

C Bias Crime Offenders

Overview of the Session: At a Glance

Presentation: Offender Typology	30 minutes
Presentation: Organized Hate Groups	15 minutes
Activity: Analysis of Three Video Segments	45 minutes
TOTAL TIME	90 minutes

Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe the characteristics of three types of bias crime offenders
- Give examples of retaliatory hate crimes and discuss the importance of appropriate responses
- Describe the characteristics of organized hate groups
- Identify offender typology, given a case example

Materials and Equipment



Time: 90 minutes



Videos: “That Old Gang of Mine” (interview with Eric, former skinhead), 1990
 “On Hate Street,” *48 Hours*, CBS, 1992
 “Licensed to Kill,” Arthur Dong, Deepfocus Productions, 1997
 (See page 56 for ordering information.)



Handouts: Thrill-Seeking Offenders; Case Studies of Typical Offenders; Reactive Offenders; Mission Offenders; Offender Typology Video Observation Form



Transparencies: Important of Understanding Offender Typology; Retaliatory Hate Crimes; Organized Hate Groups



Equipment: Overhead projector; screen; VCR; monitor


Instructor's Notes

1. Presentation: Offender Typology (30 minutes)

Explain the following:

- Jack Levin and Jack McDevitt of Northeastern University identified three different types of hate crime offenders in their book on bias crime, *Hate Crime: The Rising Tide of Bigotry and Bloodshed*: thrill-seeking offenders, reactive offenders, and mission offenders.
- These are not necessarily pure categories, and, since offenders can progress from one type to another, the lines between the categories may at times be blurred.

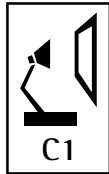
Use Transparency C1, "Importance of Understanding Offender Typology."



Note to Instructor

The offender typology presented in this session is designed to help professionals understand the different motivations and characteristics of "typical" hate crime offenders and the implications for responding to hate violence. It is not intended to overgeneralize or to presume that perpetrators will necessarily fit into one category.

Explain to participants that this typology is evolving as research on hate crime offenders continues. The terms, such as "thrill-seeking" or "mission," are the ones originally used by Jack Levin and Jack McDevitt in their seminal book on hate crime.¹ Other hate crime experts may use different terms for the same typology. To encourage discussion, you may wish to **ask** participants for their ideas about the typology and its relevance to perpetrators they have encountered.



IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING OFFENDER TYPOLOGY

Knowing offender typology helps law enforcement do the following:

- Identify suspects
- Locate offenders
- Gain insight into the victim's perception of his or her vulnerability
- Gain insight into the offender's motivation
- Determine the probability of escalation
- Anticipate community response

Distribute Handout C1, "Thrill-Seeking Offenders."



THRILL-SEEKING OFFENDERS

Offender Characteristics

- Usually, groups of teenagers
- Not generally associated with an organized hate group

Precipitating Events

- Generally, none

Motivation

- To get a psychological or social thrill
- To be accepted by peers
- To gain "bragging" rights

Victim

- Almost any member of a vulnerable group
- Members of groups perceived as inferior by offenders

Location

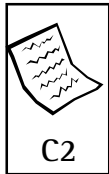
- Generally outside of offenders' "turf"
- Area(s) frequented by members of targeted group(s)

Additional Characteristics

- Most common type of hate crime; represents approximately 60 percent of all cases
- Since attacks are random, it is often difficult to identify the offenders
- Attacks often involve desecration and vandalism, although they can also involve more violent crimes
- Hatred of victim is relatively superficial; offenders may be deterred from repeating the crime if there is strong societal response condemning the behavior
- Each group member's participation may be limited to a specific aspect of the crime, enabling each offender to avoid acknowledgment of or accountability for the seriousness of the crime

Distribute Handout C2, “Case Studies of Typical Offenders.”

Note: This handout will be used to explore all three offender types.



CASE STUDIES OF TYPICAL OFFENDERS

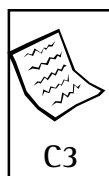


Thrill-Seeking Offenders

Two alienated white youths looking for excitement went on a spree of destruction and defacement that resulted in attacks on 23 properties in three different communities. They defaced walls, driveways, and automobiles with slurs against Jews, African Americans, Greeks, and even skinheads. After their arrest, the men claimed that they hadn’t intended to hurt anyone—that it only happened because they were drunk.

Encourage one participant to provide a case example of a thrill-seeking bias crime from his or her jurisdiction or state.

Distribute Handout C3, “Reactive Offenders.”



REACTIVE OFFENDERS

Offender Characteristics

- Have a sense of entitlement regarding their rights, privileges, or way of life, which does not extend to the victim
- Usually have no prior history of criminal behavior or overt bigotry; not generally associated with an organized hate group, although may call on an organized hate group to assist in mitigating the perceived threat

Precipitating Events

- Offenders perceive a threat to their way of life, community, place of work, or privilege

Motivation

- To protect or defend against the perceived threat constituted by the presence of “outsiders”
- To use fear and intimidation to send a message that will repel the “outsiders”

Victim(s)

- Particular individual or group of individuals who are perceived to constitute the threat
- Most often, people of color

Location

- Typically, offender’s own neighborhood, school, or place of work

(continued)



Additional Characteristics

- If the threat is perceived to subside, criminal behavior also subsides
- Offenders feel little if any guilt because they perceive their behavior as a justifiable response to their feelings of violation at the mere presence of the victim

Refer participants back to Handout C2, “Case Studies of Typical Offenders.”



Reactive Offenders

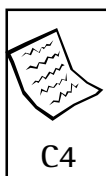
In Jersey City, New Jersey, an East Indian chemist was severely beaten with an iron bar in his own apartment by a racist who resented the presence of “Hindus” in his neighborhood.



In Wheaton, Maryland, two young white men unable to find work stopped their car and chased two African American women, who were walking from their apartment to a pay phone. One woman ran toward a house and was rescued by the occupant, who heard one of the assailants warn, “If you knock on that door again, I’ll kill you.” The other woman tried to escape into the woods, where she fell. The attackers beat her head and face, ripped off her blouse, and doused her with lighter fluid. As they attempted to light the fluid, police cars arrived at the scene. Both men escaped but were later apprehended. They were charged with attempted murder, assault with intent to murder, assault with intent to maim, kidnapping, and (under a 1988 bias crime statute) attempting to injure a person for racial reasons.

Encourage one participant to provide a case example of a reactive bias crime from his or her jurisdiction or state.

Distribute Handout C4, “Mission Offenders.”



MISSION OFFENDERS

Offender Characteristics

- Often psychotic, suffering from mental illness that may cause hallucinations, impaired ability to reason, and withdrawal from other people
- Perceive victim groups as evil, subhuman, and/or animal

Precipitating Events

- None

Motivation

- Believe they have been instructed by a higher order (God, the Fuhrer, the Imperial Wizard, etc.) to rid the world of this evil
- Believe they must get even for the misfortunes they have suffered and

(continued)



perceive a conspiracy of some kind being perpetrated by the groups they have targeted

- Have a sense of urgency about the mission; believe they must act before it is too late

Victim

- Any or all members of the category of people they perceive as responsible for their frustrations

Location

- Areas where members of the targeted group are likely to be found

Additional Characteristics

- The rarest kind of bias crime
- Crimes are of a violent nature; the mission may end in the offender's suicide



Note to Instructor

Clarify for participants that the category of retaliatory hate crimes does not encompass all forms of retaliation or revenge. It refers specifically to hate crimes in which a victim is selected at random because of his or her race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

In concluding the discussion of the offender typology, ask participants what bearing the typology and motivation of the offender has on the impact on the victim and on the community as a whole. Would participants anticipate different effects depending on the motivation? Does it matter?

Refer participants back to Handout C2, "Case Studies of Typical Offenders."



Mission Offenders

Marc Lepine entered the engineering school at the University of Montreal with the intent of "getting even" with women, especially feminist women, whom he perceived as having ruined his life. He walked into a classroom, directed the men to leave, and ordered the women to move to one side of the room, saying, "I want the women. You're all a bunch of feminists. I hate feminists."

He opened fire and killed 14 women between the classroom, the hallways, and the cafeteria, and then took his own life.



Encourage one participant to provide a case example of a mission bias crime from his or her jurisdiction or state.

Retaliatory Hate Crime

Ongoing analysis of offender research and hate crime cases has revealed that it may be necessary to add “retaliatory” as a category to the hate crime typology.² Retaliatory hate crimes are those motivated by revenge for a specific incident perceived to be rooted in discrimination or hatred.



Use Transparency C2, “Retaliatory Hate Crime,” to review the major points that characterize retaliatory hate crime, using the cases below as an illustration.

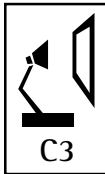
Two well-known cases illustrate retaliatory hate crime:

- During the 1992 riots in Los Angeles, following the acquittal of Los Angeles police officers in the videotaped beating of Rodney King, a group of young black males dragged white truck driver Reginald Denny from the cab of his truck and severely beat him within an inch of his life. This attack has been described as a retaliatory hate crime that occurred in response to the police brutality against Rodney King, and to widespread public perception that the justice system had failed to protect King’s civil rights.
- In 1991, a Jewish scholar named Yankel Rosenbaum was randomly selected and killed during an uprising in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, New York. The precipitating event for the unrest was the death of a young black child who was accidentally killed by an Orthodox Jewish driver. Rumors spread throughout the black community that a Hasidic-owned ambulance company had refused to treat the black children injured in the accident and instead had attended to the Jewish passengers. The police reported that they had ordered the ambulance to remove the Jewish driver from the scene to protect him from the angry crowd. Fueled by the rumors, black youths marched through the streets shouting, “Kill the Jews.” Rosenbaum, a visiting scholar from Australia who had nothing to do with the accident, was killed amidst several days of racial hostilities.

These two painful events from our history illustrate the complex nature of retaliatory hate crime. In both examples, the victim was selected merely because of his race and in retaliation for other bias incidents. Both occurred within a context of racial unrest fueled by perceptions of discrimination. And both demonstrate the devastation that can occur if the public perceives that acts of discrimination or hatred are not met with an appropriate response from law enforcement and the justice system.

II. Presentation: Organized Hate Groups (15 minutes)

Use Transparency C3, “Organized Hate Groups.”



ORGANIZED HATE GROUPS

Group Characteristics

- Range from loosely structured local groups to highly structured international groups
- Leaders of the groups tend to project a mainstream image rather than a fringe, extremist image
- The significant organized hate groups are technologically sophisticated
- Skinheads, although generally not official members of organized hate groups, often support or are loosely affiliated with these groups, taking inspiration and direction from them
- Focus on issues of concern to middle America as a method for cloaking and marketing their hate philosophy (i.e., “government interference,” “cheating,” etc.)
- Believe in the inevitability of a global war between the races
- Examples of organized hate groups include White Aryan Resistance, the Ku Klux Klan, and neo-Nazis

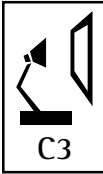
History of Organized Hate Groups

- Organized hate groups are not a new phenomenon.
- Hate groups characteristically grow in numbers and membership during:
 - periods of increased immigration, such as the 1920s
 - periods when disenfranchised groups have attempted to increase their political and economic power, such as Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement
 - periods of economic instability, when people seek scapegoats to blame for unemployment, such as the 1930s and the late 1980s
- At times, organized hate groups have been powerful forces in American political life. Many have sought dominance through violence and intimidation. Others have achieved significant political victories in electoral politics.
- Organized hate groups have a tendency to become fragmented, breaking up because of internal dissension. Groups often take names similar to those used by other hate groups, which should not imply an actual connection; for example, there are many small groups that use the term “skins” in their name.

Structure of Contemporary Hate Groups

- It has been estimated that there are currently no fewer than 20,000 and

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possibly no more than 50,000, members of white supremacist groups in the United States. These groups fall into a number of often overlapping categories, including Ku Klux Klan groups, neo-Nazi groups, Christian Identity groups, and “skinhead” gangs.

Hate Group Ideology

- Explicitly racist; considers people of color to be subhuman. Homophobia has recently been added to their agenda.
- Often blame the federal government, an international Jewish conspiracy, and/or communism for most of this country’s problems.
- Some groups include apocalyptic Christianity in their ideology and believe we are in, or approaching, a period of violence and social turmoil that will precede the Second Coming of Christ.

Strategy

- The major organized hate groups often take a more sophisticated approach to spreading their message, using such venues as cable TV, the World Wide Web, and computer bulletin boards.
- Some are consciously attempting to display a more mainstream image and run for office (often under the banner of a major political party). However, there is always the potential for violence. For example, during the 1980s, a small number of white supremacists formed a paramilitary organization called The Order, which was implicated in a number of bombings and murders, including that of Alan Berg, a Jewish radio talk show host.
- Many of the militant white supremacist groups have relocated to congregate in certain geographical areas, such as the Pacific Northwest, where members have engaged in a number of armed confrontations with federal authorities.

Skinheads

- Skinhead groups are small, loosely organized gangs of adolescents and young adults. Most skinheads are male, although young women are involved in both skinhead activity and hate violence.
- Skinhead violence is typically perpetrated by small groups of skinheads who attack persons of color or other targets, using fists, boots, bats, and knives. Some of these attacks are fatal. Most are unplanned; however some skinheads have been implicated in organized violence involving bombs and firearms and carefully selected targets, such as gay bars, temples, or the offices of civil rights organizations.
- The stereotypical skinhead has a shaved head and wears Doc Marten shoes or workboots, suspenders, and jeans. However, so do many other young people who are not involved in hate group activity. Conversely, many racist “skinheads” do not shave their heads.

III. Activity: Analysis of Three Video Segments (45 minutes)



Tell participants that they are about to watch several videos and that their challenge is to categorize the offender based on the typology. *Instruct* participants to take notes as they watch the videos so that they will be prepared to share both their categorization of the offender and the reasoning behind their choices. *Distribute* Handout C5, “Offender Typology Video Observation Form.”



Videos recommended for this activity are listed below. Instructors are advised to *order* the videos 4 to 6 weeks in advance of the training. Be sure to *screen* the videos and *select* those segments that best fit the course and the time available.

- “That Old Gang of Mine” (interview with Eric, former skinhead); The Bureau for At-Risk Youth; 135 Dupont Street; P.O. Box 760; Plainview, NY 11803; Phone: (800) 999-6884, ext. 262. *Price: \$125*
- “Licensed to Kill,” Arthur Dong; Deepfocus Productions, Inc.; P.O. Box 39548; Los Angeles, CA 90039-0548
Phone: (323) 662-6575; FAX: 323/662-6577
E-mail: AdongLA@aol.com
<http://www.filmmag.com/community/adong/>
77-minute full length theatrical version: \$295
53-minute special edited version: \$245
A comprehensive study guide accompanies the video.
- “On Hate Street,” *48 Hours*, CBS; February 26, 1992
CBS Network Television: (800) 934-NEWS

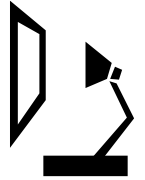
Show the three video segments. *Ask* participants to note their observations on the form.

Facilitate a discussion at the conclusion of each video segment, using the following questions to focus the discussion:

- *Can you identify the typology of the offender(s) in the videos?*
- *What might cause the offender to move into another type of offender category?*
- *Have you had any experience with any of the offender types portrayed in the videos?*

References

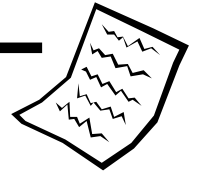
- ¹ Levin, J. and McDevitt, J. (1993). *Hate crime: The rising tide of bigotry and bloodshed*. New York: Plenum Publishers.
- ² McDevitt, J. (1998). National Center for Hate Crime Prevention Advisory Council Meeting.



IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING OFFENDER TYPOLOGY

Knowing offender typology helps law enforcement:

- identify suspects
- locate offenders
- gain insight into the victim's perception of his or her vulnerability
- gain insight into the offender's motivation
- determine the probability of escalation
- anticipate community response



Thrill-Seeking Offenders

Offender Characteristics

- Usually, groups of teenagers
- Not generally associated with an organized hate group

Precipitating Events

- Generally, none

Motivation

- To get a psychological or social thrill
- To be accepted by peers
- To gain “bragging” rights

Victim

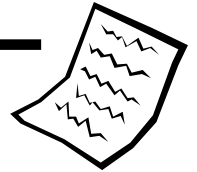
- Almost any member of a vulnerable group
- Members of groups perceived as inferior by offenders

Location

- Generally outside of offender’s “turf”
- Area(s) frequented by targeted group(s)

Additional Characteristics

- Most common type of hate crime; represents approximately 60 percent of all cases
- Since attacks are random, it is often difficult to identify the offenders
- Attacks often involve desecration and vandalism, although they can also involve more violent crimes
- Hatred of victim is relatively superficial; offenders may be deterred from repeating the crime if there is a strong societal response condemning the behavior
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Case Studies of Typical Offenders

Thrill-Seeking Offenders

Two alienated white youths looking for excitement went on a spree of destruction and defacement that resulted in attacks on 23 properties in three different communities. They defaced walls, driveways, and automobiles with slurs against Jews, African Americans, Greeks, and even skinheads. After their arrest, the men claimed that they hadn't intended to hurt anyone—that it only happened because they were drunk.

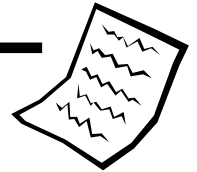
Reactive Offenders

In Jersey City, New Jersey, an East Indian chemist was severely beaten with an iron bar in his own apartment by a racist who resented the presence of "Hindus" in his neighborhood.

In Wheaton, Maryland, two young white men unable to find work stopped their car and chased two African American women, who were walking from their apartment to a pay phone. One woman ran toward a house and was rescued by the occupant, who heard one of the assailants warn, "If you knock on that door again, I'll kill you." The other woman tried to escape into the woods, where she fell. The attackers beat her head and face, ripped off her blouse, and doused her with lighter fluid. As they attempted to light the fluid, police cars arrived at the scene. Both men escaped but were later apprehended. They were charged with attempted murder, assault with intent to murder, assault with intent to maim, kidnapping, and (under a 1988 bias crime statute) attempting to injure a person for racial reasons.

Mission Offenders

Marc Lepine entered the engineering school at the University of Montreal with the intent of "getting even" with women, especially feminist women, whom he perceived as having ruined his life. He walked into a classroom, directed the men to leave, and ordered the women to move to one side of the room, saying, "I want the women. You're all a bunch of feminists. I hate feminists." He opened fire and killed 14 women between the classroom, the hallways, and the cafeteria, and then took his own life.



Reactive Offenders

Offender Characteristics

- Have a sense of entitlement regarding their rights, privileges, or way of life, which does not extend to the victim
- Usually have no prior history of criminal behavior or overt bigotry; not generally associated with an organized hate group, although may call on an organized hate group to assist in mitigating the perceived threat

Precipitating Events

- Offenders perceive a threat to their way of life, community, place of work, or privilege

Motivation

- To protect or defend against the perceived threat constituted by the presence of “outsiders”
- To use fear and intimidation to send a message that will repel the “outsiders”

Victim(s)

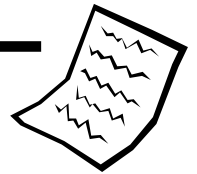
- Particular individual or group of individuals who are perceived to constitute the threat
- Most often, people of color

Location

- Typically, in offender’s own neighborhood, school, or place of work

Additional Characteristics

- If the threat is perceived to subside, criminal behavior also subsides
- Offenders feel little if any guilt because they perceive their behavior as a justifiable response to their feelings of violation at the mere presence of the victim



Mission Offenders

Offender Characteristics

- Often psychotic, suffering from mental illness that may cause hallucinations, impaired ability to reason, and withdrawal from other people
- Perceive victim groups as evil, subhuman, and/or animal

Precipitating Events:

- None

Motivation

- Believes they have been instructed by a higher order (God, the Fuhrer, the Imperial Wizard, etc.) to rid the world of this evil
- Believe they must get even for the misfortunes they have suffered and perceive a conspiracy of some kind being perpetrated by the targeted groups
- Have a sense of urgency about the mission; believe they must act before it is too late

Victim

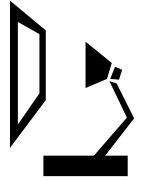
- Any or all members of the category of people they perceive as responsible for their frustrations

Location

- Areas where members of the targeted group are likely to be found

Additional Characteristics

- The rarest kind of bias crime
- Crimes are of a violent nature; the mission often ends in the offender's suicid



RETALIATORY HATE CRIME

- Motivated by revenge for another incident or crime, especially incidents perceived to be rooted in prejudice
- May involve large-group activity or rioting
- Demonstrate what can happen if hate crimes do not receive an appropriate response from law enforcement, the justice system, and the community

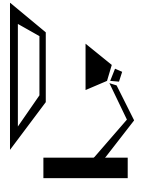


ORGANIZED HATE GROUPS

Group Characteristics

- Range from loosely structured local groups to highly structured international groups
- Leaders tend to project a mainstream image
- Technologically sophisticated
- Skinheads loosely affiliated with these groups, although usually are not official members
- Focus on issues of concern to middle America as a cover for their aims
- Believe in the inevitability of a global war between the races
- Examples include White Aryan Resistance, the Ku Klux Klan, and neo-Nazis

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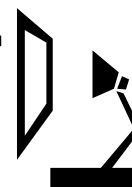
ORGANIZED HATE GROUPS (cont'd)

History of Organized Hate Groups

- Not a new phenomenon; hate groups grow in response to:
 - periods of increased immigration
 - attempts by disenfranchised groups to increase political and economic power
 - periods of economic instability
- Powerful forces in American political life
- Tend to break up because of internal dissension; groups often take names similar to other hate groups

Structure of Contemporary Hate Groups

- Estimated at no fewer than 20,000 and possibly no more than 50,000 members of white supremacist groups in the United States



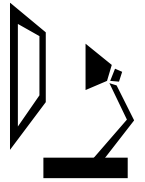
ORGANIZED HATE GROUPS (cont'd)

Hate Group Ideology

- Explicitly racist, considering people of color to be subhuman; homophobia recently added to their agenda
- Often blame the government, communism, and/or ethnic and racial “conspiracies” for most of this country’s problems
- Some include apocalyptic Christianity in their ideology

Strategy

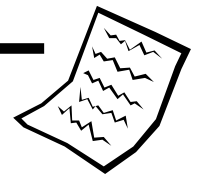
- Often use technological venues, such as cable TV, the World Wide Web, and computer bulletin boards
- Some attempt to display a more mainstream political image and might run for office, but the potential for violence is always present
- Congregate in large numbers in certain geographical areas (e.g., Pacific Northwest)



ORGANIZED HATE GROUPS (cont'd)

Skinheads

- Groups are small, loosely organized gangs of mostly male adolescents and young adults
- Most attacks are unplanned; however, skinheads have been implicated in organized violence



Offender Typology Video Observation Form

Title	Description	Typology	Indicators
Video #1			
Video #2			
Video #3			

