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Stalkers and Harassers of British Royalty: an Exploration of Proxy Behaviours for Violence[†]

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Study of risk factors for violence to prominent people is difficult because of low base rates. This study of harassers of the royal family examined factors suggested in the literature as proxies for violence—breaching security barriers, achieving proximity, approach with a weapon, and approach with homicidal ideation. A stratified sample of different types of approach behaviour was randomly extracted from 2,332 Royalty Protection Police files, which had been divided into behavioural types. The final sample size was 275. Significant differences in illness symptomatology and motivation were found for each proxy group. Querulants were significantly over-represented in three of the four groups. There was generally little overlap between the proxy groups. There is no evidence of the proxy items examined being part of a ''pathway to violence''. Different motivations may be associated with different patterns of risk. Risk assessment must incorporate knowledge of the interactions between motivation, mental state, and behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

The problem with studying violence towards small groups, such as prominent people, is the low base rate. One strategy for dealing with this problem is to study attacks retrospectively. The Exceptional Case Study (Fein, Vossekuil, & Holden, 1995; Fein and Vossekuil, 1998, 1999) sought to examine factors associated with attacks on US presidents, but in order to gain a large enough sample for descriptive consideration it was necessary to extend the remit to include near-attacks, and not only on politicians, but also businessmen and media personalities, over a 47-year period. A study of attacks on European politicians over a 15-year period (James et al., 2007) was able to identify significant associations with serious or fatal attack. The only similar study of attacks on

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the British royal family (James et al., 2008) covered the period 1785–2004; whilst producing some evidence as to risk factors involved, it was hampered by the paucity of detail available, in particular for some of the more distant historical incidents.

A different strategy was adopted as part of the Fixated Research Project, which studied the risk posed to members of the royal family from those who engage in inappropriate or threatening communications or approaches towards them with the aim of identifying ways in which resultant risks could be managed (Mullen et al., 2009; James et al., 2009). Given the virtual impossibility of predicting accurately whether a specific individual will go on to engage in a particular form of behaviour, the aim was to identify which groups are more likely to go on to cause problems. This could allow a concentration of resources on these groups to prevent adverse consequences without the need to attempt to predict the behaviour of any particular individual. With public figures, risk falls into a number of domains, each of which may be associated with different risk factors. These comprise, other than the domain of violence, those of persistence, escalation, disruption and recurrence (MacKenzie et al., 2009), which may give rise to anxiety, embarrassment and a need for intrusive and expensive security measures. Below, we report the findings concerning risk of violence. Given the rarity of attacks, it is necessary to adopt an indirect means of studying attack. The method adopted was to study items that the literature suggests are likely to be associated with the risk of violence (Meloy et al., 2004), in other words those that may act as proxies for attack.

Over the last 20 years, since the studies of Dietz et al. (1991a, 1991b), primacy has been given to the issue of approach in studies of risk of violence to public figures. This is based on the obvious, namely that physical approach is a necessary pre-condition for most forms of attack (see, e.g., Scalora et al., 2002a, 2002b; Scalora, Baumgartner, & Plank, 2003). Fein and Vossekuil (1998, 1999) introduced the concept of a 'near-lethal approach', by which was meant those found in the vicinity of possible victims with a weapon. In other words, achieving proximity and the carrying of a weapon were assumed to be characteristics of particular concern. A logical extension of this is that, if a prominent individual is receiving personal protection, it would often be necessary to breach security cordons in order to gain proximity. Based upon these considerations, a study population was chosen of those who attempted to approach members of the royal family at their places of residence or as they went about their programme of public engagements. Five factors were chosen for study as proxies for violence. These were unsuccessful attempts to breach security cordons, successful breaches of security cordons, achieving proximity to the subject, carrying weapons, and the declared presence of homicidal ideation.

The study aimed to determine the characteristics of individuals who engaged in these forms of behaviour, and explore differences between those who did so and those who did not, in particular in terms of motivation and mental state characteristics. A further aim was to try and examine to what degree the importance assigned to these behaviours in the threat assessment literature is justified. Fein and Vossekuil (1998, 1999; Fein et al., 1995) have put forward the concept of a 'pathway' towards attack. Applying such a model, we sought to examine to what degree the elements set out above constitute any form of logical pathway—in other words, whether these behaviours form sub-sets of each other, with there being a small (and progressively larger) core element contained within each of them that comprises individuals progressing towards attack.

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METHOD

Selection of the study sample

The source material comprised 8,001 files created by the Royalty Protection unit of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) over a 15-year period between 1988 and 31 July 2003. Files were extracted that related to one or more incidents of inappropriate approach towards members of the royal family. Inappropriate approaches included attempts at unauthorized approaches to royalty, breaching security barriers, trespass in the palaces or their grounds, repeated loitering near royal venues in a manner that raised concern, or unauthorized entry into royal events attained by deception. When files were excluded that related to matters irrelevant to the study, a pool of 2,332 cases concerning inappropriate approach remained.

These files were then divided into the following behavioural categories.

1. *Simple approaches* ($N = 1{,}349$; 57.8% of all cases). The individuals concerned had attended royal residences or royal events, where they acted in an inappropriate manner, which brought them to the attention of protection officers. They had not, however, attempted to breach security barriers nor previously engaged in inappropriate communication.
2. *Pre-approach and simple approach* ($N = 240$; 10.3%). These were cases where individuals had engaged in both communications and simple approaches
3. *Failed breaches* ($N = 160$; 6.9%) were unsuccessful attempts to breach security barriers, such as walls or entrances to buildings or security cordons around public royal events.
4. *Successful breaches* ($N = 583$; 25%) were incidents where the individual successfully broke through a security barrier or crossed a security perimeter. This included cases where such proximity was obtained through deception.

Given the unequal distribution of these categories amongst the files, a stratified sampling strategy was chosen to ensure approximately equal numbers from each behavioural group. Random allocation into group was undertaken using a random number generator, until there were at least 50 cases in each group. As part of this exercise, cases were excluded that could be classified into the behavioural groups, but did not meet the study parameters of inappropriate and deliberate approach (e.g. those able to give legitimate explanations, drunks, pranksters and accidental intrusions).

Data extraction

A data-sheet comprising 125 items was completed for each case in the sample. This covered demographics, the nature and motivations of the behaviour, the individual's state of mind, and the identity of the target. Data forms derived from each file were scanned into a computerized SPSS database (Version 11.5) using an automatic form reader, in order to minimize the occurrence of transcription errors. (The data-sheet is available on request.)

Definitions of terms

Weapons were defined as instruments of potential attack: folded pocket knives were not included, as these tended to be incidental personal possessions not indicative of any

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hostile intent. Proximity was defined as coming within the presence of a royal family member. Homicidal ideation was recorded as being present when recorded by the police in the files: in other words, it was only said to be present where it was both volunteered by the detained individual and recorded by the attending police. Definitions of intimidating behaviours, threatening language and demand language were taken from the work of Scalora et al. (2003).

Characteristics of the sample

The presence of symptoms of abnormal mental state was ascertained. In each case, consideration was given as to whether there was sufficient evidence available to establish the presence of serious mental illness. Each file was examined using a screening list of abnormalities. The presence of serious mental illness was recorded when at least one of the following was present.

a. Obvious delusions.
b. Marked thought disorder, as illustrated in written material or recorded verbal output.
c. Clear evidence of abnormal perceptions.
d. Evidence of passivity phenomena.
e. Clear documentary evidence of a diagnosis of severe mental illness taken from hospital records.

Motivation was recorded and classified according to an eight-item typology derived during work on the original 8,001 file set (Mullen et al., 2009). The motivation of the subjects was determined on the basis of the content of their communications and/or the explanations offered when interviewed by the police. The primary motivation was generally expressed with reasonable clarity, but where a number of different aims were apparent the most prominent was selected. Where insufficient information was available to separate reliably into motivational groups, no category was assigned and the cases excluded from analyses involving motivational group.

Statistical analysis

Associations between each variable of concern were sought with other items in the data-set. To determine differences/similarities between groups on categorical variables, analyses were performed using Pearson's chi-square (χ^2) where the appropriate assumptions were met. Where assumptions were violated, exact tests were used.

Effect sizes were also calculated for each measure of association. This was because the group sizes in some of the analyses performed were relatively small and uneven, thus reducing power and increasing the probability of making type II errors (i.e., failing to detect relationships where these exist). The use of effect sizes enabled interpretation of the data beyond, and independently of, the information provided by p values (Cohen, 1992). The measure of effect size used for 2×2 analyses was phi (ϕ) (Siegel & Castellan, 1988).

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Formal testing of the inter-rater reliability of case separation into behavioural types and classification of motivation had been undertaken, using Cohen's kappa, as part of a previous study (James et al., 2009).

Ethical Considerations

The project was financed by the Home Office and concerned material held by the Metropolitan Police Service. The research group was required to operate within the relevant ethical frameworks of these organizations. The project concerned retrospective examination of police files, with anonymization of data. It did not involve access to medical information, contact with the subjects, or interventions.

RESULTS

The study set comprised 222 cases.

Characteristics of the sample

Mental illness

There was evidence for the presence of serious mental illness in 193 cases (86.9% of the sample). Delusional beliefs were present in 151 cases (68.0%), grandiose ideas in 135 (60.8%), rambling, incoherent or confused utterances in 76 (34.2%), and persecutory pre-occupations in 47 (21.2%). There was evidence of suicidal intention in 7 cases (3.2%) and expressions of homicidal ideation in 8 cases (3.6%).

Motivational classification

Sufficient information was available to determine reliably motivational group in 197 cases (88.7%). The remaining 25 cases were excluded from analyses involving motivational group. The 197 cases fell into the following motivational categories.

(i) *Delusions of royal identity*: $N = 61$ (31% of the sample). This was the largest group. It comprised 15 individuals who expressed delusional beliefs that they were the true sovereign, and 46 other cases who believed that they were blood members of the royal family.

(ii) *Amity seekers*: $N = 37$ (18.8%). These were subjects who offered their friendship and advice, which they expected to be taken, apparently oblivious to the unrealistic nature of their endeavour.

(iii) *The infatuated*: $N = 23$ (11.7%). Thirteen (6.6% of the sample) had clear erotomanic delusions. Ten of these were male. All expressed the conviction that they were loved by or already married to their royal target. Those who were infatuated, but not clearly erotomanic ($N = 10$, 5.1%), wished to express their love or offer their hand in marriage to a royal. They understood that the royal

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personage did not yet love them or even know of their existence, but they still displayed absolute conviction that they would succeed in their suit.

(iv) *Sanctuary and help seekers*: $N = 15$ (7.6%). These were people asking for royal assistance with personal adversity or royal protection from supposed persecutors.

(v) *The royally persecuted*: $N = 6$ (3.0%). This small group comprised individuals who claimed to be victims of organized persecution orchestrated by a member of the royal family.

(vi) *Counsellors*: $N = 14$ (7.1%). Though similar in some ways to the amity seekers, such individuals saw it as their role and right to offer advice and opinions to the royal family on how they should live their lives and respond to political situations. They expected their advice to be taken, and were angered if it was not.

(vii) *Querulants*: $N = 13$ (6.6%). These were people who were pursuing a highly personalized quest for justice and vindication.[1] They were seeking royal assistance with their claims, or complaining of royal indifference to their cause.

(viii) *The chaotic*: $N = 28$ (14.2%). No clear motivation could be assigned to these cases, because their writings and/or their statements to police were so difficult to follow or understand. It was not that there was insufficient information to assign another category: rather, their thought processes and behaviour were so disturbed as to make a singularity of purpose unlikely.

Failed breachers ($N = 54$)

Seventy-six per cent were men. The mean age was 38 (SD 13.1). Ninety-three per cent were evidently mentally ill, with 77.8% being deluded and 68.5% grandiose. A third were rambling or confused, but only 16.7% showed evidence of persecutory preoccupations. This was a notably hostile group, with 51.9% showing evidence of hostility or aggression. The largest motivational group were those with delusions of royal identity (38.9%), followed by intimacy seekers (16.9%). There were 10.4% in the counsellor group, and 8.3% were amity seekers. The smallest proportions of cases fell into the entreaty for help or sanctuary (1.9%) and the royally persecuted (1.9%) groups. There were 6.3% in the querulant group. Nearly one in five of the failed breachers managed to achieve close proximity to a member of the royal family (18.9%). However, only 7.4% carried a weapon, and only 3.7% gave evidence of homicidal ideation.

The failed breachers were significantly different from others in approach groups (see Table 1). They were more likely to include those with delusions of royalty and less likely to include amity seekers. They were more likely to be hostile and aggressive, and more likely to engage in assault, intimidating language, demand language and abusive language towards proxies (i.e. mainly police and security personnel). They were significantly more likely to gain close proximity to a royal family member, but not significantly more likely to carry a weapon or give evidence of homicidal ideation.

[1] Querulant is a term used to describe a person who engages in a pattern of behaviour involving the unusually persistent pursuit of a personal grievance in a manner seriously damaging to the individual's economic, social and personal interests, and one often disruptive to the functioning of the courts and/or other agencies attempting to resolve the claims (Mullen & Lester, 2006).

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Table 1. Associations with behaviours of concern

	Behaviours of concern (proxies for violence) *N* (%) column category, *N* (%) remainder of sample Chi-square, *p* ϕ Odds ratio (95% CI)				
	Failed breach *N* = 54	Successful breach *N* = 57	Achieving proximity *N* = 20	Carrying a weapon *N* = 14	Homicidal ideation *N* = 8
Male gender	41 (75.9%), 119 (70.8%) NS	41 (71.9%), 119 (72.1%) NS	10 (50.0%), 150 (74.3%) 5.320, 1 df, 0.021 −0.155 0.347 (0.137–0.880)	11 (78.6%), 148 (71.5%) NS	6 (75.0%), 154 (72.0%) NS
Home address outside UK	4 (7.8%), 17 (10.7%) NS	1 (1.8%), 20 (13.0%) 5.725, 1 df, 0.017 −0.165 0.122 (0.016–0.930)	2 (10.0%), 19 (10.0%) NS	0 (0.0%), 20 (10.3%) NS	1 (12.5%), 20 (9.9%) NS
Motivational type					
Querulants	3 (6.3%), 10 (6.7%) NS	8(17.0%), 5 (3.3%) 10.879, exact 0.003 0.235 5.949 (1.843–19.204)	45 (26.3%), 8 (4.5%) 13.263, exact 0.004 0.259 7.589 (2.189–26.309)	3 (23.1%), 10 (5.5%) 6.080, exact 0.044 0.176 5.190 (1.231–21.886)	0 (0.0%), 13 (6.8%) NS
The chaotic	4 (8.3%), 24 (16.1%) NS	11 (23.4%), 17 (11.3%) 4.277, 1 df, 0.039 0.147 2.991 (1.029–5.554)	0 (0.0%), 28 (15.7%) NS	5 (38.5%), 23 (12.6%) 6.646, exact 0.024 0.184 4.348 (1.310–14.432)	2 (33.3%), 26 (13.6%) NS
Amity seekers	4 (8.3%), 33 (22.1%) 4.542, 0.033 −0.152 0.320 (0.107–0.954)	7 (14.9%), 30 (20.0%) NS	6 (31.6%), 31 (17.4%) NS	0 (0.0%), 37 (20.2%) NS	0 (0.0%), 37 (19.4%)
Entreaty for help or sanctuary	1 (2.1%), 14 (9.4%) NS	1 (2.1%), 14 (9.3%) NS	1 (5.3%), 14 (7.9%) NS	0 (0.0%), 15 (8.2%) NS	0 (0.0%), 15 (7.9%) NS
Counsellors	5 (10.4%), 9 (6.0%) NS	0 (0.0%), 14 (9.3%) 4.722, exact 0.025 −0.155 1.346 (1.236–1.465)	0 (0.0%), 14 (7.9%) NS	2 (15.4%), 12(6.6%) NS	2 (33.3%), 12 (6.3%) NS

(*Continues*)

Table 1. (Continued)

	Behaviours of concern (proxies for violence)				
	N (%) column category, *N* (%) remainder of sample Chi-square, *p* ϕ Odds ratio (95% CI)				
	Failed breach *N* = 54	Successful breach *N* = 57	Achieving proximity *N* = 20	Carrying a weapon *N* = 14	Homicidal ideation *N* = 8
Delusions of royal identity	21 (38.9%), 40 (23.8%) 4.663, 1 df, 0.031 0.145 2.036 (1.061–3.909)	13 (22.8%), 48 (29.1%) NS	4 (20.0%), 57 (28.2%) NS	2 (14.3%), 59 (28.5%) NS	1 (12.5%), 60 (28.0%) NS
The infatuated	9 (16.7%), 14 (8.3%) NS	6 (10.5%), 17 (10.3%) NS	3 (15.0%), 20 (9.9%) NS	1 (7.1%), 21 (10.1%) NS	0 (0.0%), 23 (10.7%) NS
Royally persecuted	1 (2.1%), 5 (3.4%) NS	1 (2.1%), 5 (3.3%) NS	0 (0.0%), 6 (3.4%) NS	0 (0.0%), 6 (3.3%) NS	1 (16.7%), 5 (2.6%) NS
Mental state					
Overt mental illness	50 (92.6%), 143 (85.1%) NS	47 (82.5%), 146 (88.5%) NS	13 (65.0%), 181 (89.2%) 9.314, exact 0.007 −0.205 0.227 (0.082–0.629)	13 (92.9%), 179 (86.5%) NS	8 (100%), 185 (86.5%) NS
Deluded	42 (77.8%), 109 (64.9%) NS	32 (56.1%), 119 (72.1%) 4.974, 1 df, 0.026 −0.150 0.495 (0.265–0.924)	12 (60.0%), 139 (68.8%) NS	8 (57.1%), 142 (68.6%) NS	5 (62.5%), 146 (68.2%) NS
Grandiose	37 (68.5%), 98 (58.3%) NS	27(47.4%), 108 (65.5%) 5.815, 1 df, 0.016 −0.162 0.475 (0.258–0.875)	10 (50.0%), 125 (61.9%) NS	6 (42.9%), 128 (61.8%) NS	3 (37.5%), 132 (61.7%) NS
Feels persecuted	9 (16.7%), 38 (22.8%) NS	6 (10.5%), 41 (25.0%) 5.292, 0.021 −0.155 0.353 (0.141–0.883)	4 (20.0%), 43 (21.4%) NS	5 (35.7%), 42 (20.5%) NS	3 (37.5%), 44 (20.7%) NS
Hostile/Aggressive	28 (51.9%), 33 (19.6%) 21.274, 1 df, 0.000	15 (26.3%), 46 (27.9%) NS	9 (45.0%), 52 (25.7%) NS	11 (78.6%), 50 (24.2%) 19.342, exact 0.000	5 (62.5%), 56 (26.2%) 5.108, exact 0.038

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Behaviour on approach					
Attempted or actual assault on proxy	11 (20.4%), 5 (3.0%)	3 (5.3%), 13 (7.9%)	0 (0.0%), 16 (7.9%)	6 (42.9%), 10 (4.8%)	3 (37.5%), 13 (6.1%)
	18.487, exact 0.000 0.289 8.340 (2.750–25.286)	NS	NS	28.235, exact 0.000 0.357 14.775 (4.299–50.778)	11.387, exact 0.014 0.226 9.277 (1.994–43.158)
Intimidating behaviour to proxy	42 (77.8%), 76 (45.2%)	51 (89.5%), 67 (40.6%)	14 (70.0%), 104 (51.5%)	13 (92.9%), 104 (50.2%)	7 (87.5%), 111 (51.9%)
	17.377, 1 df, 0.000 0.280 4.237 (2.083–8.616)	40.629, 1 df, 0.000 0.428 12.433 (5.049–30.616)	NS	9.559, 0.002 0.208 12.875 (1.654–100.224)	NS
Threatening language to proxy	7 (13.0%), 10 (6.0%)	2 (3.5%), 15 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%), 17 (8.4%)	4 (28.6%), 13 (6.3%)	4 (50.0%), 13 (6.1%)
	NS	NS	NS	9.177, exact 0.015 0.204 5.969 (1.646–21.649)	21.042, exact 0.001 0.308 15.462 (3.467–68.955)
Demand language to proxy	28 (51.9%), 45 (26.8%)	12 (21.1%), 61 (37.0%)	8 (40.0%), 65 (32.2%)	5 (35.7%), 67 (32.4%)	4 (50.0%), 69 (32.2%)
	11.634, 1 df, 0.001 0.229 2.944 (1.562–5.547)	4.863, 1 df, 0.027 −0.148 0.455 (0.223–0.926)	NS	NS	NS
Abusive language to proxy	11 (20.8%), 12 (7.1%)	6 (10.5%), 17 (10.4%)	2 (10.0%), 21 (10.4%)	4 (28.6%), 19 (9.2%)	3 (37.5%), 20 (9.4%)
	8.006, 1 df, 0.005 0.190 3.405 (1.403–8.260)	NS	NS	5.242, exact 0.045 0.154 3.937 (1.126–13.767)	6.534, exact 0.039 0.172 5.790 (1.287–26.042)

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Within the failed breacher group, individuals from four motivational groups managed to achieve proximity: the querulant (66.7%: i.e. 66.7% of all querulants were amongst the failed breachers), amity seekers (25%), those with delusions of royal identity (19%) and the infatuated (22.2%). Weapons were carried by querulants (33.3%), counsellors (20%) and the infatuated (11.1%). Only the counsellors gave any evidence of homicidal ideation (20%).

Overall, a majority of failed breachers had a marked sense of entitlement, whether to the throne or to personal relationships with members of the royal family, which they pursued in a direct and aggressive manner. Those pursuing help or friendship do not tend to engage in this form of breach activity.

Successful breachers ($N = 57$)

Successful breachers were those who succeeded in breaching security barriers before being apprehended. This category included those found wandering around the palaces or grounds of royal residences. Seventy-two per cent were male, and the mean age was 36.7 (SD 12.0). Mental illness was evident in 82.5%, with 56.1% deluded, 47.4% grandiose and 28.1% confused. The largest motivational groups were the chaotic (23.4%) and those with delusions of royal identity (22.8%). The querulant accounted for 17.0%, and 14.9% were amity seekers. There were no counsellors. Only 1.8% were seeking help or sanctuary, and only 1.8% numbered amongst the royally persecuted. Close proximity was achieved by 8.8%, 10.7% carried weapons and 7.0% gave evidence of homicidal ideation. None committed an assault and only 5.3% attempted to do so.

Significant differences from other approachers were over-representation of the querulant and the chaotic, and under-representation of counsellors. Successful breachers were less likely to be deluded, grandiose or persecuted. They were far more likely to engage in intimidating behaviour to proxies (89.5%), although they used less demand language.

The successful breachers were not a homogeneous group, and their characteristics differed with motivation. Of the two motivational groups significantly over-represented (the querulant and the chaotic), the querulant were significantly different from the others in the successful breacher group in that none was overtly mentally ill ($\chi^2 = 47.000$, exact 0.000, $\phi = -1.000$). Evidently, therefore, none was deluded, grandiose, persecuted or incoherent. By contrast, all the chaotic were by definition mentally ill and 63.6% were evidently deluded. None achieved proximity to a member of the royal family, but they were significantly more likely than other successful breachers to be carrying a weapon ($\chi^2 = 6.932$, exact 0.023, $\phi = 0.388$, OR = 9.429, 95% CI 1.434–61.986) and to declare homicidal ideation ($\chi^2 = 6.836$, exact 0.05, $\phi = 0.381$).

Within the successful breacher group, only three motivational groups managed to achieve proximity: querulants (25%; i.e. 25% of all querulants were within the successful breacher group), counsellors (10.6%), and amity seekers (42.9%). Homicidal ideation was only to be found in the chaotic (18.1%), and weapons were found in those from four motivational groups: the querulant (12.5%), counsellors (13%), the chaotic (36.4%), and those with delusions of royal identity (7.7%).

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Comparison of Failed Breachers and Successful Breachers

There are similarities between the failed and successful breachers, in that those seeking help or friendship do not appear to be given to breaching security barriers, in contrast to those with a marked sense of entitlement or cause. However, it is clear from the results above that there were differences between those that tried to breach security barriers, but failed, and those that tried and succeeded. When the two were compared, the following significant differences were apparent. In terms of motivation, the failed breachers were significantly less likely to include the chaotic ($\chi^2 = 4.057$, 1 df, 0.044, $\phi = -0.207$, OR = 0.298, 95% CI 0.087–1.000). They were significantly more deluded ($\chi^2 = 5.842$, 1 df, 0.001, $\phi = 0.229$, OR = 2.734, 95% CI 1.195–6.257), more grandiose ($\chi^2 = 5.081$, 1 df, 0.024, $\phi = 0.214$, OR = 2.418, 95% CI 1.114–5.247), and more hostile or aggressive ($\chi^2 = 7.619$, 1 df, 0.006, $\phi = 0.262$, OR = 3.015, 95% CI 1.361–6.679). The failed breachers were more likely to engage in demand language to a proxy ($\chi^2 = 11.412$, 1 df, 0.001, $\phi = 0.321$, OR = 4.038, 95% CI 1.759–9.270) and more likely to assault a proxy ($\chi^2 = 9.100$, exact 0.002, $\phi = 0.286$, OR = 2.239, 95% CI 1.806–2.776).

A notable difference is that 88.2% of failed breachers tried to cross the security barriers through an appropriate entrance (e.g. through a gate, instead of over a wall), compared with only 40.9% of successful breachers ($\chi^2 = 23.684$, 1 df, 0.000, $\phi = 0.499$, OR = 10.833, 95% CI 3.820–30.7260). More deluded and more grandiose than the successful breachers, the failed breachers included many who believed they should be let into palaces or events as a matter of right and therefore attended an entrance or gate, determined to force their way in.

Achieving proximity to a member of the Royal Family ($N = 20$)

Women comprised 50% of those who achieved proximity. The mean age of the women was 45 (SD 7.7) and that of the men 36 (SD 16). Mental illness was evident in 65%, with 60% being deluded, 50% grandiose and 35% rambling or confused. Those motivational groups that achieved proximity were the querulant (26.3%), amity seekers (31.6%), entreaty for help or sanctuary (5.3%), those with delusions of royal identity (20.0%) and the infatuated (15.0%). Only 7.1% of those who achieved proximity were carrying a weapon, and none gave evidence of homicidal ideation or engaged in actual or attempted assault of a proxy.

Significant differences between those achieving proximity and the remainder of approachers are set out in Table 1. The querulant were over-represented, as were women. Those achieving proximity were less likely to show evidence of mental illness.

It is of note that more than twice as many failed breachers as successful breachers succeeded in gaining proximity to a member of the royal family. This is probably because their breach attempts were more likely to occur when a member of the royal family was close at hand. Breaching the security of a residence is a different type of activity than breaching the security of an event. A principal is always present at an event, but it may be that a residence is unoccupied at the time that security was breached, something that is unlikely to be known to the breacher at the time.

Those achieving proximity had a significantly lower rate of overt mental illness than the remainder of approachers. However, there was no significant difference between

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those achieving proximity and those not on measures of disturbed or aggressive behaviour.

Overall, three types of approacher gained proximity to a royal family member: those seeking amity or help or sanctuary (who are rarely hostile); those with virtually a 100% deluded membership, who have very personal beliefs about their own identity or status that directly concern the royal family (delusions of royal identity and the infatuated); and querulants, who are by contrast the least likely to show signs of overt mental illness.

Carrying weapons ($N = 14$)

Of those carrying weapons, 78.6% were male, with a mean age of 34.7 (SD 8.94). Mental illness was apparent in 92.9%, with 78.6% being hostile or aggressive, 57.1% deluded, 42.9% grandiose and 35.7% with persecutory ideas The majority (92.9%) engaged in intimidating behaviour towards a proxy. The chaotic accounted for 38.5% of cases and the querulant 23.1%. Counsellors and those with delusions of royalty each accounted for 14.3%. There were no amity seekers or seekers of sanctuary or help amongst those carrying weapons.

The sample of those carrying weapons was small (14 of the 222 approach cases). However, significant findings are apparent from an examination of the data (see Table 1). Weapon carriers were more likely to come from amongst querulants and the chaotic. They were more likely to be hostile or aggressive, to engage in intimidating behaviour to proxies and to use threatening language and abusive language.

Overall, those carrying weapons appear to be more hostile, and less likely to be seeking help or friendship. There does not appear to be one single type of approacher that carries a weapon. The two most frequent motivational groups, the chaotic and the querulant, are different in terms of mental state items, with those pursuing an agenda showing markedly fewer overt signs of mental illness, but also the highest proportion with hostility/aggression of the motivational groups, apart from the royally persecuted.

Homicidal ideation ($N = 8$)

There were only eight cases where homicidal ideation was recorded. Six were men. The mean age was 31.8 (SD 7.6). All showed evidence of mental illness. Homicidal ideation was significantly associated with the presence of hostility or aggression, the use of threatening language and of abusive language and attempted or actual assault of a proxy (see Table 1).

Relationships between factors of concern

In selecting the behaviours to examine, the hypothesis was that it would generally be necessary to breach security to pose a risk of violence; that, amongst those who breached security, those posing a risk of attack would need to gain proximity; and that, amongst those who achieved proximity, those who possessed a weapon and harboured homicidal ideation would be particularly dangerous. The inter-relationships between the various behaviours examined in this study are set out in Table 2.

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Table 2. Associations between behaviours of concern

	Failed breach	Successful breach	Achieving proximity	Carrying weapons	Homicidal ideation
			% row *N* (%) column, *N* (%) remainder of sample χ^2, 1 df, *p* ϕ OR (95% CI)		
Failed breach			20.4% 11 (55.0%), 43 (21.3%) 11.236, exact 0.002 0.225 4.519 (1.760–11.606)	7.4% 4 (28.6%), 50 (24.2%) NS	3.7% 2 (25.0%), 52 (24.3%) NS
Successful breach			8.8% 5(25.0%), 52 (25.7%) NS	10.7% 6 (42.9%), 50 (24.2%) NS	7.0% 4 (50.0%), 53 (24.8%) NS
Achieving proximity	55.0% 11 (20.4%), 9 (5.4%) 11.236, exact 0.002 0.202 4.519 (1.760–11.606)	25.0% 5 (8.8%), 15 (9.1%) NS		5.0% 1 (7.1%), 19 (9.2%) NS	0.0% 0 (0.0%), 20 (9.3%) NS
Carrying weapons	28.6% 4 (7.4%), 10 (6.0%) NS	42.9% 6 (10.7%), 8 (4.8%) NS	7.1% 1 (5.0%), 13 (6.5%) NS		14.3% 2 (25.0%), 12 (5.6%) NS
Homicidal ideation	25% 2 (3.7%), 6 (3.6%) NS	50% 4 (7.0%), 4 (2.4%) NS	0% 0 (0.0%), 8 (4.0%) NS	25% 2 (14.3%), 6 (2.9%) NS	

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As regards the first proposition, 78.9% of those that achieved proximity were found in the two breacher groups. However, it is clear that proximity was achieved in more than 20% of cases without any attempted or successful breaching of security barriers. In other words, breaching was not necessary to achieve proximity.

Of those who carried weapons, 71.5% were to be found in the breacher groups, as were 75% of those who exhibited homicidal ideation. However, only 7.1% of those carrying weapons and none of those manifesting homicidal ideation managed to achieve proximity. A quarter of those with homicidal ideation carried a weapon; in other words, three-quarters did not. Of those carrying weapons, only 14.3% gave evidence of homicidal ideation. Overall, the associations between the behaviours of concern were limited. The only significant association was between failed breach and achieving proximity.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study suggest that the examination of proxy measures for violence may constitute a useful approach for identifying differences in patterns of risk. A principal finding of the current study was that some motivations are far more closely linked than others with behaviours of concern as proxies for violence. In brief, people in the querulant and the chaotic motivational groups are significantly more likely to engage in the behaviours studied than are other approachers. In contrast, those concerned with seeking friendship or requesting help are less likely to engage in such behaviours. This is of practical importance in terms of risk management, in that it offers a rationale for separating out those with particular motivations for special attention, and for the targeting of resources towards particular sub-groups of those who engage in inappropriate contacts with members of the royal family and, potentially, other public figures.

Of particular interest was the finding that the querulant group, although small in number, was significantly over-represented amongst the successful breachers, those achieving proximity and those carrying weapons. The fact that this group was over-represented in three of the five groups studied suggests that querulants are worthy of particular attention from those involved in risk management. The finding is noteworthy because it is consistent with the findings of an earlier study conducted by the Fixated Research Group, which concerned actual attacks on prominent people, rather than proxy measures for violence (James et al., 2007). The study in question examined attacks on Western European politicians over the period 1990–2004 and found that death or serious injury was significantly associated with perpetrators who were pursuing a particular cause or quest for justice. A second study (James et al., 2008), which looked at historical attacks on the British royal family between 1778 and 1994, also noted the querulous pursuit of grievances as an important motivating factor in those perpetrating attacks.

The numbers in two of the groups considered as proxies for violence—weapons carriers and those with homicidal ideation—were small. Whilst this did not prevent the identification of significant associations, it suggests the likelihood of type II errors and the need to consider in future studies samples drawn solely from those with the characteristics in question. Of the behaviours under examination here, homicidal ideation was the weakest in terms of the study aims. Whereas breaching security barriers

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and the carrying of weapons are objective facts that are likely to be recorded by police when they occur, homicidal ideation is an aspect of individual mentation, which cannot be directly apparent to an observer. In other words, it is almost certainly under-recorded in this study.

There was little evidence in this study to support the contention that there is a logical sequence of behaviours moving from breach to gaining proximity. In fact, the results give reason to question the centrality often given to breach activity in studies of risk towards the prominent. There is little evidence in these findings to support the idea that there is a pool of intended breachers, of whom some succeed and some do not. The failed and successful breachers seem rather to belong to two different populations, with different patterns of motivation and significantly different levels of psychotic symptomatology. In addition, their behaviours were different, with failed breachers being more likely to attempt to breach security barriers at appropriate places, such as gates, whereas the successful breachers were more likely to breach at inappropriate places, such as climbing walls. Breaching security when there is no obvious royal personage present is likely to be a different phenomenon than doing so when a member of the royal family is nearby. The data here suggest that the difference between failed and successful breachers may be a false dichotomy reflecting the difference between direct and indirect approaches, rather than reflecting attempts to come within attacking range. The failed breacher group, rather than being a collection of those that have not yet succeeded in breaching, are those who tend to adopt a direct approach and therefore should be more worrying to protection agencies. This is reflected in the significantly higher proportion that achieve proximity to a royal family member.

It is attractive to assume that the groups chosen as proxies for violence in this study must logically have included most of those who might have intended violence, and that the groups should logically form subsidiary sets of each other, in which the initial sets (the breacher groups) are inevitably the largest and least discriminating in terms of likelihood of attack. Whilst it cannot be said that this is incorrect, it is quite evident that most of those in the breacher groups are driven by motivations that rarely lead to attack. Many people seek to gain admittance to the royal presence for reasons that concern affection, goodwill or fealty, however deluded. Breach activity in itself is too widely inclusive a variable to be usefully discriminant in terms of violence prediction.

Furthermore, it is notable that 21.1% of those achieving proximity did not fall within the successful or attempted breacher groups. Rather, these were individuals who achieved proximity at public events or walkabouts, but were stopped by police because of concerns about their intentions, based on their behaviour, which made them stand out from the crowd. It is of note that none of the attacks on royalty in the historical study of James et al. (2008) occurred within their residences or secure buildings and that the same applied to a series of attacks on western politicians (James et al., 2007), who were all bar one (a letter bomb) attacked in public places or buildings to which the public had unfettered access. In other words, the central issue may not be one of breaching, but one of gaining proximity, which may be easier to do in many cases without launching an attempt to breach security perimeters or cordons.

This does not mean that a factor such as breaching security barriers is unimportant in terms of assessing risk. Such behaviour is evidently always associated with disruption and anxiety, both to individual members of the royal family and to those responsible for protecting them, as well as risk to the person breaching and to security staff who intercept them. The domain of risk under consideration in this study was that of

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violence to a royal family member. Breaching, whatever its relevance to violence, was clearly in this study more relevant to other domains of risk, such as disruption, embarrassment and harm to third parties.

The failure of most of those with weapons and all of those with declared homicidal ideation to achieve proximity is difficult to interpret. It is not clear from the available data whether this reflects some intervention on the part of police and security agents in interrupting those with weapons or homicidal ideation before they achieved proximity, whether carrying weapons or revealing homicidal ideation in this sample are independent of gaining proximity, or whether the sample was simply too small to produce meaningful results.

In finding little evidence of associations between the different behaviours under consideration, this study of proxies for violence has illustrated that it is not possible to determine any single entity of 'dangerous behaviour'. This should not be surprising, in that different patterns of motivation (some of which involve no hostile intent at all) may lead to similar forms of behaviour. Risk assessment exercises therefore need to incorporate knowledge of different clusters of factors of concern, rather than assuming a single construct or pathway of 'dangerousness'. Consideration of the interactions between motivation, mental state, and behaviour is a necessary starting point in constructing risk assessment schedules (James et al., 2009).

The aim of research into assessment of violence risk should not be the nigh impossible task of accurately predicting which individual will do what. Rather, it should concern the identification of groups and sub-groups at higher risk of causing such problems, in order that scarce protection resources can be more effectively targeted (Quinsey, Harris, Rice, & Cormier, 2006; Meloy, Sheridan, & Hoffmann, 2008). The results of the current study provide some practical indications to aid such an exercise. Perhaps the most useful outcome of this study is that it provides further support for the importance of motivation in public figure risk assessment (Mullen, Pathé & Purcell, 2009; MacKenzie et al., 2009) and for the prominence of mental illness, which indicates possible means of intervention (Mullen et al., 2009; James et al., 2009). The premise is that risk factors for violence vary according to motivational group. Risk factors also vary according to domain of risk, specifically in approach (Meloy et al., in press), escalation (James et al., submitted) and persistence (James et al., 2009). If motivation is a 'first order' factor in the assessment of risk in each domain, the task becomes that of determining the relative importance of different 'second order' factors for each motivation, and to the consideration of dynamic factors and precipitants. Such an approach to risk assessment is not an alternative to operational approaches to harm prevention, elegantly outlined elsewhere (e.g. Calhoun & Weston, 2009). Rather, it is the authors' contention that both are necessary in the prevention of harm to public figures.

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