such a task impossible.

A (Brief) History of Lone-Actor Terrorism

Lone-actor terrorism dates from at least the latter half of the nineteenth century, when anarchists repeatedly launched lone-actor attacks that continued into the first two decades of the next century. Johann Most, a journalist, politician and anarchist theorist and revolutionary, was an early proponent of the tactic. Exiled from Germany because of his radical politics, Most spent time in France and the United Kingdom before being imprisoned in the latter, in 1881, when he wrote a piece supporting the recent assassination of Tsar Alexander II. Upon his release, he left for the United States, where he quickly immersed himself in anarchist politics.³³ Here, in 1883, he published one of his most famous works, *Revolutionäre Kriegswissenschaft: Eine Handbüchlein zur Anleitung Betreffend Gebrauches und Herstellung von Nitro-Glycerin, Dynamit, Schiessbaumwolle, Knallquecksilber, Bomben, Brandsätzen, Giften usw., usw* (or *The Science of Revolutionary Warfare: A Little Handbook of Instruction in the Use and Preparation of Nitroglycerine, Dynamite, Gun-Cotton, Fulminating Mercury, Bombs, Fuses, Poisons, Etc., Etc*).³⁴ In the publication, Most encourages lone-actor terrorism: “If you want to carry out a revolutionary act, don’t talk to others about it first—go ahead and do it!



Only in cases where second and third persons are needed to carry out an operation should you proceed to contact them.”³⁵

Not necessarily because of Most’s exhortation, anarchists in the United States and Europe carried out a series of lone-actor terrorist attacks from the 1880s onward. Arguably, the most famous lone-actor terrorist attack of the era occurred in 1901 in Buffalo, New York, when Leon Czolgosz, an anarchist adherent, although not a member of a terrorist cell, shot President William McKinley twice. McKinley later died from his wounds. As in the twenty-first century, states found lone-actor terrorism difficult to counter, with the most successful responses combining the deployment of greater resources into police and intelligence agencies and the hardening of targets through better protection of high-profile individuals besieged by anarchists.³⁶

By the time Most had written his handbook, the first lone-actor terrorist attack in Canadian history had already occurred.³⁷ On 7 April 1868, on Sparks Street in downtown Ottawa, Patrick Whelan shot and killed Irish-Canadian politician Thomas D’Arcy McGee. McGee had apparently been targeted because he opposed the Fenian movement that sought to liberate Ireland from British control.³⁸ Despite denying involvement in McGee’s murder, Whelan was convicted of the crime and executed. In turn, Fenian organizations disavowed any involvement in the attack. Whelan would fit the profile of many future attackers: a male in his late twenties who had drifted through life.³⁹

Whelan’s attack resembled the next two lone-actor terrorist attacks in that all three were politically motivated attacks on individuals.⁴⁰ The second of the three occurred in the Vancouver courthouse in October 1914, when Bhai Mewa Singh Ji, a Sikh immigrant to Canada, shot and killed William C. Hopkinson, an immigration official and intelligence agent who had a long career involving surveillance of Sikhs and other South Asians. A few weeks earlier, one of Hopkinson’s informants had shot and killed two Sikhs. The wider environment was one of racist hostility toward South Asians, including Sikhs. Earlier in 1914, the *Komagata*



Maru, a ship carrying several hundred South Asian immigrants, including more than 300 Sikhs, had not been allowed to land in Vancouver because of White public and political protests. Ultimately, the ship and its passengers, with the exception of two dozen people, were forced to sail for India, where 20 of the Sikh passengers were killed in clashes with the police.⁴¹ At the time of the October attack, the assailant, Mewa Singh, readily admitted his guilt, for which he would be convicted and executed, and offered a justification for his act:

I shot Mr. Hopkinson out of honour and principle to my fellowmen and for my religion. I could not bear to see these troubles go on any longer. You as Christians would you think there was any more good left in your Church if you saw people shot down and killed in it. And you could not put up with it because it would be bringing yourselves to a nation that is dead to tolerate such conduct, and it is better for a Sikh to die than to bring such disgrace and ill-treatment in the Temple. It is far better to die than to live.⁴²

Less than four years later, in September 1918, a political act of terrorism with international implications occurred in Victoria, British Columbia. Tang Hualong, a cabinet minister in the Chinese government, on state visits to the United States and Canada, was shot and killed by a Chinese immigrant to Canada named Wong Chun. The shooter then fired on the minister's aides and missed before committing suicide.⁴³ He had been a member of the Chinese Nationalist League/Chinese Nationalist Party and was opposed to the Chinese government. After the murder, police discovered a suicide note that made clear both personal and broader forces inspired the violence:

I cannot bear to sit here and watch my country perish. I have determined to act with a blood and iron doctrine...When you see this, do not be sorry on my account. Now you better stop gambling, save your money and go back to China, and should you see my father, mother, brothers and sisters, and friends, comfort them for me. What I shall do you know nothing of, but you shall see the seventh year of the Chinese Republic.⁴⁴

The subsequent investigation failed to discover any accomplices or direct link to the Chinese Nationalist League.⁴⁵



After these assassinations, lone-actor terrorist attacks in Canada increasingly involved men who, as a result of personal struggles, harboured pent-up rage. The release of their fury came via acts of extreme violence. Three of these attacks occurred between 1965 and 1984, and resulted in four deaths and several injuries.

The first involved Harry Hubach, a German immigrant to Canada. Enraged over American involvement in the Vietnam War, he carried out an attack in January 1965 at the Edmonton Industrial Airport. He killed a security guard and dynamited several American military jets. Hubach had a reputation for anger and violence. The year before the attack, his marriage had broken up, the family farm was sold off, and his ex-wife returned to West Germany with their five children. Despite concerns about the attacker's mental health, the judge described the attack as a "one-man war," and ruled Hubach fit to stand trial, during which he was convicted and sentenced to death. His sentence was later commuted to life in prison.⁴⁶

In May of the following year, one of the most audacious lone-actor terrorist attacks in Canadian history occurred. The violence threatened the lives of numerous senior politicians, including Prime Minister Lester Pearson. Paul Joseph Chartier was a Franco-Albertan who had "started to float from place to place" through numerous jobs and residences. He also had a history of violence, including toward his ex-wife.⁴⁷ Chartier built a homemade explosive device packed with shrapnel and brought it to the public gallery in the Canadian House of Commons. In his jacket pocket, he carried a manifesto that reflected a crude populism in which corrupt politicians in an era of national political scandals were to blame for wider societal misery and for Chartier's own personal failings. The bomber's solution involved "exterminating" as many politicians as possible. Chartier's miscalculation of the length of the fuse, however, led to a premature explosion in a Commons restroom and to his own death.⁴⁸



The next act of lone-actor terrorism also involved a political chamber, but this one was the National Assembly in Quebec City. Denis Lortie, a member of the Canadian military, had a profound hatred for the separatist Parti Québécois (PQ) government under Premier René Lévesque, which he blamed for the problems of Canadian francophones outside of Quebec. In recorded messages sent to a radio station and left for his wife, Lortie, who had mental health issues and had grown up in an abusive household, warned that the Quebec government “is going to be destroyed... It might hurt a lot of people, but...to do something good, you have to destroy.”⁴⁹ On 8 May 1984, heavily armed and wearing military fatigues, he travelled to Quebec City, intending to attack the National Assembly. However, the legislature was not in session. Instead, Lortie killed three and wounded thirteen Assembly employees before he was convinced to surrender.⁵⁰

Two more lone-actor attacks would occur in Canada before the 1980s ended, with decidedly different results. The first, in April 1989, again involved the Canadian government in Ottawa. A Lebanese-Canadian named Charles Yacoub hijacked, at gunpoint, a bus travelling from Montreal to New York City and had it driven to Parliament Hill in Ottawa. There he held the hostages for several hours before releasing them and surrendering. His goal had been to draw attention to the ongoing Lebanese Civil War.⁵¹

The second attack of the year, and the worst lone-actor terrorist attack in Canadian history, was carried out by Marc Lépine at École Polytechnique in Montreal. Not viewed as a terrorist attack at the time, that interpretation has changed over subsequent decades, given that the attacker specifically targeted female engineering students and left behind a letter making explicit that misogyny was his motivation;⁵² he had additionally assembled a hit list of nineteen prominent Quebec feminists. Much would later be made of Lépine’s upbringing, which included an abusive father and family instability.⁵³ In the massacre, Lépine killed fourteen women before taking his own life. His letter referenced Lortie’s 1984 attack and made no secret of his motivation: “I have decided to send the feminists, who have always ruined my life, to their Maker.”⁵⁴



One final lone-actor terrorist attack would occur in the twentieth century. In May 1992, in the midst of a strike at Giant Mine in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, a bomb exploded, killing nine strike breakers brought in by the mine management. The investigation led eventually to Roger Warren, a striker who had been increasingly infuriated by management tactics. After being charged with the crime, Warren admitted his guilt and then recanted before once more confessing in 2003, when he claimed his goal had been to intimidate management and strike breakers but not to kill anyone.⁵⁵

A twenty-year gap would follow the Yellowknife bombing until the next lone-actor terrorist attack in Canada. That attack, similar to Lortie's in 1984, would have as its focus the PQ provincial government of Quebec. The target was a PQ victory rally on election night in September 2012. The perpetrator was Richard Henry Bain who, full of rage at the PQ, believed it was his mission to kill as many Quebec separatists as possible. In the end, he murdered a stagehand at the rally and wounded one other before his rifle jammed and he was overpowered. Questions around Bain's mental health were ruled irrelevant during the trial and a jury convicted him of second-degree murder.⁵⁶

Two years after the Bain attack, in June 2014, Justin Bourque launched what he later described to police as a rebellion against an oppressive and corrupt government that he believed squelched the freedom of Canadians. Dressed in fatigues and using a firearm, he shot and killed three Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers and wounded two others in Moncton, New Brunswick. It later emerged that in expressing anger toward the government, Bourque had found intellectual nourishment for his views within the American far right.⁵⁷

After Bourque, a series of faith-claimed lone-actor terrorist attacks would occur in Canada, all of them involving Islamists.⁵⁸ Three of the attackers were converts to Islam. Two of the attacks occurred within days of each other in October 2014. Martin Couture-Rouleau ran down two members of the Canadian military in



Quebec, killing one. He was subsequently shot and killed by the police.⁵⁹ Forty-eight hours later, in an attack that received worldwide attention, 32-year-old Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, using a rifle designed in the 1890s, shot and killed an unarmed soldier on ceremonial duty at Canada's national war memorial in Ottawa.⁶⁰ He then managed to enter the nearby Centre Block that houses Canada's parliamentary chamber and offices, before being shot to death by parliamentary security. Both attackers had experienced problems throughout their lives and both, after converting to Islam, were drawn to increasingly extreme viewpoints before launching their attacks.⁶¹ Couture-Rouleau had expressed a desire to travel to Syria to join the Islamic State (IS), but his passport had been seized because of concerns about his radical views. Zehaf-Bibeau, who had been refused a Libyan passport and had experienced a delay in obtaining a Canadian passport, left behind a martyrdom video decrying Canadian foreign policy against Muslims.⁶²

In 2016, two more faith-claimed lone-actor attacks occurred. The first was carried out by Ayanle Hassan Ali at a Canadian Forces recruitment centre in Toronto in March 2016. Ali, who wrote in his diary that "I have a licence to kill. One soldier is all it takes," stabbed a soldier at the recruitment centre and two others suffered minor injuries before Ali was subdued.⁶³ The presiding judge dismissed terrorism charges on the grounds that a lone individual cannot be a terrorist under Canadian law, something the Crown appealed in 2019.⁶⁴ Ultimately, Ali was found not criminally responsible for the attack because of ongoing mental health issues. The judge blamed the attack on "the defendant's radical religious and ideological beliefs," but acknowledged that "the formation of those beliefs was in large part precipitated by mental disorder."⁶⁵

Later in 2016, another convert to Islam, Aaron Driver, detonated a homemade bomb in a taxi cab after the police intercepted him on his way to carry out a terrorist attack.⁶⁶ He was shot dead by the police. Driver had already gained the attention of the authorities because he expressed support for IS in a media interview in 2015. In that year, he was arrested for suspected terrorist activity but was released by a court on a peace



bond with restrictions on his activities, including a requirement to stay off the Internet.⁶⁷ His background resembled many of the lone-actor attackers in that he had experienced a problematic childhood, including petty criminality and the death of his mother.⁶⁸ In a martyrdom video, Driver stated,

You still have a heavy debt which has to be paid. You still have Muslim blood on your hands, and for this we are thirsty for your blood. There's a fire burning in the chest of every Muslim, and this fire can be cooled only by the spilling of your blood. Your war on Islam is not the kind of crime we allow ourselves to dismiss, to forgive or to forget, insha'Allah.⁶⁹

Two other faith-claimed lone-actor terrorist attacks make up the list of nineteen. The first of these involved the only woman among the nineteen lone-actor terrorist attackers profiled in this piece. Rehab Dughmush, who experienced mental health issues and became convinced that she was under state surveillance, had previously expressed extreme views and a desire to join IS. Her family had warned authorities about her behaviour and an attempt to reach Syria was thwarted when Turkish authorities returned her to Canada. She then decided to carry out an attack within Canada and accumulated a stockpile of weapons, some of which were removed by her husband. In June 2017, carrying an IS flag, she attacked employees of a Canadian Tire store with a golf club and a knife, injuring one of them slightly. Convicted of four terrorism offences, she told a victim during the attack that “[w]hen you kill Muslims, you have to pay for it from your blood.”⁷⁰ In September 2017, Abdulahi Hasan Sharif stabbed a police officer in Edmonton before striking four pedestrians while fleeing in a vehicle. All survived and Sharif was apprehended and convicted, in 2019, of five counts of attempted murder. A co-worker alleged that Sharif was an IS supporter and an IS flag was discovered in his vehicle. He never faced terrorism charges.⁷¹

The final two attacks discussed here, one of which occurred in 2017, before the previous two, are among the deadliest in the history of Canadian lone-actor terrorism, with sixteen lives extinguished between them. Ideologically, both attacks, one motivated by racism and the other by misogyny, occupy a position on the far right of the political spectrum. In January 2017, Alexandre Bissonnette entered the Islamic Cultural



Centre of Quebec City and opened fire on worshippers, killing six; nineteen were injured, including several by bullets. The shooter, who had a history of anxiety and depression, spent time online reading about the lone-actor attacks of Marc Lépine, Justin Bourque, Dylann Roof, Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, and Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel. Bissonnette was also an avid consumer of right-wing American media, along with having a strong interest in Hitler, World War II and the Holocaust.⁷² Islamophobia and racism motivated his violence, with the immediate trigger being an announcement by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that Canada would accept more refugees: “I was watching TV and I learned that the Canadian government was going to take more refugees who couldn’t go to the United States, and they were coming here. I saw that and I, like, lost my mind.”⁷³ He would later tell a social worker that he desired “glory” and regretted “not having killed more people.”⁷⁴

Finally, Alek Minassian killed ten people in Toronto in April 2018 by using a rental van to run down pedestrians. The motivation, as with Lépine, was misogyny. Just before the attack, on Facebook, Minassian praised misogynist killer Elliot Rodger, a hero to many “incels” (an online subculture of “involuntary celibates”), and claimed that the “Incel Rebellion has already begun.”⁷⁵ A year after the attack, the director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service referred to an individual “invoking the philosophy of the involuntary celibates” as having carried out the van attack.⁷⁶ In a sign of how thinking about lone-actor terrorism in Canada may be evolving, in May 2020 a terrorism charge was laid against a 17-year-old alleged incel for an attack three months earlier in which a woman was murdered.⁷⁷

Analysis of the Canadian Attacks

Over the 150-year period, the nineteen lone-actor terrorists took numerous lives and injured many more, both physically and psychologically. Several aspects of the nineteen attacks and attackers, which are detailed more thoroughly in the appendix, deserve greater attention. Some of these features are highlighted in Tables 1 and



2 in this section and are based on key variables identified in leading texts about lone-actor terrorism, particularly the important work of Paul Gill and others.⁷⁸

Although the attacks cover the 150-year period in question, they were sparse in the first 115 years. Since Lortie's attack on the Quebec legislature in 1984, fourteen of nineteen (73.6 percent) incidents have taken place and ten of nineteen (52.6 percent) have occurred since 2012, showing an escalating pattern. There is no simple explanation for the intensification. One element may be the encouragement of such tactics by al-Qaeda (and its successor, IS). Another is the copycat factor, not just around the publicity lone-actor attacks generate but also in creating an awareness of the possibilities of carrying out these types of attacks in the first place.⁷⁹ For instance, Marc Lépine referenced Lortie's attack in his final letter and Bissonnette repeatedly viewed details of Lépine's attack and those of others, including Justin Bourque. A growth in far-right terrorism and its historic embrace of leaderless resistance as a tactic is possibly another factor.⁸⁰ Finally, a wider societal trend toward individualism and alienation potentially equates into increasing numbers of individuals carrying out attacks on their own.⁸¹ In connection to alienation, one scholarly work argues for two broad categories of lone-actor terrorists; the individuals profiled in this paper would potentially fall into, and sometimes overlap, the categories. The first grouping reflects a life of disaffection, disorder and loneliness, potentially with mental health issues, combined with a grievance and weapons experience; the other type involves individuals strongly drawn to a cause, who take on the misery of others and develop a desire to personally address this suffering.⁸²

As the details in Table 1 suggest, there are both differences and commonalities across the attacks. The intersection of mental health problems and lone-actor terrorism remains a highly contested linkage. Recent scholarship posits a more complicated picture around the place of mental health problems and personality disorders as drivers of acts of extreme violence.⁸³ Even though they are a frequent characteristic of lone-actor



terrorists, especially in relation to “normal terrorists,” mental health issues or personality disorders do not, as Hamm and Spaaij note, in themselves cause extremist violence.⁸⁴

There is no pattern to the religious background of attackers. While Muslims are overrepresented among perpetrators, particularly since 2014, half of the six were converts to Islam, suggesting a more complicated picture, as does research on extreme violence by converts.⁸⁵ Lone-actor attacks by Islamists in Canada, although more frequent, are also far less deadly than those carried out by individuals who are at least partly inspired by far-right ideologies.

Then there is race and ethnicity. Nearly 60 percent of attackers are what in the twenty-first century would be labelled “White men,” thus reflecting American statistics showing that a majority of lone-actor terrorists in the United States are “White males.”⁸⁶ The Whiteness of an attacker undoubtedly affects the responses of the wider society to the violence. Yet again, the underlying picture is more complex. Whiteness is not a fixed category.⁸⁷ Would Patrick Whelan, an Irish Catholic who killed Thomas D’Arcy McGee in 1868, have been considered White in nineteenth-century Canada, given the widespread anti-Catholic and anti-Irish sentiment at the time? Would Paul Chartier, a Catholic Franco-Albertan, have been deemed White in 1966? Were Aaron Driver and Martin Couture-Rouleau, who converted to Islam as adults, considered White? Perhaps, and this category is possibly more relevant closer to the present, but again it remains an uneasy variable to explore, except in cases where White supremacy racism leads explicitly to violence, as in the example of Alexandre Bissonnette.

Two other characteristics of 150 years of lone-actor terrorists in Canada deserve more attention, however. One is that nearly 70 percent of attackers were single, separated or divorced at the time of the attack. This speaks potentially to a sense of turmoil, dislocation and alienation in the personal lives of lone-actor terrorists, who are known to experience both micro and macro factors as they shift toward violence.



There may be a perception of “nothing to lose” or that a change in relationship status represents a “trigger” that shifts the individual into carrying out an attack. This is not to suggest that there was not already a foundation for violence. For example, important work has emerged in recent years that reveals a prevalence of a history of domestic abuse and wider misogyny among many lone-actor terrorists. Joan Smith argues that “men who are used to beating, kicking, choking and stabbing women at home are considerably further along the road towards committing public acts of violence”; her work appears to have particular relevance to lone-actor terrorists.⁸⁸ This argument is also made by Jude McCulloch and co-authors in an important and timely work that also critiques the absence of gender analysis in existing scholarship around lone-actor terrorism.⁸⁹

Following on from Smith and McCulloch et al, the final characteristic of lone actors examined here is the most dominant one across 150 years of Canadian history: 95 percent of lone attackers have been men. That figure would have been 100 percent except for the first (and, thus far, only) lone-actor attack ever carried out by a woman in Canada, in 2017. Other studies of mass shootings in the United States have found similarly high levels of male involvement in lone-actor terrorism, as have studies of American mass killers not deemed terrorists.⁹⁰ It is difficult to imagine another characteristic of lone-actor terrorists, such as a religious affiliation or a geographic location, having a 95 percent correlation and not receiving extensive publicity, discussion and analysis. Yet, as Michael Kimmel observes, the overrepresentation of men “creates hardly a ripple.”⁹¹ Echoing Kimmel, Hamm and Spaaij note that the “gendered nature of lone wolf terrorism is often noted, but rarely treated in a satisfactory manner.”⁹² Gender would certainly become a relevant topic for discussion if eighteen of nineteen attackers had been women; in fact, important feminist scholarship examining the role of women in terrorism in general has emerged over the last few years.⁹³

The involvement of men and, just as significantly, masculinity is a different story. Although it is more accurate to refer to “masculinities,” since there is no single, fixed concept of masculinity, at times “a singular



vision of masculinity” can dominate.⁹⁴ R. W. Connell describes this type of masculinity as “culturally exalted” and as representing a “hegemonic masculinity.”⁹⁵ One repeated trend is the linking of extreme violence and masculinity as an acceptable path to respond to grievances, failure and/or some wider cause within a man’s life. Some recent scholarship has explored these linkages, although not necessarily in an historical context. Fidelma Ashe and Ken Harland point to the significance of “violent masculinities,” in which “the constitution of masculinities depends on the particular constructions of men’s gendered identities that become dominant or normative within specific societies, groups, and contexts.”⁹⁶ In their study of Indonesian jihadis, David Duriesmith and Noor Huda Ismail found, in their main case study, that “different masculine positions through his life continue to play an important role in shaping political violence both in what we might think [of] as the ‘local’ for him and globally.” That response involved deploying “tropes of failed masculinity and weak men to justify his action at all stages of his life... These figurations of failed masculinity largely do not express lived subject positions, but are powerful reference points in situating Ali and [justification] for his participation in violence throughout his life.”⁹⁷ In *Guys and Guns Amok*, Douglas Kellner profiles acts of extreme violence in an American context by lone, usually White, male attackers who externalize “rage and resentment in public acts.”⁹⁸ Maleeha Aslam’s study of masculinity and Islamist terrorism observes that the consequences of “not having avenues to practise masculinity in a culturally ideal manner” can be the birth of “troubled masculinities...aggressive and emasculated, i.e. protest masculinities.”⁹⁹ Hamm and Spaaij refer specifically to “lone wolf terrorism” (terminology which, although they do not acknowledge this, has its own masculinist implications) as being engaged

with a warrior subculture that fuses violence and politics with masculinity. This subcultural script provides a model for problem-solving: It sensitizes (and socializes) the lone wolf to the cause and to the belief that a violent attack is both necessary and a transformative experience.¹⁰⁰



Leading the way in the study of the relationship between masculinity and extreme violence is the work of Kimmel. In questioning why men in the United States engage in acts of extreme violence, he observes that such individuals

were somehow convinced to externalize their sense of emasculation, turn it into righteous political rage, and lash out at those forces that they came to believe responsible for their emasculation. Their failure was not theirs, as individuals; it was something done to them—by an indifferent state, by predatory corporations and rapacious bankers, by a host of “others” who had preyed upon global sympathies to get special bargains. They were not failures; they were victims.¹⁰¹

This sense of victimhood connects to a grievance or injustice in a man’s personal life that becomes conflated with a wider cause. A survey of counter-terrorism practitioners in relation to lone-actor terrorists found “the idea of individuals possessing a grievance as the single overriding motivational characteristic regardless of whether the grievance was real, perceived or what the grievance itself was.”¹⁰² Hamm and Spaaij argue that the mixing of “personal and political grievances” is what “distinguishes lone wolves from members of large terrorist organizations, where individual grievances are less important than the social-psychological processes of an entire group.”¹⁰³ They note Jessica Stern’s 2003 observation that “[l]one wolves often come up with their own ideologies that combine personal vendettas with religious or political grievances.”¹⁰⁴ And, of course, as this working paper emphasizes, it is almost exclusively men who carry out lone-actor terrorism. Some of these men, according to Jeff Sparrow, “learn to associate masculinity with autonomy, control, and dominance. Their inability to assert such things—and the ensuing sense of their inadequacy alongside other, more successful men—might feel like an existential wrong, sufficient to make them crave the distinctly masculine power they identify with violence.”¹⁰⁵

Several of these points are evident in many of the attackers profiled in this working paper. Bhai Mewa Singh Ji, who in 1914 had faced arrest and pressure from the authorities, struck back on behalf of his own honour but equally on behalf of his faith in an era of widespread racism. At his trial, he said, “It



is far better to die than to live.”¹⁰⁶ Harry Hubach, emerging from a youth of violence in Nazi Germany that included him fighting as a child soldier, became obsessed with the Vietnam War as his marriage and family disintegrated and he experienced sexual dysfunction; his response was to launch a personal blow against American imperialism. Paul Chartier, at the end of a life of alcohol abuse, repeated unemployment, violence against his wife and sexual problems, responded by carrying out an attack against politicians whose perceived political corruption he blamed for his misfortune and the misfortune of thousands like him. Denis Lortie, a francophone living in an English-dominated province, blamed the separatist PQ government for the mistreatment of francophones outside Quebec. He reacted by travelling in his Canadian Armed Forces combat fatigues to attack the legislature in Quebec City. Full of rage against feminists and feminism because of personal and career failures, Marc Lépine, while wearing hunting-style clothing, targeted female engineering students at their college. Furious at his employer over a major strike and at those who had crossed picket lines, Roger Warren blew up some of the replacement workers. Increasingly isolated and angry with Quebec separatists, Richard Henry Bain attacked the PQ election night victory party. Struggling in life, Justin Bourque dressed in combat fatigues and attempted to launch a rebellion against the government by shooting police officers. After a life of criminality and drug abuse, and then rage over his failure to leave Canada, Michael Zehaf-Bibeau perpetrated an attack in central Ottawa on behalf of IS. Alexandre Bissonnette, who was obsessed with the American far right and the issue of immigration, and fearful of the threat he perceived that all Muslims posed to his family, reacted by slaughtering worshippers at a Quebec City mosque.

Examining masculinities as an element in the overrepresentation of men among lone-actor terrorists does not, of course, absolve the attacker of responsibility. It is important to avoid, in the words of Melanie McCarry, placing “the blame for male violence onto ‘masculinity’ and away from the men who perpetrate it,”



an argument Elizabeth Pearson echoes.¹⁰⁷ Male supremacy and violence are widespread and inherent components in patriarchy. However, various masculinities can suggest certain paths, including toward extreme violence, while militating against alternatives. That interpretation applies to terrorism but is similarly true of policing and the military. Equally, as Pearson points out, there needs to be concern when ill-defined concepts such as “toxic masculinity” are brandished by states as part of deradicalization programs.¹⁰⁸ Nor does an exploration of men and masculinities and the intersection with violent extremism diminish the work of numerous feminist scholars who have illustrated the important position of women in political violence, in a field where historically their place has been ignored.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, as more scholarly attention is brought toward masculinities and terrorism, thanks to a large extent because of the work by feminist scholars on gender and political violence, greater sophistication will emerge.

Table 1: Selected Characteristics of 19 Lone-Actor Terrorist Attacks in Canada, 1868–2018*

Characteristics	Details	Comparisons
Birthplace	12 were born in Canada (63.2%); 7 were born outside of Canada (36.8%). In the last 60 years, 12 of 16 (75%) were born in Canada.	
Average age	32.9	33 in Gill, Horgan and Deckert (2014) dataset. ¹¹⁰
Gender	18 of 19 (94.7%) of the attackers were men.	97% in Gill, Horgan and Deckert dataset of 119 lone-actor attacks in the United States and Europe. ¹¹¹
Race and ethnicity	11 of 19 (57.9%) were White men.	In the United States, “pre-9/11 lone wolves were predominantly White, urban, unemployed, single males with a prior criminal record.” After 9/11 until 2017, 64% were White males. ¹¹²



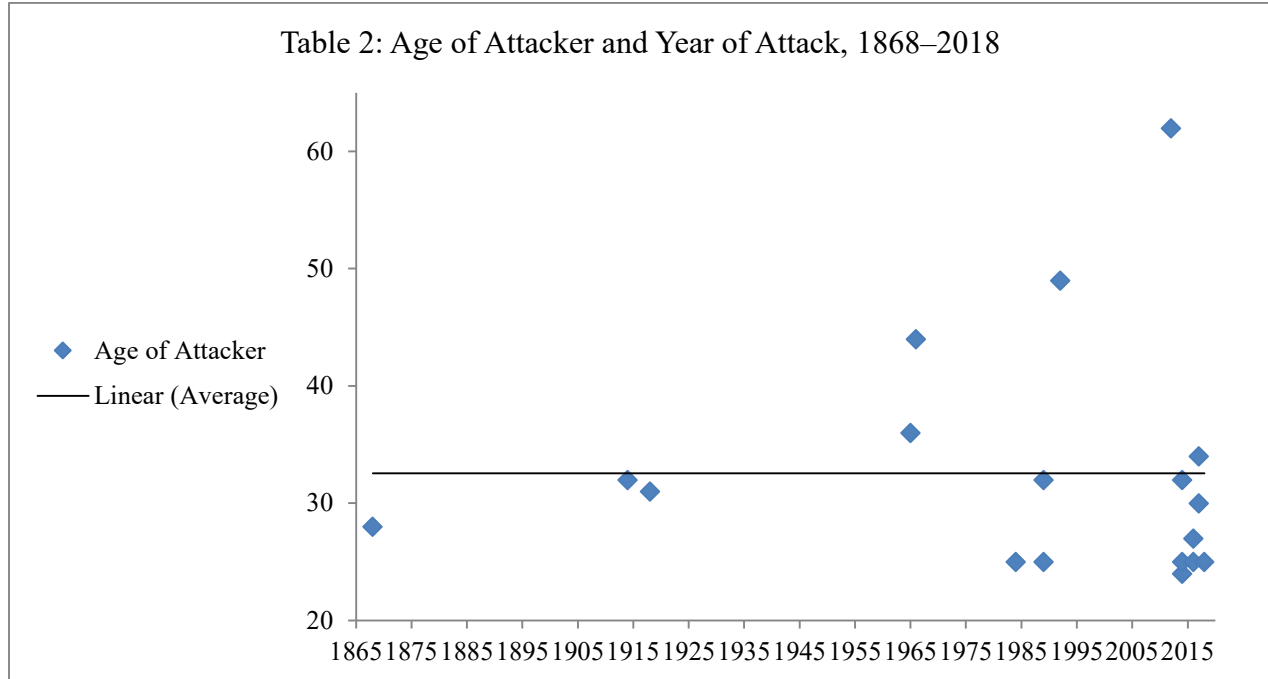
Religious affiliation	Christian: 31.6% Muslim: 31.6% (3 of 6 [50%] were converts) Sikh: 5.26% Atheist: 5.26% Unknown: 21.1%	
Relationship status at the time of the attack	Single/separated/divorced: 13 (68.4%) In a relationship: 5 (26.3%) Unknown: 1 (5.26%)	In the post-9/11 period in the United States, 64% of lone actors were White males and of that number, 80% were not in a relationship. ¹¹³
Employment status at the time of the attack	10 of 19 (52.6%) had some sort of employment at the time of the attack.	
Highest educational attainment	Unknown: 9 (47.4%) High school: 6 (31.6%) Less than high school: 4 (21.1%) University degree: 0	A study of US lone-actor terrorists found “relatively low” educational levels. ¹¹⁴
Criminal/arrest record at the time of the attack	7 of 19 had previously been arrested and/or convicted of a crime (36.8%).	
Mental health	8 of 19 (42.1%) on the list may have suffered from some type of mental health problem and/or personality disorder.	Christopher Hewitt found a 22% rate in his dataset of 27 US cases; Gill, Horgan and Deckert found 31.9% of their dataset had experienced “mental illness or personality disorder.” ¹¹⁵ However, Hamm and Spaaij point out that in the United States the chances of someone with mental illness carrying out a lone-actor attack is about one in 20 million. ¹¹⁶
Method	Gun: 11 (57.8%) Bomb: 3 (15.7%) Knife: 2.5 (13.1%) Vehicle: 2.5 (13.1%)	
Casualties	52 non-attacker deaths and 78 injuries; 2.73 deaths and 3.89	Based on 198 examples from a number of



	injuries per attack; six attackers (31.5%) died during their attacks. Four attacks (École polytechnique, Giant Mine, Quebec City mosque, and the Toronto van attack) account for 75% of deaths.	countries, Spaaij and Hamm have calculated that lone-actor terrorism killed, on average, 0.62 people per attack, as compared to 1.6 deaths per attack for all types of terrorism. ¹¹⁷
Attack occurrences and casualties (not including perpetrator) by known motivation	Islamist: 6 attacks=2 deaths (0.33 deaths per attack) Far-right: 2 attacks=9 deaths (4.5 deaths per attack) Ethno-nationalist: 3 attacks=3 deaths (1 death per attack) Misogyny: 2 attacks=24 deaths (12 deaths per attack) Anti-war and anti-Americanism: 1 attack=1 death (1 death per attack) Populist: 1 attack=0 deaths Anti-separatist: 2 attacks=4 deaths (2 deaths per attack) Labour dispute: 1 attack=9 deaths (9 deaths per attack)	
Clear evidence that a personal grievance was a factor	8 of 19 attackers (42.1%)	According to Hamm and Spaaij, "Compared to organized jihadists (both large and small scale), lone wolf terrorists are more idiosyncratic in belief and behavior. They combine various political causes with any number of highly personal vendettas in complex and extremely individualized ways." ¹¹⁸
Geographic location of attack	8 attacks occurred in Ontario (42.1%), 5 in Quebec (26.3%), 4 in Western Canada (21.1%), 1 in Northern Canada (5.26%), 1 in Atlantic Canada (5.26%).	
Date and frequency	5 of 19 (26.3%) occurred between 1868 and 1968; 14 of 19 (73.6%) occurred since 1980; 10 of 19 (52.6%) took place from 2012 to 2018.	Key literature suggests increasing frequency of lone-actor attacks in Europe and the United States over the last few decades. ¹¹⁹



*Includes one example where the individual was acquitted of terrorism charges.



Conclusion

The personal story of each lone actor is unique, yet there are similarities among the nineteen attackers across 150 years. One crucial aspect binding a number of perpetrators together is a sense of grievance and injustice and the frequent intermixing of these in both a narrow personal capacity and a broader societal one.

However, focusing on this angle misses a crucial point. Men do not have a monopoly on experiencing grievance and injustice, yet it is men who have a near monopoly on carrying out individual acts of extreme violence, through acts of terrorism or other mass killings, in response. Why? Is it a case of perpetrators responding to personal and societal issues by embracing “normative models of masculinities” that include “aggression or violence”¹²⁰?



Unquestionably, there needs to be greater attention paid to masculinities and the relationship to higher levels of violence in numerous areas, including domestic abuse. Indeed, there is just such a shift occurring in the scholarship, to a large extent because of the impact of feminist scholarship.¹²¹ What does this mean in practice? It requires that there be sustained discussion among politicians, the media and the public about the overrepresentation of men in extreme violence, particularly lone-actor terrorism. Although controversy swirls around the concepts of radicalization and deradicalization, if such programs are to exist then they need to discuss gender, and more specifically, masculinities, and address constructs that inspire men to view violence as an acceptable reply to personal or societal failings. More resources need to go into encouraging men full of rage to seek help instead of submerging such feelings until they erupt externally. In a sign of the growing importance of masculinities in terrorism studies, Bruce Hoffman and others, in a co-authored academic article, have pointed to the need for countering violent extremism programs to explicitly address men and masculinities: “‘Aggrieved entitlement’ has been a central factor in mass shootings before and since the birth of the incel movement. Teaching young men how to deal with it could also potentially avert the violent inclinations of incels.”¹²²

Finally, men need to condemn and distance themselves from not only violence by men but from the masculinities that embrace carnage as a response to perceived injustice. Parallels to this have existed for years in campaigns to encourage men and society to have zero tolerance for both domestic violence and cultural depictions that make light of or encourage it. To paraphrase a saying applied to others in relation to extreme violence, not all men are lone-actor terrorists but almost all lone-actor terrorists are men. We need to start asking why instead of viewing this overrepresentation of men as normal and unalterable.

APPENDIX: 19 Lone-Actor Terrorist Attackers and Attacks in Canada, 1868–2018

1. Patrick James Whelan

Age of attacker at time of attack: 28

Location and date of attack: Sparks Street, Ottawa, 7 April 1868

Method: He used a pistol to carry out an assassination.

Advanced planning: Whelan allegedly visited McGee's house in Montreal on 1 January 1868.¹²³

Target and attack: He shot and killed Irish-Canadian politician and Father of Confederation Thomas D'Arcy McGee on Sparks Street in downtown Ottawa. Many Irish nationalists viewed McGee, a critic of Fenianism, as a traitor.¹²⁴

Date of birth (DOB): 1840

Place of birth (POB): Galway, Ireland

Family background: Father: William Whelan; mother: Mary Sullivan. His brother was exiled because of his involvement in an uprising in Ireland in 1867.¹²⁵

Educational background: He left school at age 14 to be a tailor.¹²⁶

Occupation: Tailor and soldier

Military experience: Upon completing his training to be a tailor, he joined the British Army, serving for several years. In Quebec, he joined the Volunteer Cavalry and eventually became a sergeant.¹²⁷

Relationship status: Whelan was married to Bridgit Boyle at the time of the attack.

Social isolation: Whelan drifted through life to a certain extent. No direct evidence that he was part of a wider conspiracy; the Fenians disavowed his action and claimed he had never been a member of their movement. The assassin was involved in the St. Patrick's Society and had a network of friends and family in Canada.¹²⁸

Mental health issues: No evidence of any exists, although an acquaintance described Whelan as a person of "violent temper and strong impulse."¹²⁹

Criminal history: Whelan had been arrested previously for trying to convince a British soldier to join the Fenians, but he was later released. The authorities had also arrested him for treasonable language in 1866 in Hamilton.¹³⁰

Expression of intent: Several individuals claimed Whelan had spoken about killing McGee on numerous occasions, including saying he'll "blow his bloody brains out before the session is over."¹³¹

Motivation: Political in the form of Fenian sympathy. Whelan may or may not have been a Fenian, and the Fenians disavowed his action, but Fenian attitudes and propaganda influenced him.¹³²

Claim of responsibility: Whelan maintained his innocence until death, proclaiming he was not a Fenian and expressing admiration for McGee. He blamed his prosecution on his Catholicism. His last words were "God save Ireland and God save my soul." Controversy over his criminal conviction and subsequent execution continues to the present.¹³³

Unique aspects of the attack: The first lone-actor terrorist attack in Canada. The first political assassination in Canadian history. The execution of the perpetrator.

2. Bhai Mewa Singh Ji

Age at time of attack: 32

Location and date of attack: The Vancouver courthouse, 21 October 1914

Method: Mewa Singh used two pistols to shoot William Hopkinson four times. First, he shot his target at close range in the chest, then delivered a blow to his head with that pistol. He then shot the victim with the second pistol.¹³⁴

Advance planning: Unknown

Target and attack: He killed William Hopkinson, a career immigration officer and intelligence agent in charge of surveillance of Sikhs and other immigrants from India.¹³⁵

DOB: 1882

POB: Lopoke, India

Family background: He was born into a peasant family.¹³⁶

Education: Unknown

Occupation: He was a labourer who worked in the lumber mills of British Columbia.¹³⁷

Military experience: None

Relationship status: Single.¹³⁸

Social isolation: No evidence of isolation as he had a number of acquaintances within the Sikh community.¹³⁹

Mental health issues: None that could be determined. The Minister of Justice ordered a mental examination of Singh on 3 January 1915. Deemed sane and responsible for his actions, he was executed on 16 January 1915.¹⁴⁰

Criminal history: Mewa Singh had been arrested on 17 July 1914 on the Canadian side of the Canada-US border after he was found with hundreds of rounds of ammunition and a revolver; both had been purchased in the United States. Other temple leaders who were arrested in the United States but later released accompanied him. The authorities pressured Mewa Singh into giving a statement implicating his companions.¹⁴¹

Expression of intent: There is no evidence that he expressed in advance any interest in carrying out the attack.

Motivation: Mewa Singh expressed unhappiness with the treatment of Sikhs in Canada. The immediate catalyst for the attack appears to have been fury over the murder of two of his friends by an informant of Hopkinson named Bela Singh and the suggestion that he might have to testify on Bela Singh's behalf. The *Komagata Maru* incident, in which the Canadian government prevented a ship carrying several hundred Sikhs and other passengers from disembarking its passengers in Vancouver, played an important role in generating anger toward immigration officials.¹⁴²

Claim of responsibility: Mewa Singh was arrested at the site of the murder and quickly confessed, offering no defence in court. In a statement at his trial, he justified the attack.¹⁴³

Unique aspects of the attack: The targeting of a government official and the first and only lone-actor attack carried out by a Sikh. The attacker claiming responsibility for his actions.

3. Wong Chun (Wang Chang)

Age at time of attack: 31

Location and date of attack: Victoria, British Columbia, 1 September 1918

Method: A shooting using two .32-calibre revolvers¹⁴⁴

Advance planning: The full extent is unknown, but clearly there was some planning required to have been aware of the visit of the minister and to have prepared a suicide note.

Target and attack: Tang Hualong, a cabinet minister in the government of the Republic of China, who was on a visit to Canada and the United States. He was shot twice, including in the head. The assailant also fired on the minister's aide and several others but missed repeatedly.

DOB: 1886

POB: China

Family background: Father: Wang Woo; mother: Tou She.¹⁴⁵

Education: Unknown

Occupation: Barber

Military experience: None

Relationship status: Single¹⁴⁶

Social isolation: The shooter was an active member of the Chinese Nationalist League and discussed family and friends in the note he left behind.¹⁴⁷

Mental health issues: None¹⁴⁸

Criminal history: None

Expression of intent: There is no evidence of him informing anyone else in advance of the attack.

Motivation: The shooter was opposed to the Chinese government. His target, Tang Hualong, was on a diplomatic mission to the United States and Canada, seeking funds.¹⁴⁹

Claim of responsibility: He committed suicide immediately after the killing, leaving his motivation in a note.¹⁵⁰

The subsequent investigation failed to discover any accomplices or direct link to the Chinese Nationalist League.¹⁵¹

Unique aspects of the attack: The targeting of a foreign politician. The attacker committing suicide after the attack.

4. Harry Waldeman Fredrich Hubach

Age at time of attack: 36

Location and date of attack: Edmonton Industrial Airport, 28 January 1965

Method: He used a rifle and improvised explosive devices containing dynamite.¹⁵²

Advance planning: The presiding judge suggested that Hubach, based on his previous work at Northwest Industries Ltd, knew there would be only one security guard on duty after 2 a.m. Hubach told the police that he had taken work with a local farmer because he knew he owned dynamite. "I thought with that dynamite I could do something."¹⁵³

Target and attack: The targets were four US F-84 warplanes undergoing repairs at the airport in Edmonton; he destroyed three of the four planes with bombs, but the fourth explosive device failed to detonate. During the attack, Hubach killed a security guard, Threnton James Richardson, with three bullets, two of which were fired less than 12 inches away from the victim.¹⁵⁴

DOB: 1929

POB: Germany

Family background: He had a wife and five children.¹⁵⁵

Education: Unknown

Occupation: Labourer and farmer. In 1959, he worked for several months at Northwest Industries Ltd, based at Edmonton Industrial Airport.

Military experience: Fought as a child in the Hitler Youth in Germany in the closing days of World War II.¹⁵⁶

Relationship status: Separated.

Social isolation: Hubach and his wife separated in 1964 and she took the children and moved back to West Germany. He sold the farm as a result and left Edmonton, travelling to Japan for a year to pursue business opportunities and because he expressed a desire to fight for North Vietnam against the United States. The Japanese government later deported him to Canada.¹⁵⁷

Mental health issues: His mental fitness became an issue at the trial. The defence called a psychiatrist who testified Hubach was not mentally fit to stand trial, whereas two psychiatrists called by the Crown both



testified that he was fit. The jury decided he was mentally fit to face trial. However, his death sentence was later commuted to life in prison based on concerns about his mental health. He supposedly had a violent temper and kept a briefcase containing a hunting knife next to his bed. He also expressed concern that he had too much sexual desire and, as a result, had undergone a circumcision at an Edmonton hospital.¹⁵⁸

Criminal history: No convictions, but he was detained on suspicion of indecent assault in West Germany on 15 June 1950. Criminal proceedings against Hubach for suspicion of debauchery were discontinued on 22 January 1951 because of an amnesty.¹⁵⁹

Expression of intent: Allegedly, Hubach repeatedly ranted at home during TV newscasts about the US involvement in Vietnam but did not inform anyone of his plans. The dynamite came from a neighbouring farmer.¹⁶⁰

Motivation: Hubach, who had fought as a Hitler Youth in the closing days of World War II, was strongly opposed to the Vietnam War and any Canadian involvement in the conflict, which he viewed as the beginning of World War III. He believed the United States had used the warplanes based in Edmonton in the Vietnam conflict and he was determined to stop them from being sent back there.¹⁶¹

Claim of responsibility: He confessed to his attack, which the judge described as a “one-man war,” including to what he said was the accidental killing of the guard.¹⁶²

Unique aspects of the attack: An American military target. The first use of explosives by a lone-actor terrorist.

5. Paul Joseph Chartier

Age at time of attack: 44

Location and date of attack: House of Commons, Ottawa, 18 May 1966

Method: Improvised explosive device containing dynamite

Advance planning: Chartier wrote that he had planned the attack for more than a year and the authorities believed he had made a previous trip to Ottawa to scout out his target.

Target and attack: Members of Parliament including cabinet ministers and Prime Minister Lester Pearson inside the House of Commons. Chartier detonated his bomb prematurely in a washroom outside the public gallery, killing only himself.

DOB: 21 August 1921

POB: Bonnyville, Alberta

Family background: Chartier’s parents were French-Canadian. His father was a hotelier.¹⁶³

Education: He did not finish high school.

Occupation: He worked as a miner, truck driver, hotelier, and hotel detective; he failed twice as a gas station owner.

Military experience: He served in the Royal Canadian Air Force in World War II, although he never left Canada; he was discharged honourably in 1945.

Relationship status: Chartier married a woman fourteen years younger than himself in 1952. In 1958, they separated and later divorced. After Chartier’s death, his wife said that he had physically abused her.¹⁶⁴

Social isolation: Described after his death by former employers as a “drifter,” “odd-ball” and a “loner,” Chartier had ten different jobs and eleven different addresses between 1962 and 1966. In the words of a US official, he “started to float from place to place.”¹⁶⁵

Mental health issues: Only once did a doctor diagnose him with mental health issues while alive and that involved a brief notation in 1965. He did have issues with alcohol and prescription drugs, and seems to have suffered from depression at various stages in his life. His autobiography also suggests serious problems around sexual intercourse.¹⁶⁶



Criminal history: Arrested several times, including at least twice for physical assault, he was convicted of a public disorder offence.

Expression of intent: Chartier made it clear why he was carrying out his attack. He made copies of a sixteen-page manifesto and sent one to the *Edmonton Journal* in advance of the attack, while he carried another with him on the day of the attack.¹⁶⁷

Motivation: Chartier's manifesto was heavily populist in tone, containing both left and right-wing elements. He believed that all of Canada's major problems, including inequality, emanated from political corruption in Ottawa. He sought to cleanse this ill by "exterminating" as many MPs as possible.¹⁶⁸

Claim of responsibility: His manifesto made clear his purposes and that he was prepared to die.

Unique aspects of the attack: The first attacker born in Canada. The first to leave behind a manifesto explaining their motivation for the attack. The first attack on Canada's national parliament.

6. Denis Lortie

Age at time of attack: 25

Location and date of attack: Quebec National Assembly, Quebec City, 8 May 1984

Method: A gun attack. Lortie had a submachine gun, two handguns and a hunting knife.¹⁶⁹

Advance planning: Not a lot, especially as the Quebec legislature was not sitting on the day of the attack.

Target and attack: Premier René Lévesque and his PQ government. The legislature was not in session, so Lortie missed his main targets but killed three employees and wounded thirteen others instead.

DOB: 10 March 1959

POB: Quebec

Family background: Lortie was one of eight children in a family in which their father abused the children and their mother. He married Lisa Levesque in 1980 and had a son and a daughter with her.¹⁷⁰

Education: Unknown

Occupation: Corporal in the Canadian Army

Military experience: Assigned to a base near Ottawa, he worked as a supply corporal in the Royal 22nd Regiment.

Relationship status: He was married with two children.

Social isolation: Not reported, but he did have mental health issues.

Mental health issues: Five days before the attack, he hallucinated during a conversation with a superior sergeant and saw his violent father's face instead. The defence called three psychiatrists as witnesses: one said Lortie suffered from paranoid delusions; another that it was psychotic delusions; the third that it was a case of schizophrenia. All three admitted, however, that despite his mental state, he knew what he was doing.¹⁷¹

Criminal history: None.

Expression of intent: Lortie wanted people to know why he was carrying out the attacks, so he made audio recordings expressing his justifications and left copies for his wife, a Quebec radio talk show host, and for the chaplain at his military base.

Motivation: He had a profound hatred of the PQ government of Premier René Lévesque, which he blamed for the problems of Canadian francophones.¹⁷² In a recording sent to a Quebec talk radio host, he made his intentions clear:

The present government is going to be destroyed, which is the Parti Québécois including René Lévesque. I have found that it is people who have done a great deal of harm to the French



language in Quebec and in Canada. ... I could have also tackled something more powerful like the Liberal Party in Ottawa, but for me it is not a very important point because my language is in Quebec and I do not want anyone to destroy it. It might hurt a lot of people, but that, what do you want: to do something good, you have to destroy.¹⁷³

Finally, he desired a degree of notoriety, allegedly once telling his parents, “One day... my name will be everywhere.”¹⁷⁴

Claim of responsibility: Initially convicted of first-degree murder, Lortie’s conviction was struck down and a new trial ordered. In 1987, he pleaded guilty to second-degree murder.¹⁷⁵

Unique aspects of the attack: The first attack by a member of the Canadian military. The first attack on the Quebec legislature and in relation to Quebec separatism. The first attacker to record a message in advance of the attack. The first attack where there were multiple victims.

7. Charles Yacoub

Age at time of attack: 32 or 33, precise date of birth unknown

Location and date of attack: He hijacked a Greyhound bus en route from Montreal to New York and had it driven to Parliament Hill in Ottawa on 7 April 1989.¹⁷⁶

Method: He used a .45 calibre pistol in the hijacking. He also claimed to have a bomb, but no bomb was discovered by police during its investigation.¹⁷⁷

Advance planning: Unknown

Target and attack: After a standoff of several hours on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Yacoub surrendered. No one was physically injured during the hijacking, as Yacoub’s desire was to draw attention to the ongoing Lebanese Civil War.

DOB: 1956 or 1957

POB: Lebanon; he emigrated to Canada in 1976.¹⁷⁸

Family background: Lebanese-born Christian

Education: Unknown

Occupation: Jeweller¹⁷⁹

Military experience: Unknown

Relationship status: He was married with two children.¹⁸⁰

Social isolation: Unknown

Mental health issues: Yacoub’s lawyer said his client appeared to “be calm and rational” and no effort was made to link the hijacking to mental health problems.¹⁸¹

Criminal history: None

Expression of intent: Unknown

Motivation: Distressed by the Lebanese Civil War, Yacoub desired to draw attention to the intervention by the Syrian military in the conflict. He sought the removal of Syrian troops from Lebanon and the freeing of all political prisoners. Although Yacoub claimed to represent a group called the Liberation Front for Christian Lebanon, officials later confirmed that the group did not exist.¹⁸²

Claim of responsibility: Later granted bail and acquitted of hostage taking, intimidating Parliament, and aggravated assault, Yacoub was convicted of forcible confinement and use of a weapon in commandeering the bus. He received a sentence of six years but served only two of them before being released. In 2008, he was granted a pardon.¹⁸³



Unique aspects of the attack: The first lone-actor hijacking. The first attack without any physical casualties. The first attack to occur in two provinces.

8. Marc Lépine

Age at time of attack: 25

Location and date of attack: École Polytechnique, Montreal, 6 December 1989

Method: Mini-14 rifle and a hunting knife

Advance planning: The note Lépine left behind suggested his failed effort to join the Canadian Armed Forces had been an effort to access weaponry. This meant, according to him, that he “had to wait until this day to execute my plans. In between, I continued my studies in a haphazard way for they never really interested me, knowing in advance my fate.”¹⁸⁴ He had been seen at École Polytechnique three times in the week leading up to the attack and eight times between 11 September 1989 and the date of the attack.¹⁸⁵

Target and attack: Female engineering students; he also possessed a list of nineteen other targets, including well-known Quebec feminists.¹⁸⁶ Lépine separated female engineering students from male ones and proceeded to shoot and kill fourteen women. He wounded fourteen others (ten women and four men).

DOB: 26 October 1964

POB: Montreal, Canada

Family background: Born Gamil Rodrigue Liess Gharbi to an Algerian-born businessman and a French-Canadian mother, he would change his name at age 14 to Marc Lépine. His father was abusive and disrespectful toward women, with a view that a woman’s purpose was to serve men; he beat his wife and Lépine. His parents separated in 1971, when Lépine was seven, and divorced in 1976. Lépine and his siblings lived with their mother. When she began work as a nurse, they stayed with friends and family during the week and only saw her on weekends. Lépine lived in fifteen different locations throughout his life, including Costa Rica and Puerto Rico.¹⁸⁷

Education: He was a quiet and above-average student, but was unable to gain admission to École Polytechnique, which he would blame on places going to female applicants.¹⁸⁸

Occupation: Student. Previously, he worked a catering job at the hospital where his mother worked, but was fired in 1987.¹⁸⁹

Military experience: He applied to join the Canadian Armed Forces at age 17. The military rejected his application, possibly because of the results on his aptitude test.¹⁹⁰

Relationship status: Single

Social isolation: Said to be withdrawn and shy and to have had only one friend. His mother said he “found it impossible to be romantic with women.”¹⁹¹

Mental health issues: In 1975, the family visited a psychotherapist. A police psychologist with access to family members and documents would later say that Lépine suffered from a personality disorder. Additional psychologists argued that Lépine was psychotic, while some linked the abuse he suffered as a child with his later violence. A friend noted his mood swings and bouts of anger.¹⁹²

Criminal history: None

Expression of intent: None, although his final letter made it clear he had been planning the attack and that his hatred for women had grown.

Motivation: The final letter revealed that misogyny was his motivation. A friend had previously noticed his inability to form relationships with women and his growing anger toward them, including his belief that their proper place was in the home.¹⁹³ At various points in the lead-up to the attack, others encountered his misogyny.¹⁹⁴ These feelings represented a hatred of feminists and women in general, whom he blamed for his



various misfortunes and failures in life: “I have decided to send the feminists, who have always ruined my life, to their Maker.”¹⁹⁵ He began his attack by shouting, “You’re all a bunch of feminists, and I hate feminists!”¹⁹⁶ His attack on women challenging male domination by seeking to become engineers had a significant symbolic aspect. The coroner’s report on the attack noted, “Marc Lépine identified feminists, women, as the enemy, the bad thing to be destroyed. He regarded them as invested with negative characteristics, based on a projective mode of thinking: all the evil was on their side.”¹⁹⁷

Claim of responsibility: Committed suicide at the scene, but left a note behind listing his grievances against feminists. He also made reference to the 1984 attack by Denis Lortie.¹⁹⁸

Unique aspects of the attack: The highest loss of life in any lone-actor attack. The first attack where misogyny was a clear motivation. The first attack on an educational establishment. The first attacker to reference a previous lone-actor attack (Lortie).

9. Roger Warren

Age at time of attack: 49

Location and date of attack: Giant Mine, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, 22 May 1992

Method: Bomb

Advance planning: Warren had the technical expertise needed to carry out the attack, but it is not clear how much he planned the bombing in advance.

Target and attack: Warren snuck into Giant Mine in Yellowknife and planted a bomb along a rail line used to bring in workers; it killed nine replacement workers/strike breakers.

DOB: 17 December 1943

POB: Toronto, Ontario

Family background: Although born in Toronto, he grew up in Elgin, a town near Kingston, Ontario. He was one of five children with two sisters and two brothers and had a stable family upbringing.

Education: He left high school during his grade 13 year because his family had money problems.

Occupation: Labourer, including a bricklayer, and then later a miner

Military experience: None¹⁹⁹

Relationship status: He was married with two daughters.²⁰⁰

Social isolation: Warren had a reputation as a family man who was an active participant in local sports, but was perceived by some as grumpy and somewhat aloof.²⁰¹

Mental health issues: Warren received a psychological assessment as part of the trial. He suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder from a 1987 explosion at the mine that had killed one miner and injured another one. He also suffered from depression, in part due to health issues and from the strike, which further fuelled a sense of paranoia around management tactics. In particular, being out of work affected his male identity, which relied on his ability to work and provide for his family. Finally, he increasingly suffered from impotence, something that also had an impact on his sense of maleness.²⁰²

Criminal history: Minor encounters with the law as a teenager, including being arrested after a friend became involved in a dispute over the currency exchange rate during a visit to the state of New York.

Expression of intent: Other strikers had already carried out small-scale bombings. Tensions existed between those on strike and replacement workers/strike breakers.

Motivation: Warren would claim he never intended to kill anyone but that the explosion was designed to intimidate mine management and strike breakers. Considerable anger existed toward replacement workers, including those who had left the ranks of the strikers to resume their jobs.



Claim of responsibility: During a police interrogation in October 1993, Warren admitted responsibility and demonstrated to the police how he had carried out the attack. He later recanted his confession and maintained his innocence, even after being convicted of second-degree murder. Finally, in 2003, he once more confessed and claimed that his goal had been to intimidate and not to kill.²⁰³

Unique aspects of the attack: The first attack related to an industrial dispute. The first attack in northern Canada.

10. Richard Henry Bain

Age at time of attack: 62

Location and date of attack: Metropolis Concert Hall, Montreal, 4 September 2012

Method: He used a rifle that jammed after firing one shot.²⁰⁴

Advance planning: Unknown

Target and attack: Bain's attack occurred in Montreal at the PQ's election night victory celebration. He sought to kill as many separatists as possible. In the end, he killed stagehand Denis Blanchette and wounded another.²⁰⁵

DOB: 8 September 1950

POB: Montreal

Family background: Bain's father, a World War I veteran, was an emotionally absent father who rarely spoke to his children. Bain's mother played the most important role in raising him and his two older brothers.

Education: Unknown

Occupation: Bain worked for 33 years at a copper refining and processing plant, where he rose to become a supervisor. His social activities also revolved around work as he played in a company hockey league. After retiring from the plant, he established a fishing business.

Military experience: None

Relationship status: Bain met a woman in the late 1980s and they began a twenty-year relationship that he would end in 2009.²⁰⁶

Social isolation: After retiring in 2009, Bain began to use antidepressants and became isolated.²⁰⁷

Mental health issues: The attacker experienced some depression that grew worse in 2009. He would blame his actions on a particular type of antidepressant, while his lawyer suggested that Bain was experiencing psychosis on the night of the attack, possibly from an undiagnosed bipolar disorder. The Crown argued that Bain's mental health was irrelevant and that he had reacted out of anger over the PQ election victory. The jury accepted this argument and found Bain guilty of second-degree murder.²⁰⁸

Criminal history: None

Expression of intent: None

Motivation: Bain told a psychiatrist after the attack that his goal had been to kill as many separatists as possible.²⁰⁹ Part of this came from a conviction that a new PQ government would damage his business, but also from a wider belief that he was on a religious mission to end the "national separatist problem," calling himself a "Christian soldier" who desired to "fight the evil separatists."²¹⁰

Claim of responsibility: Bain accepted responsibility for the attack, but he blamed antidepressants for what he did and said he could not recall the actual shooting.²¹¹

Unique aspects of the attack: The oldest ever lone-actor terrorist in Canada.

11. Justin Bourque

Age at time of attack: 24

Location and date of attack: Moncton, New Brunswick, 4 June 2014

Method: Shooting using a semi-automatic rifle

Advance planning: Having purchased ammunition earlier in the day, Bourque walked around a Moncton neighbourhood dressed in camouflage and openly carrying a weapon, apparently to draw a police response.

Target and attack: The police, in the form of RCMP members. Bourque killed three Mounties and wounded two others.

DOB: 12 November 1989

POB: Moncton, New Brunswick

Family background: One of seven children, Bourque grew up in a tightly knit, deeply devout Roman Catholic family in a middle-class neighbourhood in Moncton.

Education: He and his siblings were home-schooled by their mother because of their strong religious beliefs.

Occupation: Bourque struggled through a number of jobs, including at a distribution centre and at Walmart.

Military experience: Although he had no military experience, Bourque was obsessed with guns.

Relationship status: Single

Social isolation: Described as shy and awkward but with a sense of humour, he played video games and smoked cannabis regularly with friends.

Mental health issues: None, but Bourque became increasingly anxious, angry and withdrawn prior to his attack, with particular concern about distant wars and the government.²¹² His lawyer described Bourque's thinking as "extremely defective."²¹³ His father said that his son had become depressed and paranoid, but a psychiatric assessment deemed the attacker mentally sound and he stood trial.²¹⁴

Criminal history: None

Expression of intent: Bourque expressed increasing anger toward the authorities as he focused on the US government, the US military and American gun culture; a Confederate flag hung on the wall in his bedroom.²¹⁵ His parents became so concerned with his views and activities that they contacted retired police acquaintances. Allegedly, Bourque told a co-worker of his desire to "give people something to remember him for" and that "he wanted to go out with a bang."²¹⁶ In a Facebook post two months ahead of the attack, he wrote: "Ask yourself, would you fight for the future of your children or grandchildren, or your family and friends sons and daughters? The answer is: no you're too stupid to know what to fight for, cause we're already losing the silent war you don't wanna believe is happening."²¹⁷

Motivation: In a statement given to the police immediately after the attack, he claimed he wanted to start a rebellion against an oppressive and corrupt government that he believed squelched the freedom of Canadians.²¹⁸ A potential trigger for the launch of violence was the July 2013 RCMP killing of a local Moncton man and the clearing of the officers involved in that incident two weeks before Bourque carried out his attack.²¹⁹

Claim of responsibility: Bourque surrendered after a thirty-hour manhunt. He would later plead guilty to all charges while expressing regret for his actions.

Unique aspects of the attack: The youngest ever lone-actor attacker in Canada. The first ever attack explicitly motivated by far-right ideology. The first attack on the police. The first attack in Atlantic Canada.

12. Martin Couture-Rouleau

Age at time of attack: 25

Location and date of attack: Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, 20 October 2014

Method: Used a car to run over two people

Advance planning: He waited for two hours in his car in advance of running the soldiers down.

Target: Two military personnel; one was killed.

DOB: 1989

POB: Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec

Family background: After his parents separated, Rouleau lived with his father but remained in contact with his mother.²²⁰

Education: He attended classes for children with behavioural issues.

Occupation: Rouleau worked for a delivery service before launching a pressure-washing business in March 2012, but his entrepreneurial effort failed.

Military experience: None

Relationship status: Rouleau separated from his wife months after she gave birth in April 2011, but had shared custody of their son. Fearing Rouleau's mental state by May 2014, his former wife refused to bring their son to scheduled visits.²²¹

Social isolation: During his teenage years, Couture-Rouleau enjoyed partying and was not religious. Later, he became progressively isolated socially, spending considerable time online.²²²

Mental health issues: Couture-Rouleau experienced a downward cycle in terms of his mental stability. By 2013, he had become so depressed that he rarely slept and spent most of his time in his father's basement. In 2012, in the aftermath of the failure of his business, he increasingly believed in conspiracy theories, including that 9/11 had been an inside job.²²³

Criminal history: At age 16, he was stopped for impaired driving; he also used cannabis.²²⁴ The RCMP had been monitoring him closely since June 2014 out of a concern that he had become radicalized and might travel overseas to join militants. In July 2014, the RCMP arrested him and seized his passport before he could travel to Turkey. The Mounties met with him regularly over the next few months until 9 October.²²⁵

Expression of intent: Converting to Islam in 2013, Couture-Rouleau made no secret of his increasingly radical views, including through frequent social media posts involving praise for IS violence. His father reported him to the police and tried unsuccessfully to take him to a psychiatric ward. He expressed a desire to fight in Syria because of a chance at martyrdom. A few days before his attack, he changed his online profile image to two open doors representing heaven and hell.²²⁶

Motivation: He wanted Canada to leave the "coalition against the Islamic State" and was angry that the country supported American bombing of IS in Syria and Iraq.²²⁷ He also desired an opportunity for martyrdom.

Claim of responsibility: After running down the soldiers, Couture-Rouleau drove off and called 911 to make it clear he was "acting in the name of Allah." The police shot him after he charged at them with a knife.²²⁸

Unique aspects of the attack: The first attacker to use a vehicle as a weapon. The first attacker to be motivated by Islamism and support for IS. The first attack on Canadian military personnel. The first attacker to be a convert to Islam.

13. Michael Zehaf-Bibeau

Age at time of attack: 32

Location and date of attack: National War Memorial and Parliament Hill, Ottawa, 22 October 2014

Method: A shooting using a Winchester lever-action single-shot rifle.²²⁹

Advance planning: Some, as reflected in the creation of his video.

Target: Zehaf-Bibeau shot and killed an unarmed Canadian soldier on ceremonial duty at the War Memorial and then managed to enter the Parliament buildings, where he fired several shots. Three were injured.

DOB: 16 October 1982

POB: Montreal



Family background: His father was Bulgasem Zehaf, a Libyan businessperson, and his mother was Susan Bibeau, a civil servant. A witness described both parents as involved and caring and Zehaf-Bibeau grew up in a middle-class Montreal suburb, with his parents divorcing in 1999. Ten years later, Zehaf-Bibeau moved to Vancouver after a clash with his mother, whom he would not speak to again for five years. He also lived in Calgary.²³⁰

Education: He graduated from high school in 1999.

Occupation: He worked as a miner and labourer.²³¹

Military experience: None

Relationship status: Single

Social isolation: Zehaf-Bibeau had gone through periods of homelessness and living in shelters and was estranged from his mother for more than five years.²³²

Mental health issues: In 2011, he received a psychiatric assessment after he expressed a desire to go to jail to deal with his addiction to crack. The assessor concluded that “I am unable to find any features or signs of mental illness.” A friend told the media after the attack that Zehaf-Bibeau had once told him that he was being pursued by the “devil.”²³³ Several acquaintances described him as paranoid, while his mother described the attack as the “last desperate act of a person not well in his mind.” In contrast, the RCMP blamed the attack on “ideological and political motives.”²³⁴

Criminal history: Zehaf-Bibeau had a lengthy criminal record, going back to at least 2001, related to drug possession, theft, robbery, uttering threats, possession of a dangerous weapon and assault.²³⁵

Expression of intent: None beyond Zehaf-Bibeau desiring to study in Libya and to travel to Syria.

Motivation: He had converted to Islam in 2004 and later became radicalized. He was angry over the rejection of his application for a Libyan passport and in relation to a delay in obtaining a Canadian passport, as he sought to travel abroad.²³⁶ In the video he released before the attack, Zehaf-Bibeau explicitly framed his attack as a retaliation for Canadian foreign policy, including in Afghanistan:

To those who are involved and listen to this movie, this is in retaliation for Afghanistan and because [Canadian Prime Minister Stephen] Harper wants to send his troops to Iraq. So, we are retaliating, the Mujahedin of this world. Canada’s officially become one of our enemies by fighting and bombing us, and creating a lot of terror in our countries and killing us and killing our innocents. So, just aiming to hit some soldiers just to show that you’re not even safe in your own land, and you gotta be careful. So, may Allah accept from us. It’s a disgrace. You guys have forgotten God and have you [sic] let every indecency and things running your land. We don’t, we don’t go for this. We are good people, righteous people, believing his laws and his prophet’s peace be upon them all. That’s my message to all of you in this. Inshallah, we’ll not cease until you guys decide to be a peaceful country and stay to your own and I, and stop going to other countries and stop occupying and killing the righteous of us who are trying to bring back religious law in our countries. Thank you.²³⁷

Claim of responsibility: A short video released by Zehaf-Bibeau said opposition to Canadian foreign policy motivated his attack.

Unique aspects of the attack: The first attacker to record a video message prior to an attack.

14. Ayanle Hassan Ali

Age at time of attack: 27



Location and date of attack: A Canadian Forces recruitment centre, Toronto, 14 March 2016

Method: A knife

Advance planning: Unknown

Target: Soldiers; one was stabbed and two others suffered minor injuries.

DOB: 1988

POB: Montreal

Family background: He was born in Montreal to Somali immigrant parents who had three other children. When Ali was two years old, the family relocated to Toronto. Some time later, his mother was diagnosed with mental illness and a year after that, in 2001, Ali's father left the family. Ali struggled with caring for his mother in subsequent years.²³⁸

Education: He completed high school in Toronto. Although reports said he had been an engineering student at the University of Calgary and then abandoned his studies to care for his mother, he was registered only as an open studies student there in the 2009 winter and summer terms.²³⁹

Occupation: He had brief employment in the oil industry in Alberta.

Military experience: None

Relationship status: Unknown

Social isolation: One account stated that Ali only ever left his home to purchase groceries and to attend his mosque, but one friend said that they regularly played basketball in the summer.²⁴⁰

Mental health issues: An expert testified that Ali had suffered from schizophrenia and other mental health issues since 2010. He has been treated at a forensic psychiatry hospital since his arrest. Before the attack, Ali became convinced that the government was listening to him and that spirits were possessing him.²⁴¹

Criminal history: None

Expression of intent: He wrote in his diary, "I have a licence to kill. One soldier is all it takes."²⁴²

Motivation: Ali was angry over the involvement of the Canadian military in Muslim countries and came to believe that if he were martyred, his sins would be forgiven in the afterlife. During the attack, he was heard to say: "Allah told me to do this." The judge in the case declared that the stabbings were "motivated by the defendant's radical religious and ideological beliefs but there is no dispute that the formation of those beliefs was in large part precipitated by mental disorder."²⁴³

Claim of responsibility: Ali pleaded not guilty on grounds of mental illness. A judge acquitted him in May 2018 of terrorism charges because he had acted alone and had no contact with or connection to any terrorists or terrorist groups and thus had not violated Canadian law. The judge also found him not criminally responsible for the other offences because of mental illness.²⁴⁴

Unique aspects of the attack: The first lone-actor attacker to use a knife.

15. Aaron Driver

Age at time of attack: 25

Location and date of attack: Strathroy, Ontario, 10 August 2016

Method: Homemade bomb

Advance planning: The use of a homemade bomb and making of a martyrdom video demonstrated planning.

Target: Initially believed to be Citi Plaza shopping mall in London, Ontario, but in 2018, the Canadian government confirmed the target was Union Station in Toronto.²⁴⁵

DOB: 18 August 1991

POB: Regina, Saskatchewan



Family background: Driver, who had two older siblings, was born to Wayne, a devout Christian and long-haul truck driver, and Linda, a stay-at-home mother. Driver had an extremely close relationship to his mother, who died of a brain tumour while he was a child. He grew angry and resentful when his father began a new relationship in the aftermath of his mother's death; he ran away repeatedly and also wrote poetry that involved him murdering his father and stepmother. Driver moved out to live with his siblings, but after encounters with the law, he eventually returned to live with his father.

Education: At age 18, Driver left high school to get a job. In 2012, he moved back in with his father and enrolled at Jameswood Alternative School in 2013 in Winnipeg.

Occupation: He worked at a gas station in 2012 and then moved in with his sister and her family. He got a job on the assembly line at Meridian Lightweight Technologies, a car parts manufacturer in Strathroy, Ontario.

Military experience: None

Relationship status: At age 17, Driver was in a relationship and his girlfriend became pregnant. The baby, a boy, was stillborn and the couple broke up in 2012.

Social isolation: Driver started watching Islam-related YouTube videos online at the age of 18. Islam became an even bigger factor in his life after the stillbirth of his son. Returning to live with his father in 2012, he failed to make friends and spent increasing time online.

Mental health issues: Driver's father was convinced that his son became depressed after his mother's death and never recovered.²⁴⁶

Criminal history: While a teenager, Driver stole electronics from homes and cars to sell. He came to the attention of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the RCMP in October 2014, after he tweeted out (under a pseudonym) support for IS. In 2015, the police arrested Driver on the grounds of suspected terrorist activity; a court released him on a peace bond with twenty-five conditions, including the wearing of a GPS tracker and staying off the Internet. Later, a court reduced this to nineteen conditions.²⁴⁷

Expression of intent: On day of the attack, the RCMP received a tip from the FBI about Driver, who had posted a martyrdom video online. He left a suicide note addressed to his family in which he said he loved them all.²⁴⁸

Motivation: Islamism. In a 2015 CBC interview, he linked his anger to the situation in Syria: "Seeing some of the things that happened in Syria, it infuriates you and it breaks your heart at the same time. And I think that if you know what's going on, you have to do something. Even if you're just speaking about it."²⁴⁹ In the martyrdom video he made, Driver stated:

you received many warnings. You were told many times what will become of those who fight against the Islamic State. You watched as your allies in Europe and America had their bullets and bombs returned back to them. You saw bodies of the filthy French laying in their own streets. You saw explosions in Paris and Brussels, similar to the explosions they were dropping on citizens of the Islamic State.

You saw brave men and women respond to the call of jihad. You saw that each member of the coalition of crusaders was being punished for their aggression against the Muslims. Then, perhaps, you found yourself safe from retaliation because you ran away from the battlefield. No, no by Allah you still have much to pay for.

You still have a heavy debt which has to be paid. You still have Muslim blood on your hands, and for this we are thirsty for your blood. There's a fire burning in the chest of every Muslim, and this fire can be cooled only by the spilling of your blood. Your war on Islam is not the kind of crime we allow ourselves to dismiss, to forgive or to forget, insha'Allah.²⁵⁰



Claim of responsibility: Driver claimed responsibility in the video and in his suicide note.

Unique aspects of the attack: The first attacker to use a non-dynamite homemade bomb.

16. Alexandre Bissonnette

Age at time of attack: 27

Location and date of attack: Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City, Quebec City, 29 January 2017

Method: A Glock handgun and a semi-automatic rifle that jammed

Advance planning: Worshippers later stated that Bissonnette had previously visited the Islamic Cultural Centre, but no evidence of this was presented during the trial. On the day of the attack, he watched a YouTube video about the weapon he used to kill the worshippers.

Target: Muslim worshippers in the Mosque; six were killed and nineteen injured.

DOB: 1989

POB: Quebec City

Family background: He grew up in a middle-class family with a civil servant mother and a lawyer father.²⁵¹ As an adult, he lived in an apartment with his twin brother, close to his parents, with whom he often stayed on weekends. He and his father, Raymond Bissonnette, went occasionally to a shooting range together and would email each other about Alexandre's medication and issues related to Muslims.

Education: According to a former teacher, Bissonnette was regularly bullied by other students in high school. He began studying political science and anthropology at Laval University, but at the time of the attack he was not enrolled, due to depression and anxiety.²⁵²

Occupation: At the time of the shooting, Bissonnette worked at Héma-Québec, the body that manages the provincial blood supply. However, he was off work after a superior criticized him for asking for leave to take a university exam.

Military experience: None

Relationship status: According to his father, he did not have a partner, had trouble meeting people and suffered from low self-esteem.²⁵³

Social isolation: Bissonnette spent considerable time online reading about mass shooters, including lone-actor terrorists Marc Lépine and Justin Bourque. He also consumed the social media output of American right-wing political commentators, US President Donald Trump, and French politician Marine Le Pen.²⁵⁴

Mental health issues: Bissonnette had a history of depression and anxiety and had taken medication in the past. In 2014, he acquired a gun license after lying about his history of mental illness and would legally obtain six guns in subsequent years. He then allegedly considered, at various points, using the weapon to take his own life. He also held violent and hostile thoughts for a number of years and at one point contemplated carrying out a shooting at a shopping mall. While being interrogated by the police, he appeared delusional and said he had been anxious and depressed for a decade and had begun to take a new antidepressant medication because a previous one was not effective. Eight months after this, he informed a social worker that he had not been delusional during the attack but that he wanted "glory" and regretted "not having killed more people."²⁵⁵

Criminal history: None

Expression of intent: Bissonnette had expressed extreme right-wing views, including anti-Muslim ones, online and to people around him. He searched online for information about lone-actor terrorists, including Marc Lépine, Justin Bourque, Dylann Roof, Michael Zehaf-Bibeau and Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, and searched for Trump 819 times. According to friends, he was "extreme right" in his political views and obsessed by Hitler,



World War II and the Holocaust. He also sought information about feminists and Muslims at Laval University and viewed details about Lépine's attack on female engineering students in 1989.²⁵⁶

Motivation: Far-right hatred of immigrants that was fuelled by social media. Bissonnette informed the police that the immediate trigger for his violence was a 28 January 2017 tweet by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that welcomed refugees to Canada in response to Trump's ban on seven Muslim-majority countries:

I was watching TV and I learned that the Canadian government was going to take more refugees who couldn't go to the United States, and they were coming here. I saw that and I, like, lost my mind. I don't want us to become like Europe. I don't want them to kill my parents, my family. I had to do something, I couldn't do nothing. It was something that tortured me.²⁵⁷

Claim of responsibility: Bissonnette cried repeatedly in a 911 call he made after the attack and asked whether he had killed anyone. He was charged with first-degree murder and pleaded guilty to six charges of first-degree murder.²⁵⁸

Unique aspects of the attack: The first attack on a religious place of worship and on Muslims.

17. Rehab Dughmush

Age at time of attack: 32(?)

Location and date of attack: A Canadian Tire store in Scarborough, Ontario, 3 June 2017

Method: A golf club and a knife

Advance planning: Dughmush had prepared weapons but her husband took most of them away from her. She also had a homemade IS flag with her.

Target and attack: Employees at a Canadian Tire store, with one employee injured slightly.

DOB: 1985(?)

POB: Syria

Family background: She was born in Syria, where her parents continue to live. One of her brothers lives in Germany and another in the United Arab Emirates.

Education: Unknown

Occupation: Homemaker

Military experience: None

Relationship status: In an arranged marriage, she arrived in Canada in 2009 to live with her husband. They had two children and were in the process of getting a divorce when she carried out her attack.

Social isolation: She was convinced the government was spying on her. She spent considerable time online viewing extremist videos, to the point that while visiting her brother in the United Arab Emirates, he shut down her Internet access.²⁵⁹

Mental health issues: As a child, she suffered bouts of depression and anxiety that led her to pull her hair out. Beginning in 2013, when she was expelled from a citizenship ceremony because she refused to remove her niqab, she became convinced that the Canadian government was persecuting her. This concern included a belief that the government had hidden cameras in her house. As a result, she covered light sockets and vents with aluminium foil.²⁶⁰ A psychiatric assessment prepared for her trial stated, "The worsening of her psychotic state over time resulted in severe functional decline and adverse interpersonal consequences, as manifested by her social withdrawal, failure to adequately manage her household/familial responsibilities, and marital demise." However, the same report argued that her adopting of increasingly extremist religious views was separate from her mental health issues and she was deemed fit to face a trial.²⁶¹



Criminal history: No criminal record. In 2016, a brother in Germany contacted the RCMP to report that his sister was intending to travel to Syria to join IS. Turkish officials stopped her and sent her back to Canada. The Mounties interviewed her but she was not charged.

Expression of intent: She regularly viewed extremist videos. In her own videos, she stated that she intended to seek “revenge for Muslims.” Her family were aware of her views and her brother contacted the RCMP to warn about her travelling to Syria to join IS, while her husband took away her collection of weapons before her attack.²⁶²

Motivation: Islamism and support for IS

Claim of responsibility: She told a store employee who asked her if she was trying to kill people on behalf of IS: “Yes. When you kill us, we will kill you... When you kill Muslims, you have to pay for it from your blood.”²⁶³

Uniqueness of attack: The first and only lone-actor attack in Canada carried out by a woman.

18. Abdulahi Hasan Sharif

Age at time of attack: 30

Location and date of attack: Edmonton, outside a Canadian Football League game and along a road, 30 September 2017

Method: A U-Haul truck and a knife

Advance planning: Unknown

Target and attack: Sharif drove a truck into a police officer and then stabbed him. He later struck four pedestrians with the vehicle.

DOB: 1987

POB: Somalia

Family background: Sharif was a Somali refugee who was ordered to leave the United States by an immigration judge in 2011. He came to Canada in 2012 and was granted refugee status. He has a brother living in Toronto.²⁶⁴

Education: Unknown

Occupation: He worked in construction in 2015²⁶⁵

Military experience: Unknown

Relationship status: He was married, with his wife living in Africa; they had no children. He was also involved in a relationship with an Edmonton woman, with whom he had lived since 2016.²⁶⁶

Social isolation: The local Edmonton Somali community had little knowledge of him.²⁶⁷

Mental health issues: His longer history is unknown. After two psychiatric assessments, doctors deemed him fit to stand trial.²⁶⁸

Criminal history: Sharif was detained in US custody for four months in 2011 and ordered deported to Somalia, but was released on an “order of supervision” and then went missing. He had no known criminal history at that time. In 2015, a complainant alleged to the Edmonton Police Service that Sharif had expressed extremist ideology. That brought him to the attention of the RCMP, but after an investigation it was decided that there was insufficient evidence to warrant either terrorism charges or a peace bond.²⁶⁹

Expression of intent: A fellow worker at the construction site alleged that Sharif was an IS sympathizer and that he discussed his hatred of Shia Muslims and support for well-known members of IS. He reported Sharif to the RCMP, who interviewed him but decided there was insufficient evidence to warrant a peace bond or charges.

Motivation: An IS flag was allegedly found in the vehicle.²⁷⁰

Claim of responsibility: Sharif was convicted of five charges of attempted murder in October 2019. He never faced charges related to terrorism.²⁷¹

Unique aspects of the attack: The first attack involving a rental vehicle.

19. Alek Minassian

Age at time of attack: 25

Location and date of attack: Toronto, Ontario, 23 April 2018

Method: Rented a van and used it to run down pedestrians, killing ten people and injuring sixteen others.

Target: Pedestrians

DOB: 1993

POB: Richmond Hill, Ontario

Family background: He lived with his father.²⁷²

Education: Minassian attended Thornlea Secondary School in Ontario for special needs children. His high school classmates described him as an IT expert. For seven years, he was a student at Seneca College.²⁷³

Occupation: While at Seneca College, he worked on software development.²⁷⁴

Military experience: Minassian joined the Canadian Armed Forces on 23 August 2017, but quit after sixteen days of basic training. The military officially released him two months later. After the attack, a military spokesperson said, “He wasn’t adapting to the military lifestyle... There were no red flags and nothing that would point to anything like this.” He had not received any weapons training.²⁷⁵

Relationship status: Unknown

Social isolation: Several former classmates depicted him as lacking many friends and as socially awkward, exhibiting strange behaviour.²⁷⁶

Mental health issues: A number of people who knew him in school said he had mental health issues. At his trial, his lawyers argued that he was not criminally responsible for the attack due to autism spectrum disorder.²⁷⁷

Criminal history: None. The Toronto police had not encountered him.²⁷⁸

Expression of intent: In a Facebook post ten minutes before the attack, Minassian referred to the incel movement, while praising misogynist killer Elliot Rodger, and stated that the “Incel Rebellion has already begun.”²⁷⁹

Motivation: Misogyny, as Minassian was part of an online community of incels. In an April 2019 appearance, David Vigneault, director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, referred to an individual “invoking the philosophy of the involuntary celibates” as having carried out the van attack.²⁸⁰

Claim of responsibility: He eventually surrendered to police. Minassian admitted renting the van and carrying out the attack, but his lawyers argued that he was not criminally responsible due to autism spectrum disorder.²⁸¹ The judge found him guilty on all charges on 3 March 2021.²⁸²

Uniqueness of attack: The first attack linked to the incel movement.

NOTES

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² Ramón Spaaij, *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism: Global Patterns, Motivations and Prevention* (New York: Springer, 2012), 23.

³ Ramón Spaaij and Mark S. Hamm, “Key Issues and Research Agendas in Lone Wolf Terrorism,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 38, no. 3 (2014): 168. On the origins of “lone wolf” as a concept, see R. A. Bates, “Dancing with Wolves: Today’s Lone Wolf Terrorists,” *Journal of Public and Professional Sociology* 4, no. 1 (2012): 3; Edwin Bakker and Beatrice de Graaf, “Preventing Lone Wolf Terrorism: Some Ct Approaches Addressed,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 5, no. 5-6 (2011): 43; Paul Gill, *Lone-Actor Terrorists: A Behavioural Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2015), 4-6; Mark S. Hamm and Ramón Spaaij, *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 6. For more on the history of the American White power movement, see Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2018).

⁴ For more on lone-actor terrorism in the United States, see Charles A. Eby, “The Nation That Cried Lone Wolf: A Data-Driven Analysis of Individual Terrorists in the United States since 9/11,” PhD Dissertation, Naval Postgraduate School, 2012.

⁵ Richard Bach Jensen, “The Pre-1914 Anarchist ‘Lone Wolf’ Terrorist and Governmental Responses,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 1 (2014): 86-94.

⁶ Marc Sageman, “The Stagnation in Terrorism Research,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 4 (2014): 565-80; Marc Sageman, *Misunderstanding Terrorism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2016 [Kindle Edition]), 20; Jim Bonworth, Marie Eyre, Michelle McManus, and Daniel Peddell, “Influences and Vulnerabilities in Radicalised Lone-Actor Terrorists,” *International Journal of Police Science & Management* 18, no. 2 (2016): 64.

⁷ Paul Gill, John Horgan, Emily Corner, and James Silver, “Indicators of Lone Actor Violent Events: The Problems of Low Base Rates and Long Observational Periods,” *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management* 3, no. 3-4 (2016): 169.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 166; Hamm and Spaaij, *Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 17.

⁹ Manni Crone, “Radicalization Revisited: Violence, Politics and the Skills of the Body,” *International Affairs* 92, no. 3 (2016): 598.

¹⁰ Ramón Spaaij, as quoted in Hamm and Spaaij, *Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 17.

¹¹ Fred Vultee, “Securitization: A new approach to the framing of the ‘war on terror’,” *Journalism Practice* 4, no. 1 (2010): 33-47; Paddy Hillyard, *Suspect Community: People's Experience of the Prevention of Terrorism Acts in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1993).

¹² “Research into gender dynamics in radicalization to violence and in countering violent extremism,” Public Safety Canada, 8 October 2014, <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/tender-notice/PW-14-00656049> (accessed 16 April 2019).

¹³ Michael Kimmel, *Healing from Hate: How Young Men Get Into—and Out of—Violent Extremism* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2018 [Kindle Edition]), 3-4.

¹⁴ Nicole Tishler, Marie Ouellet, and Joshua Kilberg, “A Survey of Terrorism in Canada, 1960-2015,” in Jez Littlewood, Lorne L. Dawson, and Sara K. Thompson, eds., *Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 25-48.

¹⁵ For more on far-right extremism and violence in Canada, see David C. Hoffman, “Breaking Free: A Socio-Historical Analysis of the Canadian Freemen-on-the-Land Movement,” in Littlewood, Dawson, and Thompson, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Canada*, 77-100.

¹⁶ Barbara Perry and Ryan Scrivens, “Who’s a Terrorist? What’s Terrorism? Comparative Media Representations of Lone-Actor Violence in Canada,” in Littlewood, Dawson, and Thompson, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Canada*, 242-64. See also Juan Cole, “Top Ten differences between White Terrorists and Others,” *Informed Comment*, 9 August 2012, www.juancole.com/2012/08/top-ten-differences-between-white-terrorists-and-others.html (accessed 11 May 2017).

¹⁷ “Murder and Extremism in the United States in 2019,” ADL Center on Extremism (February 2020), 4, 7-8, www.adl.org/media/14107/download (accessed 25 June 2020). There has been push back against the ADL report: Anthony L. Fisher, “The ADL’s extremism statistics make it seem like ultraright-wing violence in the US is more common than it actually is,” *Business Insider*, 24 April 2020, www.businessinsider.com/adl-extremism-ultraright-wing-violence-statistics-anti-defamation-league-2020-4?r=US&IR=T (accessed 25 June 2020). I am currently working on a history of lone-actor terrorism in the United Kingdom covering 1894 to 2019. Of the twenty-three lone-actor terrorist attacks identified, Islamists carried out ten of them and the far right was responsible for eleven. In the inverse to Canada, attacks by Islamists have been far deadlier than those by far-right extremists. Steve Hewitt, “A History of Lone-Actor Terrorism in the United Kingdom,” work in progress.

¹⁸ Graham Macklin, *Failed Führers: A History of Britain’s Extreme Right* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2020), 3.



¹⁹Andrew Silke, as quoted in Magnus Ranstorp, 'Introduction: Mapping Terrorism Research- Challenges and Priorities', in M. Ranstorp, ed., *Mapping Terrorism Research: State of the Art, Gaps and Future Direction* (London: Routledge, 2006), 12.

²⁰ Richard Jackson, Jeroen Gunning, and Marie Breen Smith, "The Case for a Critical Terrorism Studies," Paper presented to the American Political Science Association, 2007, 5, <http://cadair.aber.ac.uk/dspace/bitstream/handle/2160/1945/APSA-2007-Paper-final2.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (accessed 31 October 2016).

²¹ Randall D. Law, *Terrorism: A History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009 [Kindle edition]), locations 317-320.

²² Ibid.

²³ The Canadian Criminal Code definition of terrorism at the time of the writing of this working paper can be found here: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-46/page-12.html#h-26>. For more on definitions of terrorism, see Alex P. Schmid, "Terrorism: The Definitional Problem," *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* 36, no. 2 (2004): 375-419; Jessie Blackbourn, Fergal F. Davis, and Natasha C. Taylor, "Academic Consensus and Legislative Definitions of Terrorism: Applying Schmid and Jongman," *Statute Law Review* 34, no. 3 (2012): 239-61.

²⁴ For the wider issues around terrorism studies as a field, see Lisa Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror: How Experts Invited "Terrorism"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

²⁵ A prime example of different definitions is that Gill, Horgan, and Deckert label the Oklahoma City Bombing as lone-actor terrorism whereas Spaaij and Sageman do not. For international examples, see Paul Gill, John Horgan, and Paige Deckert, "Bombing Alone: Tracing the Motivations and Antecedent Behaviors of Lone-Actor Terrorists," *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 59, no. 2 (March 2014): 425-35; Spaaij, *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 17-8; Sageman, *Misunderstanding Terrorism*, locations 910-914. In a later piece co-authored with Emily Corner and James Silver, Gill and Horgan define lone-actor terrorism as individuals "who, by definition, act alone and without direction or support." Gill, Horgan, Corner, and Silver, "Indicators of Lone Actor Violent Events," 168.

²⁶ Raffaello Pantucci, "A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists," *The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence* (2011): 1-39; Jeffrey D. Simon, *Lone Wolf Terrorism: Understanding the Growing Threat* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2016 [Kindle Edition]), locations 521-25.

²⁷ Spaaij, *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 16-17; Hamm and Spaaij, *Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 5.

²⁸ Jason Burke, "The myth of the 'lone wolf' terrorist," *Guardian*, 30 March 2017, www.theguardian.com/news/2017/mar/30/myth-lone-wolf-terrorist (accessed 23 August 2019); Juliette Kayyem, "There are no lone wolves," *Washington Post*, 4 August 2019,



www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/08/04/there-are-no-lone-wolves/ (accessed 23 August 2019); Maggie Koerth-Baker, "No Terrorist Is A 'Lone Wolf'," *FiveThirtyEight*, 6 August 2019, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/no-terrorist-is-a-lone-wolf/> (accessed 23 August 2019); Hamm and Spaaij, *Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 59. For an academic examination of this issue, see David C. Hoffmann, "How 'Alone' Are Lone-Actors? Exploring the Ideological, Signaling, and Support Networks of Lone-Actor Terrorists," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 43, no. 7 (February 2020): 657-78.

²⁹ Hamm and Spaaij, *Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 81; Crone, "Radicalization revisited," 598.

³⁰ For example, Judy M. Torrance, *Public Violence in Canada, 1867–1982* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986); Anthony Kellett, "Terrorism in Canada, 1960-1992," in Jeffrey Ian Ross, ed., *Violence in Canada: Sociopolitical Perspectives* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 284-312; Dmitry Anastakis, *Death in the Peaceable Kingdom: Canadian History since 1867 through Murder, Execution, Assassination, and Suicide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015); Stéphane Leman-Langlois, "Canada," in Andrew Silke, ed., *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism and Counterterrorism* (London: Routledge, 2019), 504-16; Tishler, Ouellet, and Kilberg, "A Survey of Terrorism in Canada, 1960-2015." As a point of comparison, Christopher Hewitt identifies thirty cases of lone-actor terrorism in the United States between 1955 and 1999. Hewitt classified attackers as right-wing racists, Islamic extremists, Black militants or anti-abortionists. Although such examples only accounted for two percent of terrorism offences in the era examined, they were responsible for 15 percent of the fatalities from terrorism. Hamm and Spaaij, *Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 14.

³¹ A case that was not included in the list is that of Norman Walter Raddatz. Raddatz shot and killed an Edmonton police officer in June 2015. He had a history of far-right extremism, but the motive for the killing, in response to a police effort visit to his home to arrest him, is unclear. Hoffman, "Breaking Free: A Socio-Historical Analysis of the Canadian Freemen-on-the-Land Movement," 77-79; "Norman Raddatz had extensive police file for hate crimes," *CBC News*, 9 June 2015, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/norman-raddatz-had-extensive-police-file-for-hate-crimes-1.3105901 (accessed 14 June 2020).

³² "Ayanle Hassan Ali, accused of stabbing at Canadian Forces centre, facing 9 charges," *CBC News*, 15 March 2016, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-stabbing-military-recruitment-centre-1.3491719 (accessed 12 July 2018). For more on the prosecution of terrorism in Canada, see Michael Nesbitt and Dana Hagg, "An Empirical Study of Terrorism Prosecutions in Canada: Elucidating the Elements of the Offences," *Alberta Law Review* 57, no. 3 (2020): 595-648.

³³ "Johann Most," *Spartacus Educational*, <https://spartacus-educational.com/USAmost.htm> (accessed 19 February 2020).

³⁴ Johann Most, *Revolutionäre Kriegswissenschaft: Eine Handbüchlein zur Anleitung Betreffend Gebrauches und Herstellung von Nitro-Glycerin, Dynamit, Schiessbaumwolle, Knallquecksilber, Bomben, Brandsätzen, Giften usw., usw.* (New York: Internationaler Zeitung-Verein, c. 1883).

- ³⁵ Johann Most, *Science of Revolutionary Warfare: A Handbook of Instruction in the Use and Preparation of Nitroglycerine, Dynamite, Gun-Cotton, Fulminating Mercury, Bombs, Fuses, Poisons, Etc., Etc.* Trans. Anonymous (El Dorado, Arizona: Desert Publications, 1978), 60.
- ³⁶ Jensen, "The Pre-1914 Anarchist 'Lone Wolf' Terrorist and Governmental Responses." See also Richard Bach Jensen, "Anarchist Terrorism and Global Diasporas, 1878–1914," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27, no. 3 (2015): 441-53.
- ³⁷ For detailed descriptions of the attacks and attackers described in this section, see the Appendix.
- ³⁸ Hereward Senior, *The Fenians and Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978).
- ³⁹ T. P. Slattery, "Patrick James Whelan," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* IX 1861-1870, www.biographi.ca/en/bio/whelan_patrick_james_9E.html (accessed 4 April 2019); Senior, *The Fenians and Canada*, 124.
- ⁴⁰ I see assassinations driven by political/ideological motivations as terrorism. For more on assassinations and terrorism, see David C. Rapoport, *Assassination & Terrorism* (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1971), 3; T.K. Wilson, *Killing Strangers: How Political Violence Became Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 117.
- ⁴¹ Hugh Johnston, *The Voyage of the "Komagata Maru": The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989).
- ⁴² Statement by Mewa Singh, 26 October 1914, vol. 1467, file Singh, N, Record Group (RG) 13 C1, Records of the Department of Justice, Library and Archives Canada (LAC).
- ⁴³ Zhongping Chen, "An Assassination in Victoria," *Times Colonist*, 31 August 2008.
- ⁴⁴ "Blood, Guns and Politics"; C. H. Cahan, Director of Public Safety, to Minister of Justice, 16 October 1918, vol. 1940, file 1547-1919, RG 13, LAC.
- ⁴⁵ Zhongping Chen, "An Assassination in Victoria," *Times Colonist*, 31 August 2008.
- ⁴⁶ Steve Finkelman and Scott Lilwall, "Edmonton's terrorist attack: the 1965 airport bombing," *CBC News*, 26 January 2014, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-s-terrorist-attack-the-1965-airport-bombing-1.2510608 (accessed 3 July 2018); Statement of Harry Waldemar Fredrich HUBACH, no date, file Hubach, H.W.F., part 8, City of Edmonton Police Department, vol. 1820, LAC; Justice Hugh C. Farthing to Minister of Justice Lucien Cardin, 15 October 1965, RG 13, vol. 1820, LAC; Condensed Summary of Trial of Hubach, no date, RG 13, vol. 1820, LAC; Catherine Griwkowsky, "Edmonton municipal airport site of 1965 American warplane bombing, guard slaying by Vietnam war protester," *Edmonton Sun* (2014), <http://edmontonsun.com/2014/01/27/edmonton-municipal-airport-site-of-1965-american-warplane-bombing-guard-slaying-by-vietnam-war-protester/wcm/ac346c83-499e-4936-83ff-361c19e6efae> (accessed 3 July 2018); Chris Zdeb, "Jan. 28, 1965: Edmonton man charged with murder, sabotage," *Edmonton Journal*



(2015), <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/jan-28-1965-edmonton-man-charged-with-murder-sabotage> (accessed 3 July 2018).

⁴⁷ Memorandum from the US Embassy, Ottawa, 19 May 1966, Access Request A2015-00097, Records of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RG 18), LAC, 224; FBI report, 31 May 1966, 949; FBI report, 2 June 1966, 955; “Commons Bomber Left Rambling Tale of Life,” *Brandon Sun*, 8 July 1966, www.ancestry.co.uk/mediaui-viewer/tree/70880557/person/44434968646/media/8d0b75b4-fea6-4252-a865-bd534c0fd29e?_phsrc=zRR7&_phstart=successSource (accessed 5 July 2018).

⁴⁸ Steve Hewitt, “Happy-Go-Lucky Fellow: Lone-Actor Terrorism, Masculinity, and the 1966 Bombing on Parliament Hill in Ottawa,” *Canadian Historical Review* 100, no. 1 (March 2019): 46-68.

⁴⁹ R-2 Transcript of the Recording of Denis Lortie's Cassette at CJRP, 7 May 1984 (translated by Mark Irving), vol. 4045, Record Group (RG) 125, Records of the Supreme Court of Canada, LAC, 2-3.

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⁵⁵ Giant Mine Murders,” *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*, www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/giant-mine-murders/ (accessed 10 July 2018); Lee Selleck and Francis Thompson, *Dying for Gold: The True Story of the Giant Mine Murders* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 1997), 231.

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⁵⁸ The “Islamist” label is problematic and there are increasing efforts to move away from its use. I have continued to utilize it in this piece but have added the qualifier “faith-claimed” to emphasize the complexities around the matter. For more on the debate, see Bethan Johnson, “Are We Ready to Drop the Term ‘Islamist’ in Reference to Terrorism?,” *Fair Observer*, 24 July 2020, <https://www.faiobserver.com/region/europe/bethan-johnson-islamist-christianist-terrorism-terminology-debate-uk-news-15516/> (accessed 4 March 2021).

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