Domestic Violence Related
Mass and Spree Killings

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DV-Related Mass and Spree Killings

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Outline

I. Defining Mass & Spree Killing
II. Types of Mass & Spree Killing
III. Social & Historical Patterns
IV. Case Illustrations & Key Themes
I. DEFINING MASS AND SPREE KILLING

- Public mass and spree killings are extremely rare – less than 0.2% of all US murders
- Media amplification & public concern considerable
- Mass murder = the killing of four or more victims in one event, in one location/setting
- Spree murders = 2+ victims, in one episode, in 2+ locations/settings, without the offender “cooling off” emotionally between murders
II. TYPES OF MASS/SPREE KILLING

- Familicide – usually non-public, not always
- Felony mass/spree killing – usually public
- Non felony-related public mass/spree killing include:
  * Cases usually with fewer but targeted killings where the DV/IPV is centrally important (e.g. IPV offender kills current/former spouse/partner and/or those associated with the DV/divorce/custody case)

Case illustrations: Carey Dyess, Dwight Jones
Case types

* Cases usually with many unknown victims where DV/IPV is one aspect of the case (e.g. mass killer kills his [abused] current/former spouse/partner or family member [e.g. mother] before killing many unknown victims)

Case illustrations: Charles Whitman, Adam Lanza, Andrew Kehoe, Omar Mateen

* Cases without any apparent DV/IPV component
Familicide

- Familicide = the deliberate killing within a relatively short period of time of a current or former spouse/intimate partner and one or more of their children, perhaps followed by the suicide of the perpetrator
- 1999-2013 averaged 8.5 familicide mass shootings per year (CRS)
- Gendered
Familicide

- *Livid coercive* killers – classic batterers, angry, often misogynistic, impulsive, violent with women and sometimes others*
- *Civil reputable* killers – enormous emotional restraint, especially in public
- Emotional continuum between LC & CR killers – not distinctive types, rather under-controlled and over-controlled in terms of the regulation of rage
Familicide

- *Contradictory/intermediate* cases that fall somewhere between these two extremes*
- Much lower levels of livid coercion
- Somewhat tarnished reputation
Familicide

Out of a total of 163 cases:

- 77 (47%) as evidencing livid coercion (76 male, one female perpetrated)
- 47 (29%) civil reputable hearts (40 male, 7 female).
- 39 (24%) (33 male, 6 female) contradictory/intermediate
Felony Mass/Spree Killings

- Linked to other felonious behavior – drug/gang
- Often involve financial gain, covering up another crime
- Murders serve to eliminate witnesses of a robbery, drug crime, or gang attack
- Perps tend to be young Black or Hispanic males with extensive criminal records
- Offenders rarely suicidal
Felony Mass/Spree Killings

- Victims are typically male acquaintances, criminal associates, or strangers of similar age
- Most victims of the same race as the offender
- At least 75% involve firearms
- Often not well publicized
- Gendered
Non felony-related public mass & spree killing

- Offenders vary but majority of victims unknown to the killer
- School and workplace killings – offenders seek revenge on specific victims/groups or classes of victims
- Domestic terrorists – e.g. 2015 Charleston Church attacks – instill fear and draw attention to ideological messages
Non felony-related public mass & spree killing

- Often extensive planning, methodical selection of victims – not random incidents where people gunned down indiscriminately

- May leave written messages/recordings explaining their actions
Non felony-related public mass & spree killing

- Lack strong social networks
- Killers can exhibit extreme detachment/isolation
- Many school and workplace shooters described as “loners” who were often bullied in childhood and from “broken homes”
- Gendered
III. SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL PATTERNS

- Congressional Research Service (CRS), 1999-2013 – at least 272 (0.14%) of the BJS-reported 197,191 murders and non-negligent manslaughter incidents were mass shootings
  - Mass (non-felony related) public shootings = 54 incidents, 348 victims
  - Familicides = 111 incidents, 507 victims
  - Felony mass shootings = 107 incidents, 461 victims
Social patterns

- In mass public shootings and familicide mass shootings, nearly all the offenders were lone assailants.
- Over half of the offenders in either type of mass murder committed suicide or were killed by responding police.
- Most mass murderers who kill with firearms carefully plan their attacks well in advance, know at least some of their victims, and often select their victims methodically.
Social patterns

- A domestic dispute of some type was allegedly a precipitating factor in roughly a fifth (21.2%) of “mass public shootings” incidents, from 1999-2013 (Congressional Research Service, 2015, page 16). Note problem of missing data in DV/IPV cases

- Either all or a majority of the victims were not related to the offender(s)
Social patterns

- In US (2009-2016) -156 mass shootings - 4+ people shot and killed, not including the shooter
- In at least 54 percent of these (85/156) a current or former intimate partner or family member killed (most were familicides, i.e. non-public; fewer involved non-felony related mass/spree shootings)
Social patterns

- Mass murderers are often “emotionally/mentally unstable,” at least temporarily, but they are rarely psychotic and hallucinatory*

- They are seldom found to be criminally insane or otherwise unfit to stand trial

- The large majority of people with mental illness are not violent and most violence is caused by factors other than mental illness

- Depression, anger, & suicidality much more important than psychosis and schizophrenia as drivers
Social patterns

- However, at certain junctures, e.g. period surrounding a psychiatric hospitalization or first episode of psychosis, small subgroups of those with serious mental illness are at elevated risk of violence.

- Secret Service, 2018, examined 28 mass attacks in 2017, killing 147 and injuring 700 others.

- 32% had psychotic symptoms prior to their attacks but only 14% of attacks identified mental health or psychosis as the principal motive.*
Social patterns

- Most of the attackers ($n = 20, 71\%$) had histories of criminal charges beyond minor traffic violations. Those charges included both non-violent ($n = 16, 57\%$) and violent ($n = 15, 54\%$) offenses

- All had at least one significant stressor* within the last five years, and over half had indications of financial instability in that timeframe

- All the attackers were male

- The majority ($n=23; 82\%$) displayed behaviors indicative of aggressive narcissism (rigid, hostile, extreme self-centeredness) – note often hidden but very important unrecognized shame
Historical patterns

- For 44 years (1970-2013), the prevalence of mass public shootings has increased: 1.1 incidents per year on average in the 1970s, 2.7 (1980s), 4.0 (1990s), 4.1 (2000s), and 4.5 in the first four years of the 2010s.

- In the 29 years (1982-2011) mass shootings occurred on average every 200 days. In the three-year period 2012-2014, mass shootings occurred every 64 days on average.
IV. CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF DV-RELATED PUBLIC MASS/SPREE KILLINGS

- DV/IPV appears central and victims associated in some way with the DV/IPV case – Dyess, 2011; Jones, 2018
Carey Dyess, Yuma County, AZ, June 2, 2011

- Carey shot bus driver, Linda Clatone, 51, four times in the face as she opened the door to her home in Wellton. She survived these injuries.
- She had opened the door to Carey around 4:50 am.
- He had knocked on her door, posing as her next door neighbor – shows planning, preparation, cunning.
- Linda shot because she was a friend and character witness of Carey’s ex-wife, Theresa Sigurdson.
Carey Dyess

- Theresa Sigurdson shot dead outside her residence around 8:15 am the same morning
- Linda Clatone had called Theresa after she was shot to warn her Carey had shot her
- At 9:25 am Jerrold Shelley, Theresa’s divorce attorney shot and killed at his office in Yuma on his last day of work
- Dyess let Mr. Shelley’s admin person go – discerning, not blind rage
Carey Dyess

- Around 6:00 am he killed Theresa’s business partner, James Simpson, 75 – he had helped Theresa buy the property she once lived in with Carey
- After shooting Clatone & Simpson, Dyess heads over to a Jack in the Box, gets coffee and chats with snowbirds. They reported him calm
Carey Dyess

- Approx 10:05 am in Wellton, YCSO found Henry Scott Finney, 79, and Cindy Wilborn, 81, dead from gunshot wounds to the face/head – had let Theresa stay in a trailer on their property
- Dyess shoots himself in the head in his car. Police found him just before 11:00 am
Carey Dyess

- Carey & Theresa married in 2003, divorced in 2007
- It was his fifth divorce, the previous four all in Washington state
- Carey returned to Washington state, 2007-2009 – rumination?
- Contentious divorce, no child custody issues
Carey Dyess

- On 7th May, 2007 Jerrold Shelley filed a “Verified Motion for Contempt,” claiming the petitioner/husband (Carey Dyess) had not delivered various inventory items as promised by March 23, 2007
- Shelley wanted to set up a contempt hearing for Carey. In particular, Carey had delivered “moldy hay” to Theresa
- Dissolution decree (4th October 2007). Theresa got the house with directions to sell it and give Carey half the proceeds minus expenses
Carey Dyess

- Order of protection issued on August 1, 2006 against Theresa and on behalf of Carey. However, after a full hearing the order was dismissed by the Judge.
- A number of IPV, disorderly conduct, and breach of OP calls brought police to their residence in 2006 and 2007.
- Carey also accused one of Theresa’s friends of stalking him, driving by his residence.
Carey Dyess

- In 2004, Sigurdson wrote a friend in Washington State, “I became concerned for my safety when I saw Carey put his pistol under his pillow... I asked him why he was doing it and he said because he felt he needed protection. I asked from what and he said me!!! Well, he’s the one with the gun. I’m the one who doesn’t feel real safe”

- In August 2006, Sigurdson filed for an order of protection against Dyess. Mutual OPs eventually issued
Carey Dyess

- Her OP request noted Dyess’ “physical and verbal abuse,” that he “has guns and will use them,” and that “he said he would kill me”*

- The court record references a physician who notes conflicts began about six months into the marriage, escalating into verbal and physical about one year into the marriage.” The physician described Dyess as a “very controlling spouse”**
Carey Dyess

- During divorce proceedings in Kitsap County Superior Court in Washington State in 1985, his second wife, Shirley Jean Hardisty, claimed she feared Carey would kill her.

- She reported that Carey threatened, “that if I do not ask my attorneys to withdraw that I will not live to see any monies from my husband”

- Carey had also “threatened to fatally injure her attorneys”
Carey Dyess

- A lawyer for Dyess filed a brief in October 2008 that said Dyess had not been paid more than a year after the divorce became final.
- "Mr. Dyess is sick and believes (his ex-wife) is 'holding out,' waiting for him to die," (Yuma attorney Gregory Torok per court petition)
- Dyess also aggrieved at the killing of a buffalo that was destroyed after getting stuck in a ditch.
- He blamed Theresa for the death of the animal.
Dwight Lamon Jones, Scottsdale, May 31-June 2, 2018

- Killing spree by Dwight Lamon Jones, 56
- Acrimonious divorce, DV, and child custody case, lasting at least nine years
- Involved family lawyers and allied professionals
- Jones killed prominent Scottsdale forensic psychiatrist, Steven Pitt, and paralegals Veleria Sharp and Laura Anderson, and psychologist Marshall Levine
Dwight Jones

- He also killed acquaintances, Bryon Thomas and Mary Simmons, in Fountain Hills, before taking his own life in his Extended Stay hotel room in Scottsdale.
- Dr. Pitt testified that Dwight Jones suffered from anxiety, mood disorders, and paranoia.
- The paralegals worked at the law firm retained by Dr. Connie Jones, Dwight Jones' ex-wife.
Dwight Jones

- Marshall Levine had no connection to the Jones case but he rented space in the same office complex where the therapist who examined Jones’s child used to work.
- Scottsdale Police Department had arrested Dwight Jones in May 2009 on charges of domestic violence and making threats.
- “Backing the mother into a wall, pushing and hitting her in the face with his forearm” (court docs)*
Dwight Jones

- Multiple accusations that he assaulted Dr. Jones over 20 years of marriage, including a 2007 incident where he fractured her sternum

- Dr. Jones described Dwight Jones as, “A very emotionally disturbed person,” adding, “I have feared for my safety for the past nine years”*

- Custody evaluator provided evidence of Dwight’s TK Dr. Jones, his constant carriage of a firearm
Dwight Jones

- “Mother has not engaged in acts of domestic violence against Father or the minor child” (Superior Court, Maricopa County, FC 2009-001948, Nov 15, 2010, Docket, 5-6).

- Before the shootings, Dwight Jones posted a series of YouTube videos outlining a conspiracy to deny him access to his son, a son in whose life the court acknowledged the father “played an important role” and a son the father loves “very deeply” (Docket, 9) – leaking/signaling?
Key Themes in DV/IPV central cases

- Gendered
- Signaling, leaking, warning
- IPV history more like IT than SCV
- Extreme hate and anger
- Yet, planning/preparation
- Killings – dissipate hate/anger? Or, feed or gratify feelings of grandiosity and omnipotence? Both?
Key Themes in DV/IPV central cases

- Social isolation, loners, social ostracism
- Fascination, proficiency with weaponry/guns
- Threatening change in life circumstances
- Suicidality, depression
- Paranoia and persecution ~grievances, revenge
- Mental health issues. Extent?
Key Themes in DV/IPV central cases

- Acrimonious/contentious divorce
- Hannah Arendt “Power and violence are opposites; where the one rules absolutely, the other is absent. Violence appears where power is in jeopardy, but left to its course it ends in power’s disappearance”*
- James Gilligan, “I can only conclude that their desire for omnipotence is in direct proportion to their feeling of impotence”**
Public Mass/Spree Killings where DV/IPV is one factor

DV/IPV one factor among many and most victims unknown to the offender and not linked to the DV/IPV case. Case illustrations include:

Charles Whitman, 1966
Adam Lanza, 2012
Andrew Kehoe, 1927
Omar Mateen, 2016
Charles Whitman

- University of Texas, Austin, tower killings, Aug 1, 1966 – lasted 96 minutes, killed by police
- He killed 14 and wounded 31
- Killed mother then wife before heading to the tower
- He was a sharpshooter in the US marines
Charles Whitman

- Deeply distressed by his parents divorce (March 1966)
- His mother assaulted by his father
- Saw psychiatrist at UT & reported “something was happening to him and he didn’t seem to be himself”*
- Told psychiatrist he had “twice assaulted his wife and that she was afraid of him”*
Charles Whitman

- Also told many people he had contemplated ascending the UT tower and shooting people below – signaling/leakage of intent
- Was taking an excessive amount of stimulants
- Strangled his mother to death to save her from his father
- Knifed his wife in the chest five times while she slept
Charles Whitman

- Left do not disturb note for wife’s housekeeper and told her employer she was sick - suggests planning
- Wife was leaving him and talking of divorce
- She had told her parents of his TK
- Whitman asked for an autopsy - assumed he would die
- Brain tumor, size of a pecan nut
Adam Lanza, Sandy Hook School Shooting, Newtown, CT Dec 14 2012

- Adam killed his mother before killing 20 students and 6 adults at the school – DV related because he killed his mother first
- He committed suicide after police arrived
- Careful planning
- Adam had Asperger’s syndrome and as a teenager suffered depression, anxiety, and OCD
Adam Lanza

- Office of Child Advocate, CT report (Nov 2014): his mental health condition “neither caused nor led to his murderous acts”
- Lanza became increasingly isolated
- Untreated by mental health professionals
- Fascination with weapons and violence, part of a micro-society of mass murder enthusiasts with whom he was in email contact
Adam Lanza

- In the last months he did not leave his house, was increasingly despondent, and was anorexic
- Mrs. Lanza planned to leave Sandy Hook in 2012. Perhaps the move out of Adam’s “comfort zone” contributed to the mass killing?
- Education, child health, and mental health services existed in silos
- Report identified his continued access to assault weapons as a major problem
Bath Township, Michigan school mass killing, May 18, 1927

- Andrew Kehoe murdered his wife, Nellie sometime between May 16-18
- He then firebombed his own house and surrounding farm buildings (May 18 at 8:45 am)
- He then detonated explosives at the Bath Consolidated School killing 36 schoolchildren and two teachers
- Then blew up his own truck, killing himself, the school superintendent, and others nearby
Andrew Kehoe

- Kehoe angered because of increased taxes to pay for school consolidation
- Shamed by not winning local election for town clerk position
- Financial difficulties perhaps because of his wife’s long hospitalization. She was released May 16, 1927, just before the mass killing
- Notified of pending foreclosure on his mortgage in June 1926
Andrew Kehoe

- Neighbors noted he stopped working on his farm from the notification of pending foreclosure – some thought he was suicidal
- Killed his trees by girdling them & cut his fences – note symbolism
- Purchased explosives carefully and discretely from June 1926
- He secretly planted explosives inside the school over many months
Andrew Kehoe

- Kehoe had studied electrical engineering and worked as an electrician, including at the school he destroyed.
- He was a suspect in the earlier killing of his stepmother, whom his father had married after the death of Andrew’s mother.
- Investigators found a wooden sign wired to the farm's fence with Kehoe's last message stenciled on it: "Criminals are made, not born"
Omar Mateen, Pulse Nightclub massacre, June 12, 2016, Orlando

- Fatally shot 49 people and injured 53 more at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando
- Eye witnesses described him as laughing as he killed people
- He had shown some interest in radical Islam, enough for the FBI to investigate him twice
- At the time of the shooting he had a wife (Noor Salman) and a three year old son
Omar Mateen

- His ex-wife (Sitora) alleged he beat her before they divorced in 2011. “He would just come home and start beating me up because the laundry wasn’t finished or something like that”*

- He beat her for not doing the laundry, pulled her hair, choked her. Later explained he had just had an argument with his father

- He also threatened her with a gun if she left him
Omar Mateen

- He had also held her hostage and had “serious mental health problems”
- Sitora Yusifiy divorced Mateen after four months of marriage in 2009**
- Rescued by her family after being held hostage
- According to Sitora, much of his anger came from his problems with his father
Omar Mateen

- His ex-wife described him as “Obviously disturbed, deeply, and traumatized”*

- A man who had recently been his colleague said, “He was an angry person, violent in nature...I saw it coming... He said he was going to kill a whole bunch of people” **

- Sitora also described him as “very short tempered”

- She noted he had a history of abusing steroids and a friend of his confirmed that he using steroids to bulk up from his weightlifting
Omar Mateen

- He allegedly attacked Sitora when she was sleeping
- After their marriage he showed his more flamboyant side
- He expressed his resentment about homosexuals, especially when he was angry
- Possible repressed homosexual especially in light of his father’s disapproval of homosexuality?
Omar Mateen

- He had a gun license and was proficient with weaponry
- Worked as a security officer and eventually wanted to become a police officer
- Pledged allegiance to ISIS and urged an end to the bombing of ISIS in Syria
- A childhood friend (Sean Chagani) incredulous - Omar was “different” but he had not talked with him in several years
Omar Mateen

- Mateen never acted violently according to his friend (Sean Chagani: knew him from school and mosque)
- His father did not think Omar’s motive was an expression of Islamic radicalism
- Rather, according to his father, Omar was “disgusted” by displays of homosexual affection
Omar Mateen

- Rumors that Omar may have been using gay dating apps
- Reported that some gay men thought Omar appeared interested in picking up men
Omar Mateen

- Evidence suggests he stalked a woman who he had escorted to court. Continued for three years, frequent calls and texts
- He followed her but never came to her apartment
- He was obsessed with her
- He tracked her to her car and said he wanted to date her
- She rejected him and he did not recognize her right to say “no” and he reacted badly
Omar Mateen

- Sitora believed he was a repressed homosexual
- She alleged there was no sexual connection between them
- All he wanted to do was have children
- He never initiated sexual contact and he was not sexually interested in her
Omar Mateen

- Sitora thought his pledge to ISIS was a ruse
- Omar’s father mocked Omar for being “gay”
- He killed people during Ramadan. Sitora reportedly thought he did it to please his father who strongly disapproved of homosexuality
Omar Mateen

- In the weeks before the attack, Mateen had spent more than $26,500 buying jewelry, clothes, toys, guns and ammunition on credit cards*

- Noor Salman claimed Omar was so abusive that she was afraid to question his actions leading up to the attack

- She was put on trial in federal court for aiding and abetting Omar in his plan to murder 49 people and with obstruction of justice. Federal jury found her not guilty
Omar Mateen

- Noor Salman claimed Mateen beat her while she was pregnant and sometimes threatened to kill her.
- She did not question him watching violent Islamic state videos including beheadings “because he was violent”.
- “Has he ever forced you to have sex when you did not wish to do so?” — yes, she said.
- Salman told her family that her husband had beat her. He raped her. He controlled her life.
Omar Mateen

- “Has he ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a lethal weapon?” — she said he had not
- “Noor Salman is a severely abused woman who was in realistic fear for her life from her abusive husband”
- “Her behavior was entirely consistent with severely abused women who are completely controlled by a highly abusive male partner”
Omar Mateen

- Quotes from Dr. J. Campbell for the defense team
- Prosecution objected that the defense was not raising a defense that Noor was under duress when she aided and abetted Omar, therefore Campbell should not be allowed to testify
- US District Judge Paul Byron ruled jurors will be allowed to hear from Dr. Campbell
- Noor Salman acquitted of helping her husband plan his attack
Omar Mateen

- It appears Mateen chose Pulse randomly, less than an hour before the attack
- It is not clear he knew it was a gay bar
Key Themes in DV/IPV one factor cases

- Gendered
- Signaling, leaking, warning
- IPV history more like IT than SCV
- Mood altering drug abuse
- Planning/preparation
- Organic impairment?
- Mental health issues. Extent?
Key Themes in DV/IPV one factor cases

- Social isolation, loners, social ostracism
- Fascination, proficiency with weaponry/guns
- Threatening change in life circumstances
- Suicidality, depression, rage, vengefulness, ruminations
Questions

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