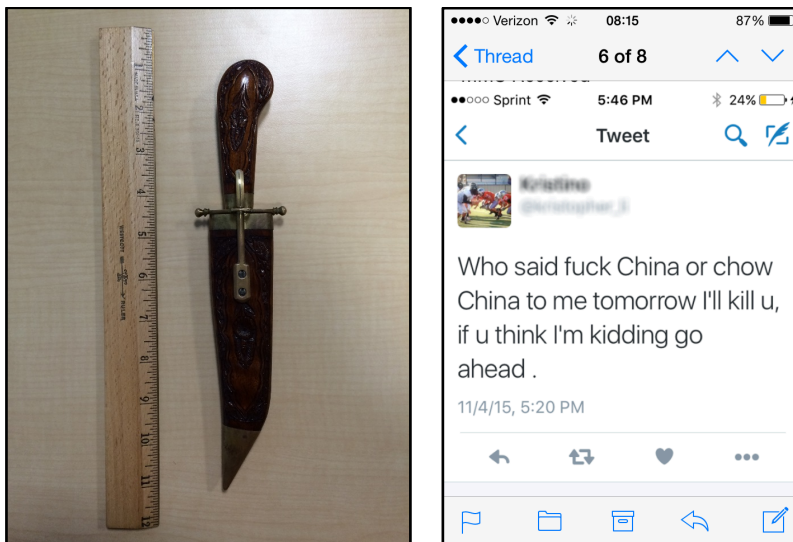


Scenario - Wayne Li 10th grade

Wayne Li, a 15-year-old high school sophomore of Chinese descent, was brought to Mr. Rivers, the school principal, by the School Resource Officer, Officer Chavez. Wayne's teacher summoned Ofc. Chavez after observing Wayne threatening another student named James with a pair of scissors. Wayne pointed the scissors towards James and exclaimed, "Maybe you should be dead!" The Look on Wayne's face and the tone of his voice were clearly threatening to James, who jumped back in obvious fear. The teacher ordered Wayne to put the scissors down and he complied. Then the teacher called Ofc. Chavez, who came immediately into the classroom. By this time Wayne was sitting at his desk with his head down.

Ofc. Chavez searched Wayne and his backpack and discovered a 6-inch sheathed knife. Ofc. Chavez asked Wayne for permission to look at the contents of his smartphone. He found a Twitter post from Wayne stating, "Who said fuck China or chow China to me tomorrow I'll kill u, if u think I'm kidding go ahead."



Based on the verbal threat, knife on campus, and the Twitter post, Mr. Rivers and Ofc. Chavez decided that Wayne should be assessed by the threat assessment team first, then Ofc. Chavez would conduct his criminal investigation. Normally, Ofc. Chavez would be a member of the team, but in this situation, he will observe, maintain a safe environment for the threat assessment team to conduct their assessment, and ask no questions.

The threat assessment team consisted of Mr. Rivers – case agent, Mrs. Yardi – school counselor and safety plan coordinator, and Mr. Blakely – pupil services director from the district office.

Mr. Rivers asked Wayne what happened in the classroom. Wayne was tearful and begged the principal not to tell his parents. The principal knew that Wayne and his family had immigrated to the United States about 10 years ago and was aware that Chinese parents are often very strict about proper behavior at school. Wayne said he was very sorry. He had never done anything like that before, but he had just felt so angry at James for laughing at him and saying, "Chow China."

Mr. Rivers asked about the significance of the phrase, “Chow China.” Wayne said many of the students had been coming up to him over the last three weeks and say “Chow China” to his face. “Chow China” in Chinese roughly means “fuck China.” Wayne insisted he would never hurt anyone, but he couldn’t stand the other students laughing at him all the time. Even though they knew it hurt his feelings, they kept doing it every day. The teasing even moved to social media. Wayne was regularly receiving direct tweets which said, “Chow china.” Mr. Rivers told Wayne teasing like this is never okay and asked if Wayne ever went to a teacher or any adult at school about what was happening. Wayne said, “No, I didn’t want it to get worse. I thought if I told someone, everyone would hate me for telling on them.”

Mr. Rivers asked Wayne if the knife found in his backpack belonged to him. Wayne looked down at his feet with tears welling up in his eyes slowly nodded, yes. Mr. Rivers asked Wayne where he got the knife. Wayne said it was an ornamental knife he found in his dad’s drawer. Ms. Rivers asked Wayne why he brought the knife to school. Wayne said, “I don’t know.” He asked Wayne if he had ever brought a knife to school before. Wayne said, “No.” Mr. Rivers asked, “You didn’t bring the knife on accident. You brought it for a reason. What was the reason?” Wayne shook his head and repeated, “I don’t know.” Mr. River showed Wayne the screen shot of his tweet. Wayne said, “I really wasn’t planning on hurting anybody. I just wanted to scare them so they would stop teasing me.”

Mr. Rivers and the threat assessment team interviewed James, the classmate who was threatened. James admitted that Wayne’s threat followed him saying “Chow China.” James said he knew “Chow China” meant something like screw China, “Maybe I shouldn’t have said that to Wayne but there’s no way he’s justified in coming after me with those scissors.” The principle agreed. James said he was truly frightened at Wayne’s actions because he had never known Wayne to show that kind of anger. The principal knew James was one of the more popular boys in the 10th grade, on the football team, and part of a group of students who are known to prank and make fun of other students. Mr. Rivers asked if James knew if other students were making fun of Wayne. James said, “There are a lot of students making fun of Wayne.”

Key Investigative Questions

As a team, discuss the following specific questions to organize and evaluate the information gathered on the person/situation of concern:

1. Motive for violence or threat

- What motivated him to make the statements or take actions that caused him to come to the attention of the team?
- Does the situation or circumstance that led to these statements or actions still exist?
- Does he have a major grievance or grudge? Against whom?
- Does he feel that any part of the problem is resolved or see any alternatives?

2. Expressed intent to attack

- Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or an intent to attack?

- What, if anything, has Wayne communicated to someone else (e.g., targets, friends, co-workers, faculty, and family) or written in a diary, journal, e-mail, or website concerning his grievances, ideas, and/or intentions?
- 3. Violent fantasies or homicidal ideas**
- Has Wayne shown inappropriate interest in any of the following?
 - Workplace, school, or campus attacks or attackers
 - Weapons (including recent acquisition of any relevant weapon)
 - Incidents of mass violence (e.g., terrorism, workplace violence, and mass murderers)
- 4. Pre-Attack Behaviors**
- Has Wayne engaged in attack-related behaviors? This means any behavior that moves an idea of violence toward actual violence. Such behaviors might include:
 - Developing an attack idea or plan
 - Making efforts to acquire or practice with weapons
- 5. Means and Access**
- Does Wayne have the cognitive capacity to carry out an act of targeted violence?
 - How organized is his thinking and behavior?
 - Does he have the means (e.g., access to a weapon) to carry out an attack?
- 6. Hopelessness, personal stress, and negative coping**
- Is Wayne experiencing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair?
 - Is there information to suggest that he is experiencing desperation and/or despair?
 - Has he experienced a recent failure, loss, and/or loss of status?
 - Is he known to be having difficulty coping with a stressful event?
 - Has he engaged in behavior that suggests he has considered ending his life?
- 7. Anger**
- Has Wayne displayed outbursts of anger?
 - Does the subject react inappropriately frustrated to situations?
 - Has the subject acted out in physical displays of anger, e.g., throwing objects, vandalism?
 - Has the subject shown a pattern of bullying, intimidation, and/or fighting?
- 8. Does Wayne abuse any substances, and is violence or anger associated with their substance abuse?**
- Is there any direct or indirect evidence that the subject is abusing drugs or alcohol?
- 9. History of violence and criminal activity**
- Does Wayne have a school discipline record of violence or criminal activity?
 - Has the subject ever been arrested or detained for criminal activity? Are there calls for service to the subject's home?
 - When was the last recorded act of violence or criminal activity? Does the subject have a school discipline record of violence or criminal activity?
 - Is the subject honest about their past acts? Does the subject show remorse?
- 10. Inhibitors against violence**
- How does Wayne respond to adversity in their life?
 - What is the subject's attitude towards authority figures?
 - Does the subject have long term life goals? Does the subject "see" himself achieving these goals?

- Does the subject have positive peer relationships?
- Does the subject have a positive relationship with at least one adult?
- What is the subject's genuine remorse for fear inducing behavior?
- Does the subject seek out appropriate help for their problems?

11. Are Wayne's conversation and story consistent with his actions?

- If there is an interview with Wayne, is his story consistent with behaviors observed by others?

12. Are other people concerned about Wayne's potential for violence?

- Are those who know him concerned that he might take action based on violent ideas or plans?
- Are those who know him concerned about a specific target?

13. What circumstances might affect the likelihood of violence?

- What factors in Wayne's life and/or environment might increase or decrease the likelihood that he will engage in violent behavior?
- What is the response of others who know about Wayne's ideas or plans? (Do they actively discourage him from acting violently, encourage him to attack, deny the possibility of violence, or passively collude with an attack?)

Scenario – Richard Thomas (6th grader)

Around lunchtime, the assistant principal of Kennedy Middle School, Mrs. Smith, received a telephone call from a sixth-grade homeroom teacher that a student named Richard had threatened to shoot his classmates. Mrs. Smith asked the teacher to escort the student to her office. The teacher said three students came to her and said Richard had threatened to “shoot them.” According to the three students, Richard said he “might as well die, and kill all of you with my dad’s gun while I am at it!” When the teacher confronted Richard with the allegations, he responded, “I don’t care!” and said nothing else.

Discuss

What immediate safety issues do you have?

Before interviewing Richard, what sources of information do you want to review?

Step 1: Initial Inquiry

Mrs. Smith individually interviewed the recipients of Richards’s threat. Each student recounted the same set of facts. All three statements agreed that Richard stated he wanted to die and kill them with his father’s gun.

Mrs. Smith then interviewed Richard and found he had little to say. He appeared stoic and angry and would not admit or deny threatening the boys. She asked him if he regretted saying those things to his classmates. Richard replied, “No!” Mrs. Smith asked him if he mentioned a gun to his classmates. For the first time, Richard seemed interested and what Mrs. Smith was asking him. Richard stated his father had taught him to shoot his handgun. Richard said he knew where his father kept his gun and said he could “get it” if he wanted.

Documentation

Mrs. Smith completed the *Behavior Incident Form*.

Discussion Questions

Based on the teacher’s and victim statements, does it appear Richard threatened to hurt himself and/or others?

Step 2: determine transient or substantive threat.

Was Richard’s statement to the three classmates a transient or substantive threat? Why or why not? Should this case be resolved in step two or should it progress to step 3?

Step 3: Threat Assessment

Mrs. Smith assembled the threat assessment team. The team was made up of Officer Jones, the school's SRO, Mr. Reeves, school counselor, and Mrs. Smith, the case agent.

Richard reported feeling sad and hopeless. He related that his parents had been divorced for many years and was living out of the state and had not seen him in more than a year. He had had little contact with his father and did not know him very well, and he was now struggling with the idea that he might never know his father. Richard was tearful and clearly distressed during the interview.

Richard denied having access to a firearm. He could not identify any reasons for being angry at his classmates except that he thought they were "always acting stupid" and he felt "left out all the time." He denied having a plan to harm himself but admitted that he felt like life was not worth living sometimes and he might be better off dead. He agreed not to hurt himself or anyone else.

Richard said he does love his Mom and likes school for the most part. He likes his science class and the teacher, Mr. Fleiss.

Mrs. Smith spoke with Mr. Fleiss about Richard's performance in his class. Mr. Fleiss said Richard was a good student that sometimes stayed after wanting to talk about whatever they were working on in class. He didn't seem to have friends in the class and didn't talk to other classmates very often. Based on Richard's and Mr. Fleiss' statements, they appear to have a good rapport with each other.

Mrs. Smith interviewed some other classmates who have classes with Richard, and they stated Richard was quiet and did not have many friends.

Educational Records: Richard has steady attendance and little prior discipline. He currently has an active IEP and no known medications.

Parent interview

Mrs. Smith contacted Richard's mother, Mrs. Thomas, and informed her of the incident, and requested she come down to the school to pick up Richard and discuss the issue further. Without Richard present, Mrs. Smith explained that Richard would be suspended from school for five days, and during this time they would complete a safety evaluation and develop a plan for meeting Richard's educational needs. Mrs. Thomas told the team that she did have her ex-husband's handgun in her home but assured the team that Richard did not have access to it.

Officer Jones explained the seriousness of the situation and asked permission to go to their home and search Richard's room and check the status of the handgun. Mrs. Thomas agreed and signed the police department's consent to search form.

Mrs. Thomas set up an appointment for herself and her son to meet with the district's psychologist the following day. Mrs. Smith advised Mrs. Jones that Richard seemed depressed and suicidal and that he should be closely supervised. She recommended that they seek further evaluation and treatment, and she provided them with contact information for local mental health professionals.

Officer Jones and Mrs. Smith went to the Thomas' home. Mrs. Thomas took him to where she kept her handgun. The handgun was properly secured in a 12x14x8 handgun lockbox with a 5-button combination. The handgun was not loaded.

Officer Jones asked Mrs. Thomas if she would be willing to let him take the handgun into police custody for *safe keeping* until the issue with Richard had been worked out. She would be able to retrieve the handgun from the police station any time she wished. Mrs. Thomas asked him to take the gun and "get rid of it." Officer Jones booked the handgun for *destruction*. A law enforcement records check found no other guns were registered to Mrs. Thomas.

Discussion Question:

What category would you place Richard in?

Notification of potential victims

Officer Jones contacted the parents of the victims to assure them that he had investigated the threat and would continue to monitor the situation.

Documentation

The Threat Assessment Team completed the Behavioral Threat Assessment Worksheet, Plan to Protect Targeted or Victimized Student.

Discussion question

Would you add additional services or aspects to this safety plan? Describe.

Documentation

Student Safety Management form

Initial Report

Taylor Reed, a student in his second year at the college, wears military fatigues every day. One of his instructors, Melinda Warren, just moved to the area and joined the college faculty this year. Warren reported Reed to the team because she thinks he is scary and that it's weird he wears fatigues all the time. Warren said Reed's grades are good and that he has one or two friends in her class, but other students find him strange and go out of their way to avoid him. She doesn't want him in her class and wants the team to do something about it.

Initial Team Questions:

1. Based on the information provided, what is the first step the team should take?
2. Is there an imminent situation or a need for the team to call for immediate law enforcement intervention?
3. Is there a need for the team to gather information?

Source Information

Other Instructors

Reed is enrolled in three courses at the college. His two other instructors confirmed that Reed wears military fatigues every day. His Business II instructor, Zelda Langley, said that she assumed he wears fatigues because he has family in the military, with the college being located in close proximity to a major army base. His auto mechanics instructor, Bobby Gallagher, said that the other students in his class seem to get along fine with Reed and that his grades are good. Neither instructor said they have issues with Reed's behavior or grades, although Langley said that she was a bit concerned about Reed now that the team has asked her because he seems more withdrawn than he did early last year when she taught him in Business I. She thinks it is probably nothing, but she feels better having passed that perception along to the team just in case. She said the only other thing she knows about Reed is that last year he had a part-time job at a fast-food restaurant close to campus. She doesn't know if he still has that job or not.

Reed's Employer

Reed's manager at the fast-food restaurant said that Reed has been a good employee for the past two years and has never caused any problems. When asked about the fatigues, the manager said that Reed is required to wear a uniform to work, so that has not been an issue. The manager added that Reed's father and older brother are both in the army and thought that might be why he wore them. The manager called back later to say that another manager said she is a bit worried about Reed because he has seemed a bit quieter and withdrawn in the past few weeks than he usually is. She said, "he hasn't been his happy self in a while."

Online Search

An online search on Reed's name yielded his Facebook page, which is publicly viewable, with comments from friends over the past two weeks that sound like condolence messages. An earlier status update from Reed indicates that his older brother was killed in Afghanistan

Scenario – Taylor Reed (Adult college student)

recently. There have been no status updates since then, with only comments from his Facebook friends. The most recent comments from a few friends ask Reed to post an update because they are worried about him.

Reed has posted more than a dozen images and videos of him shooting a handgun in a desert landscape area that does not appear to be an organized shooting range. Additionally, he has posted images of himself holding the handgun pointed at the camera, and even one of him pointing the gun to his head while making an “goofy” expression. His images and videos display various tactical/military clothing and equipment, such as holsters, magazine pouches, and nylon belts.

NCIC

Reed does not have a criminal record, nor does he have any firearms registered to him.

Interview with Taylor Reed

Reed agreed to sit down with the threat assessment team to discuss the express concerns of the school staff.

When asked how Reed was dealing with his brother’s death, Reed appeared visibly agitated and angry and simply said, “fine.”

When asked, how are things going at school? Reed reply, “it’s going fine why?” The team asked, do you like your school? Your teachers and classmates? Reed said, “they are fine I guess, but I don’t feel like anyone really understands me. I’m not sure why I’m even going to school now. It seems pointless. These people are living in a fantasy world. They are just puppets in a show run by somebody. They can be sent off to some other country and get murdered for no reason whatsoever. Don’t they know they can’t do that to us? I wish somebody would do something about it.”

The team asked, what should they do? Reed replied, “I don’t know but if they’re killing us maybe they’d stop if somebody would hurt them back.”

The team asked Reed, do you have a gun or firearm of some kind? Read appeared visibly uncomfortable. He said, “no I don’t.” The team inquired, have you ever gone to a range or some other place and practice shooting a handgun? We grew increasingly uncomfortable, shifting in his chair and laughed, “why are you asking me this?”

The team revealed that they had seen his public Facebook page, which included images and videos of him shooting a handgun. Reed turned angry and said, “I don’t think I gave you permission to look at my Facebook. I don’t think I want to talk to you anymore.”

Reed terminated the interview.

Key Investigative Questions

As a team, discuss the following specific questions to organize and evaluate the information gathered on the person/situation of concern:

1. Motive for violence or threat

- What motivated him to make the statements or take actions that caused him to come to the attention of the team?
- Does the situation or circumstance that led to these statements or actions still exist?
- Does he have a major grievance or grudge? Against whom?
- What efforts have been made to resolve the problem and what has been the result?
- Does he feel that any part of the problem is resolved or see any alternatives?

2. Expressed intent to attack

- Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or an intent to attack?
- What, if anything, has Reed communicated to someone else (e.g., targets, friends, co-workers, faculty, and family) or written in a diary, journal, e-mail, or website concerning his grievances, ideas, and/or intentions?
- Have friends been alerted or warned away?

3. Violent fantasies or homicidal ideas

- Has Reed shown inappropriate interest in any of the following?
 - Workplace, school, or campus attacks or attackers
 - Weapons (including recent acquisition of any relevant weapon)
 - Incidents of mass violence (e.g., terrorism, workplace violence, and mass murderers)

4. Pre-Attack Behaviors

- Has Reed engaged in attack-related behaviors? This means any behavior that moves an idea of violence toward actual violence. Such behaviors might include:
- Developing an attack idea or plan
- Making efforts to acquire or practice with weapons
- Surveying possible sites and areas for attack
- Testing access to potential targets
- Rehearsing attacks or ambushes

5. Means and Access

- Does Reed have the cognitive capacity to carry out an act of targeted violence?
- How organized is his thinking and behavior?
- Does he have the means (e.g., access to a weapon) to carry out an attack?

6. Hopelessness, personal stress, and negative coping

- Is Reed experiencing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair?
- Is there information to suggest that he is experiencing desperation and/or despair?
- Has he experienced a recent failure, loss, and/or loss of status?
- Is he known to be having difficulty coping with a stressful event?
- Has he engaged in behavior that suggests he has considered ending his life?

7. Anger

- Has Reed displayed outbursts of anger?
- Does the subject react inappropriately frustrated to situations?
- Has the subject acted out in physical displays of anger, e.g., throwing objects, vandalism?
- Has the subject shown a pattern of bullying, intimidation, and/or fighting?

8. Does Reed abuse any substances, and is violence or anger associated with their substance abuse?

- Is there any direct or indirect evidence that the subject is abusing drugs or alcohol?
- Does the subject have a history of violence or physical displays of anger associated with alcohol or drug use?
- Has the subject ever shown up for work or school while under the influence of drugs or alcohol?

9. History of violence and criminal activity

- Does Reed have a school discipline record of violence or criminal activity?
- Has the subject ever been arrested or detained for criminal activity? Are there calls for service to the subject's home?
- When was the last recorded act of violence or criminal activity? Does the subject have a school discipline record of violence or criminal activity?
- Is the subject honest about their past acts? Does the subject show remorse?

10. Inhibitors against violence

- How does Reed respond to adversity in their life?
- What is the subject's attitude towards authority figures?
- Does the subject have long term life goals? Does the subject "see" himself achieving these goals?
- Does the subject have positive peer relationships?
- Does the subject have a positive relationship with at least one adult?
- What is the subject's genuine remorse for fear inducing behavior?
- Does the subject seek out appropriate help for their problems?

11. What circumstances might affect the likelihood of violence?

- What factors in Reed's life and/or environment might increase or decrease the likelihood that he will engage in violent behavior?
- What is the response of others who know about Reed's ideas or plans? (Do they actively discourage him from acting violently, encourage him to attack, deny the possibility of violence, or passively collude with an attack?)

Classification Decision

Use the gathered information and the answers to the Key Investigative Questions to answer these ultimate questions:

- 1. Does Reed pose a threat of harm, whether to himself, to others, or to both? That is, does his behavior suggest that he is on a pathway toward violence?**

Scenario – Taylor Reed (Adult college student)

- Has he developed an idea to engage in violence?
 - Has he developed a plan?
 - Has he taken any steps toward implementing the plan?
 - Has he developed the capacity or means to carry out the plan?
 - How fast is he moving toward engaging in violence?
 - Where can the team intervene to move Reed off the pathway toward violence?
- 2. If Reed does not pose a threat of harm, does he otherwise show a need for help or intervention, such as mental health care?**