

James, D. V., Mullen, P. E., Meloy, J. R., Pathe, M. T., Preston, L., Darnley, B., ... Scalora, M. J. (2011). Stalkers and harassers of British royalty: An exploration of proxy behaviours for violence. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 29, 64-80. doi: 10.1002/bsl.922

When studying violence towards small groups there are low base rates which creates a problem that can be addressed by two different strategies. Attacks can either be studied retrospectively or by examining inappropriate/threatening communications towards the small group of people in order to try and determine which types of individuals commit this type of violence. The present study aimed to identify characteristics of individuals who engaged in violence against a small group of individuals, the British royalty, and to explore the differences between individuals who did not. The specific areas examined were motivations and mental states. In addition, the authors hoped to study what degree of importance assigned to these behaviors is justified in the literature (James et al., 2011).

The authors used 8,001 files created from the Metropolitan Police Service's Royalty Protection between 1988 and 2003 which consisted of one or more inappropriate approaches towards royalty. Inappropriate approaches consisted of attempts at unauthorized approaches to royalty, breaching security barriers, trespassing in a palace or the grounds, repeated loitering near royal venues, and unauthorized entry into royal events by deception. After narrowing down inclusion of only relevant studies, there were 2,332 cases of inappropriate approaches which were divided into four behavioral categories: simple approaches (attended royal residence or event but acted inappropriately), pre-approach and simple approach (engaged in both communication and simple approaches), failed breaches (unsuccessful attempts to breach security barriers), and successful breaches (security barrier or security perimeter was broken).

For each of these 2,332 cases, a 125 item data-sheet was completed which covered demographics, nature and motivations of the behavior, individual's state of mind, and the identity of the target (James et al., 2011).

In this study, specific terms were defined in order to allow for cohesion across different variables and different studies in the future. First, weapons are classified as instruments of potential attacks. Next, proximity was stated as coming within the presence of a royal family member. Lastly, homicidal ideation was indicated as being present if identified in the police files, thus only present when admitted during detainment. The presence of serious mental illness was defined and recorded when one or more of the following were present: obvious delusions, marked thought disorder, clear evidence of abnormal perceptions, evidence of passivity phenomena, or clear documentary evidence of a diagnosis of severe mental illness taken from hospital records. Motivation was determined by the content of their communication or explanations offered when interviewed by law enforcement officers (James et al., 2011).

When looking at the statistical analysis, associations between variables were sought in comparison to other items in the data set and similarities/differences were identified based on categorical variables. Effect sizes were also calculated. Overall, from the 2,332 relevant cases, 222 cases comprised this study (James et al., 2011).

When looking specifically at mental illness characteristics, there was the presence of a serious mental illness in 86.9 percent of the cases. Delusional beliefs were exhibited in 68 percent of the cases, grandiose ideas in 60.8 percent, rambling/incoherent/confused utterances in 34.2 percent, and persecutory pre-occupations in 21.2 percent. There was only suicidal ideations in 3.2 percent of the cases and homicidal ideation in 3.6 percent of the cases (James et al., 2011).

In terms of motivation, it was able to be identified in 197 cases, thus 88.7 percent of the whole sample. Of the 197 cases, 31 percent had delusions of royal identity where they expressed delusional beliefs that they were royalty. 18.8 percent were classified as amity seekers who offered their friendship and advice. The infatuated comprised 11.7 percent of the cases while sanctuary/ help seekers made up 7.6 percent. Those classified as the royally persecuted comprised 3 percent while the counselors who saw it as their role to offer advice/opinions to the royal family account for 7.1 percent. Querulants who were pursuing a highly personalized quest for justice defined 6.6 percent of the cases of violence. Lastly, the chaotic, where no clear motivation could be assigned made up 14.2 percent of the 197 cases (James et al., 2011).

The cases of violence that comprise the failed breaches were found to be significantly different from others in the groups that approached the royals. The individuals who failed breaches were more likely to be hostile and aggressive, and more likely to engage in assault, intimidating language, demand language and abusive language towards proxies. The individuals in these cases were also significantly more likely to gain close proximity to a royal family member. They were not significantly more likely to carry a weapon or give evidence of homicidal ideation, though. The failed breaches were comprised of four different motivational groups: 67 percent of the querulants, 25 percent of the amity seekers, 19 percent of the delusions of royal identity, and 22.2 percent of the infatuated were seen. Overall, the failed breachers had a sense of entitlement which they pursued in an aggressive manner (James et al., 2011).

Successful breachers were classified by having a severe mental illness in 82.5 percent of the cases, with 56.1 having delusions, 47.4 percent being grandiose, and 28.1 percent being confused. In regards to motivational groups, the majority were defined as either chaotic (23.4 percent) or delusional in regards to being royalty (22.8 percent). There was also evidence of the

querulent in 17 percent and amity seekers in 14.9 percent of successful breach cases. The significant differences between the successful breaches and other categories were first that there was an overrepresentation of the querulant and the chaotic while an underrepresentation of counselors. The individuals were less likely to be deluded, grandiose, or persecuted although they were much more likely to engage in intimidating behavior to proxies. This group of individuals was not homogenous and had varied characteristics depending on motivation. The motivational groups that actually achieved proxy were querulants, counselors, and amity seekers (James et al., 2011).

When looking at those who were successful and those who were not with breaching security barriers, it seems that those who seek help or friendship do not breach but those that have a sense of entitlement do breach. Those who failed breaching were significantly less likely to include the chaotic in terms of motivation than those who succeeded. They were significantly more deluded/grandiose and more hostile/aggressive. They also were more likely to engage in demand language to a proxy and more likely to assault a proxy. An important difference is that 88.2 percent of the failed breaches tried to cross security through an appropriate entrance compared to only 40.9 percent of the successful breaches. An appropriate entrance would be something like through a gate rather than over a wall. Due to the significant delusions and grandiosity, this could be that they felt they should be let into the palace or events and therefore use an entrance (James et al., 2011).

In examining those who achieved proximity to a member of the royal family, the querulant and women were overrepresented. In those who achieved proximity, they were less likely to show evidence of mental illness. Twice as many failed breachers as successful breachers succeeded in gaining proximity. Three types of approachers gained proximity: those

seeking amity/help, those with delusions of royal identity and the infatuated, and the querulants (James et al., 2011).

Individuals who carried weapons were only seen in 12 of the 222 cases. Although small, there were significant findings that showed carriers of weapons were more likely to come from amongst querulants and the chaotic. They were more likely to be hostile or aggressive, to engage in intimidating behavior to proxies, and to use threatening language. Mental illness was apparent in 92.9 percent of these cases. There were no amity/help seekers who carried weapons. Overall, there does not appear to be one single type of approacher who carries a weapon but the individuals do seem to be hostile and aggressive (James et al., 2011).

Of the eight cases with homicidal ideation recorded, all showed evidence of mental illness. Homicidal ideation was significantly associated with the presence of hostility and aggression, the use of threatening language, and attempted or actual assault of a proxy (James et al., 2011).

The results as a whole indicate that there may be a useful approach for identifying difference in patterns of risk. First, the current study showed that some motivations are more closely linked than others to the behaviors of violence towards proxies: querulant and chaotic motivational groups are more likely while friendship/help seekers are much less likely. This offers a rationale for separating motivations for those who need special attention and resource targeting. The querulant was significantly overrepresented among the successful breachers, those achieving proximity, and those carrying weapons. This type of motivation is worthy of particular attention by those involved in risk management. Homicidal ideation was the weakest in terms of this study but it was most certainly under recorded since was only charted in confession to law enforcement. This study showed little evidence in distinguishing a sequence moving from

breaching to gaining proximity with the successful and failed breachers belonging to different populations of motivations and mental illness. Overall, this study showed that it is not possible to determine any single type of “dangerous behavior.” Thus, risk assessment must incorporate knowledge from different characteristics of concern and incorporate motivation, mental state, and behavior as a starting point in building an assessment (James et al., 2011).