

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

FBI Criminal Investigative Division  
Dallas Field Office  
Los Angeles Field Office  
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## **(U//FOUO) Involuntary Celibates' Shared Grievance and Rhetoric Likely Initiates a Pathway to Violence Resulting in Individual Violent Acts**

(U//FOUO) The FBI assesses violent involuntary celibate (Incel)<sup>a</sup> rhetoric, expressed online in Incel community forums, likely<sup>b</sup> is partially responsible for some individual Incels' escalation from grievance to attack. The FBI further assesses the idolization of past acts of violence in furtherance of Incel ideology likely also encourages future acts of violence for notoriety. These assessments are made with medium confidence<sup>c</sup> based on FBI reporting, open-source media, public reporting, and publically available information, including current and historical events.

(U//FOUO) The FBI makes the assumption that self-identified Incels and individuals who, although not self-identified Incels, participate in Incel forums and post violent threats, believe in the grievances they are expressing through their violent posts and intend to cause harm.<sup>d</sup> The FBI assesses threats and violent attacks by Incels likely will increase in the near term because of the publicity and notoriety afforded to previous Incel attackers and the simplicity of some attacks, such as vehicle ramming attacks. Some cite the shared grievance among the online Incel community as justification to provoke an individual Incel's desire to commit violent, physical, and revengeful acts. A change in the use of threatening language by Incels or a shift in violent Incel ideology would require a revised assessment. A spike in online threats of violence from Incels or support of previous attacks would increase the confidence level associated with the assessments made herein.

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<sup>a</sup> (U//FOUO) *Analyst Note:* The term Incel originated in the 1990s. The group that calls themselves Incels began as an online community where people who were unable to find meaningful sexual relationships would find empathy and support in an "inclusive community." The current community of Incels quickly adapted that community as a venue for expressing rage about being "involuntary celibates." Generally, Incel ideology centers on male supremacy. More specifically, Incels feel oppressed for not having sex with women to whom they believe themselves entitled and believe that women are irredeemable for not giving them what is expected. They share a hatred of women for not satisfying the Incels' sexual needs and rage toward men in relationships with those women. USPER Elliot Rodger, a self-proclaimed Incel, propelled the term "Incel" into common usage, later adopted by media outlets, after he carried out a mass killing in Santa Barbara, California, in May 2014. Since that time, Rodger has been hailed a "hERo"—emphasis on the capital letters representing his initials—by some in the Incel community. An exact number of Incel-inspired attacks and related deaths could not be confirmed.

<sup>b</sup> (U) See Appendix A: Expressions of Likelihood.

<sup>c</sup> (U) See Appendix B: Confidence in Assessments and Judgments Based on a Body of Information.

<sup>d</sup> (U) *Analyst Note:* The FBI does not consider non-violent participation in the Incel community or its non-violent rhetoric as an indicator of crime.

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**(U) Source Summary Statement**

(U) Reporting in this intelligence bulletin was derived primarily from FBI investigations, open source media, publically available information concerning current and historical events, and public complaints. Open source research was deemed to be most valuable to the assessments. As the threat posed by the Incel community is relatively new, a majority of the current information is available only from open sources; such reporting provides both corroboration and context for FBI investigations. Evidence is cited to the original forum rather than the information provided by the public to the National Threat Operations Center (formally, the FBI Public Access Line). This collection occurred between 17 February 2018 and 27 January 2019 and was current as of the latter date.

*(U//FOUO) Violent Incel Rhetoric Likely Promotes a Pathway to Violence, Increasing Chance of an Attack by an Individual Incel*

(U//FOUO) The FBI judges violent Incel rhetoric, expressed online in Incel community forums, likely is partially responsible for some individual Incels' escalation from grievance to violent, physical, and revengeful acts.<sup>°</sup> This assessment is based on reporting that Incels believe their "emasculatation" is justification for revenge violence against women and the existence of online forums where Incels provoke others into a variety of violent acts, including rape, maiming, castration, and other aggressive behaviors to deal with their perceived grievance.

- (U) On 27 December 2018, according to a Reddit post on sub-Reddit page r/confession, an unidentified individual offered opinions on whether the user would still be called a nice guy after he "deliberately resort[ed] to raping and maiming [females] as well as murdering [their] beloved." The user continued by stating, "If [females] won't love us, or at the very least appreciate us, you will fear us."<sup>1</sup> On 10 January 2019, the same user posted on sub-Reddit r/Braincels that "Women don't deserve life."<sup>2</sup>
- (U) On 6 November 2017, according to Reddit communications, an unidentified individual on the sub-Reddit page r/IncelTears posted screen shots of a post and its comments from sub-Reddit page r/incels in which an unknown user posted that his roommate was "suicide fuel," because he had a girlfriend and a "normal close-knit family." Other r/incele users responded with advice to "castrate him, us[ing] chloroform while he is sleeping and cut off his balls, human castration is not very difficult you will find tutorials over tor/onion network." A second comment suggested the original poster drug his roommate with methamphetamine "to decrees [sic] the likelihood he would pass out from the pain."<sup>3</sup>
- (U) According to videos on a general online hosting site<sup>f</sup> and his manifesto from 2014, published prior to him committing murder, Elliot Rodger expressed his grievance about never kissing a girl and remaining a virgin into his twenties, despite being wealthy. Rodger stated his desire for his supremacy to be noticed by girls at his college. Rodger's manifesto included self-described acts of rage and other novel aggression behavior towards college sorority and fraternity members.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>°</sup> (U) See Appendix C: First Steps of the Pathway to Violence.

<sup>f</sup> (U) *Analyst Note:* As the Elliott Rodger videos were removed after the attack, original sourcing is unavailable.

*(U//FOUO) Idolization of Past Acts of Violence Provides Notoriety and Likely Motivates Like-Minded Attackers To Engage in Violence*

(U//FOUO) The FBI judges the idolization of past acts of violence in furtherance of Incel ideology likely encourages future acts of violence for notoriety. While a majority of the hero-worship remains centered on Rodger as the “Supreme Alpha,” Incels have extended that hero-worship to others who executed attacks under the Incel ideology, which motivates further attacks by individuals seeking the same notoriety. Incels also adopt as heroes mass shooting perpetrators perceived as aligned with the Incel community.

- (U) In April 2018, according to a media report, Alek Minassian drove a van through a busy Toronto, Canada, sidewalk, killing mostly women. Prior to this act of violence, Minassian posted, “The Incel Rebellion has already begun! We will overthrow all the Chads and Stacys!<sup>§</sup> All hail the supreme Gentleman Elliot Roger [*sic*].” In Incel forums, Minassian is praised and posthumously depicted as a soldier (see Figure 1, at right) and his initials are memorialized (see Figure 2, on next page). “Minassian is celebrated for reviving the Incel Rebellion,” according to open source reporting<sup>5</sup>
- (U) On 2 November 2018, according an FBI investigation, USPER Scott Paul Beierle, posing as a student at a yoga studio in Tallahassee, Florida, shot six patrons with a handgun, killing two and injuring four others. Prior to the shooting, Beierle posted misogynistic messages online and uploaded self-produced music containing violent language toward women to the German social media site SoundCloud.<sup>6</sup> In a video he posted online, Beierle mentioned sharing a similar outlook to Elliot Rodger, according to a media report.<sup>7</sup>
- (U) In February 2017, a user of an identified social media website, who was not associated with USPER Nikolas Cruz, defended and praised his attack<sup>h</sup> on a Parkland, Florida, school by posting: “He did nothing wrong, he’s been bullied and mocked by girls through all the high school years and this was his revenge. It’s not a coincidence that he did the shooting on St. Valentine Day, he was a semi-incel, he idolized Elliot

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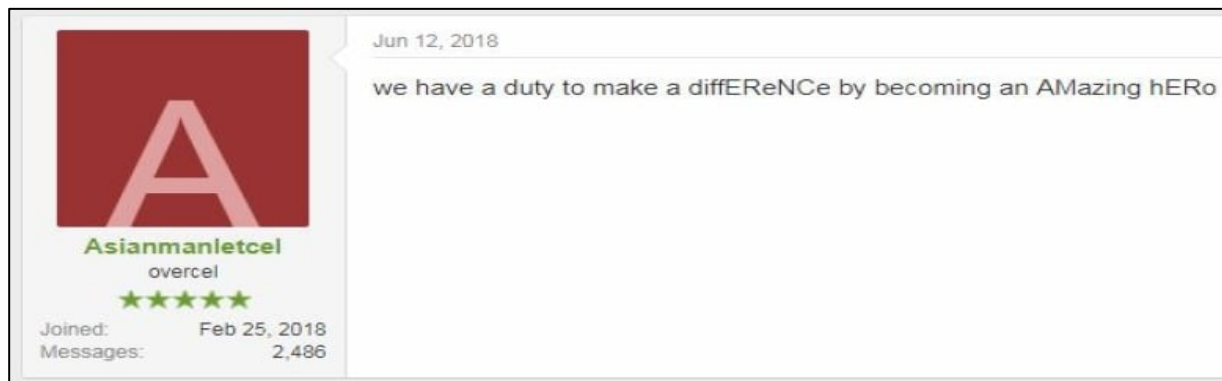
(U) Figure 1: Depiction of Alek Minassian as a soldier. *Source:* Google Images; Figure was archived and unavailable at the time of publication.

<sup>§</sup> (U) *Analyst Note:* According to multiple open source articles and a compilation of Incel-related forums, the term “Chad” is generally accepted as a derogatory name for males that Incels both admire for getting women and hate for being undeserving of women’s attention and who prevent Incels from getting women’s attention. “Chads” are also called “alpha males,” while Incels are referred to as “beta males.” “Stacy” is generally accepted as a derogatory term for a woman who cares only about having sexual relations with “Chads.”

<sup>h</sup> (U) *Analyst Note:* The FBI has made no determination as to Nickolas Cruz’s direct relation to the Incel community, but as exemplified in Figure 2, the Incel community has adopted him as an idol.

Rodger, he shared our same feelings of hate towards femoids.<sup>i</sup> Cruz is a hero, an incel hero and the incel community will remember his deeds forever. And this is just one of a long series of incel rages in order to punish femoids for their extreme hypergamy. BETA UPRISING IS NOW AND YOU WON'T STOP US! INCEL PRIDE NEVER DIES! #NikolasCruz #SaintNikolasCruz #IncelHero,” according to a write-in to the FBI.<sup>8</sup>

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(U) Figure 2: Post depicting the initials of Elliot Rodger, Nikolas Cruz, and Alek Minassian. *Source:* Incels.CO; Posting was archived and unavailable at the time of publication.

**(U) Perspective**

(U//FOUO) The Incel community predominantly operates anonymously via online forums,<sup>j</sup> a situation that in some cases promotes threatening language and acts of violence. The like-minded community offers support to those who appear to be escalating from despair or rhetoric to violent actions. For example, on a sub-Reddit page called “Blackpill” talk, users were provoked to “take the blackpill,” defined as realizing their Incel life was so bleak and hopeless that they should end their own lives (aka “taking the rope”) or the lives of others (aka “going ER,” a reference to Elliot Rodger).<sup>k</sup> As evidenced by one news outlet’s discussion with a self-proclaimed Incel, however, some Incels welcome the opportunity to be interviewed and air their grievance, viewing themselves as society’s forgotten faction.<sup>9</sup>

(U//FOUO) Social psychologists have found the Incel grievance has been an emerging factor for motivating youth to commit targeted school violence over the past several years. They have labeled this phenomenon as the “Beta Rebellion,” in which beta males who have been overlooked by women finally get revenge.<sup>10</sup> According to USBUS Grinnell College’s academic article discussing the background of the Incel mindset and ideology, Incels believe their emasculation is justification for revenge violence against women, which they believe will restore their masculinity.<sup>11</sup> Online forums have provided a platform for discussion of the Beta Rebellion, ultimately providing a platform for anonymous posting of violent content and veiled threats.

<sup>i</sup> (U) *Analyst Note:* “Femoid” is a derogatory term used in the Incel community for female humanoids. In some cases, they are robot-like androids only interested in having sex with “chads” and in other cases, they are considered females who have bullied or ignored male incel members. Hypergamy is the natural inclination for women to “trade up” in terms of looks, money, and status in men.

<sup>j</sup> (U) Currently active forums include, among others, 4chan, r9k, and redpilltalk.net (formerly PUAHate.com, then Sluthate.com). Forums that have been shut down include incels.is, incels.me, and Reddit subreddit r/Incel.

<sup>k</sup> (U) *Analyst Note:* This thread was hosted by Reddit on the Incels.me forum, but is no longer available.

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(U//FOUO) This bulletin is the first external FBI analytic product focused on the topic of Incels.

### **(U) Analysis of Alternatives**

(U//FOUO) The FBI considered the alternative hypothesis that Incels' violent expression online against women and "Chads" likely is a therapeutic method of expressing anger and actually makes the community less violent overall. The FBI deemed this alternative to be less likely, based on the Incel community's positive, hero-worshiping reaction to violent attacks. If the violent expressions were generally accepted as a therapeutic outlet, the community would react negatively to actual attacks, as evidenced in the intent of the original "inclusive society" community of Incels. If indications of incels toning down their violent language or condemnation of attacks surface from individual Incels on Incel forums, the likelihood of the alternative hypothesis would increase, and suggest a possible shift in Incel ideology.

### **(U) Outlook**

(U//FOUO) The FBI assesses threats and violent attacks by Incels likely will increase in the near term because of the notoriety afforded to previous attackers and the simplicity of successful attacks, such as stabbings and vehicle ramming. Combating this threat will remain difficult for law enforcement because of the anonymous nature of the online postings. The use of online covert employees to evaluate a subject's true intentions and identify any leakage<sup>1</sup> will very likely assist in mitigating the threat posed by Incels. The FBI also assesses, in the near and long term, if investigators determine the true identities of those posting in Incel forums, there is a roughly even chance they will welcome the opportunity to be interviewed. A change in Incels' threatening language or a shift in violent Incel ideology would require a revised assessment. A spike in online threats of violence from Incels or support of previous attacks would increase the confidence level associated with the assessments made herein.

### **(U) Intelligence Requirements**

#### (U) FBI National Standing Collection Requirements

- (U//FOUO) USA-VC-DV-K-CID-SR-0780-19
- (U//FOUO) USA-VC-DV-K-CID-SR-0780-19.II.C.1
- (U//FOUO) USA-VC-DV-K-CID-SR-0780-19.II.C.2
- (U//FOUO) USA-VC-DV-K-CID-SR-0780-19.III.B.1
- (U//FOUO) USA-VC-DV-K-CID-SR-0780-19.III.B.2
- (U//FOUO) USA-VC-DV-K-CID-SR-0780-19.III.D.1

(U) This Intelligence Bulletin was prepared by the Criminal Investigative Division Violent Crimes Intelligence Unit (VCIU), the Dallas Field Office, and Los Angeles Field Office of the FBI. Comments and queries may be addressed to the VCIU Unit Chief at 1-202-324-2290, Dallas Field Intelligence Group at 1-972-559-5000, or Los Angeles Field Intelligence Group at 1-310-477-6565.

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<sup>1</sup> (U) *Analyst Note:* As defined by the FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU), leakage is expression, whether communicated to others or not, which seems to convey thoughts, feelings, or intentions to do harm.

**(U) Appendix A: Expressions of Likelihood**

(U) Phrases such as “the FBI judges” and “the FBI assesses,” and terms such as “likely” and “probably” convey analytical judgments and assessments. The chart below approximates how expressions of likelihood and probability correlate with percentages of chance. Only terms of likelihood should appear in FBI products; the chart includes terms of probability strictly for comparison, as they sometimes appear in reporting of other government agencies. Furthermore, the FBI does not arrive at judgments through statistical analysis; and will not use terms of probability to convey uncertainty in external FBI intelligence products.

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<i>Terms of Likelihood</i>	<b>Almost No Chance</b>	<b>Very Unlikely</b>	<b>Unlikely</b>	<b>Roughly Even Chance</b>	<b>Likely</b>	<b>Very Likely</b>	<b>Almost Certain(ly)</b>
<i>Terms of Probability</i>	<b>Remote</b>	<b>Highly Improbable</b>	<b>Improbable (Improbably)</b>	<b>Roughly Even Odds</b>	<b>Probable (Probably)</b>	<b>Highly Probable</b>	<b>Nearly Certain</b>
	<b>1-5%</b>	<b>5-20%</b>	<b>20-45%</b>	<b>45-55%</b>	<b>55-80%</b>	<b>80-95%</b>	<b>95-99%</b>

**(U) Appendix B: Confidence in Assessments and Judgments Based on a Body of Information**

(U) Confidence levels reflect the quality and quantity of the source information supporting a judgment. Consequently, the FBI ascribes high, medium, or low levels of confidence to assessments, as follows:

(U) **High confidence** generally indicates the FBI's judgments are based on high quality information from multiple sources. High confidence in a judgment does not imply the assessment is a fact or a certainty; such judgments might be wrong. While additional reporting and information sources may change analytical judgments, such changes are most likely to be refinements and not substantial in nature.

(U) **Medium confidence** generally means the information is credibly sourced and plausible but not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence. Additional reporting or information sources have the potential to increase the FBI's confidence levels or substantively change analytical judgments.

(U) **Low confidence** generally means the information's credibility or plausibility is uncertain, the information is too fragmented or poorly corroborated to make solid analytic inferences, or the reliability of the sources is questionable. Absent additional reporting or information sources, analytical judgments should be considered preliminary in nature.

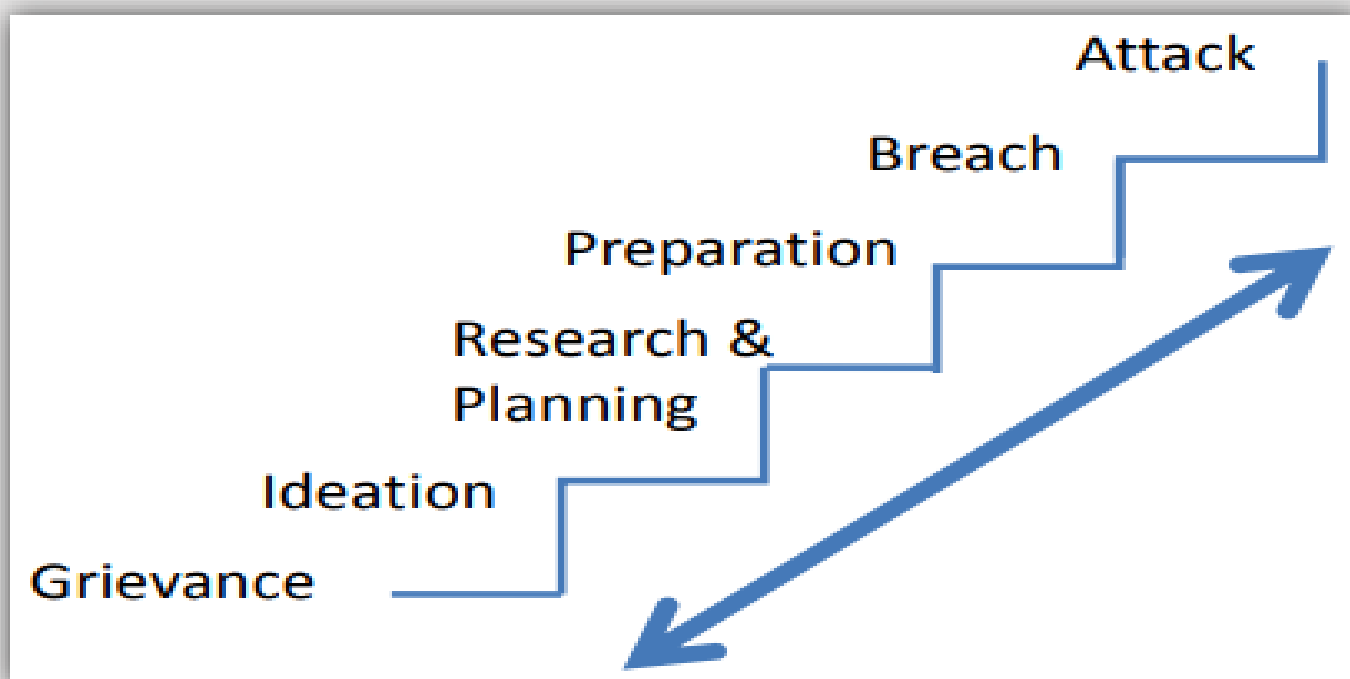
**(U) Appendix C: First Steps of the Pathway to Violence**

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(U) The BAU discusses a six-step pathway to violence, the first two steps of which are pivotal in an attacker’s escalation from frustration to attack. Incels directly satisfy BAU’s “revenge for a perceived grievance” and “quest for justice” motives for violence and first step of the pathway:

- (U) Revenge for a perceived injury or grievance;
- (U) Quest for justice;
- (U) Desire for notoriety or recognition;
- (U) Desire to solve a problem perceived to be unbearable; or
- (U) Desire to kill or be killed.

(U) Violent Ideation: The idea that violence is an acceptable, or even the only, means of achieving redress.



**(U) First Steps of the Pathway to Violence**

(U) Source: FBI; Booklet; 2017; “(U) Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks”; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is an FBI BAU publication.



**(U) Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup> (U) Website; Reddit, r/confession; “il no longer be a nice guy I will maim and rape”; archived post, date of information unknown; [www.reddit.com/r/confession/comments/aa28mm/il\\_no\\_longer\\_be\\_a\\_nice\\_guy\\_i\\_will\\_maim\\_and\\_rape/](http://www.reddit.com/r/confession/comments/aa28mm/il_no_longer_be_a_nice_guy_i_will_maim_and_rape/); accessed on 18 January 2019; Source of posts under user name *FilthyFascist*.

<sup>2</sup> (U) Website; Reddit, r/Braincels; “Women don’t deserve life”; archived post, date of information unknown; [www.reddit.com/r/Braincels/comments/aem0mc/women\\_dont\\_deserve\\_life/](http://www.reddit.com/r/Braincels/comments/aem0mc/women_dont_deserve_life/); accessed on 18 January 2019; Source of posts under user name *FilthyFascist*.

<sup>3</sup> (U) Website; Reddit, subreddit r/IncelTears; “How to deal with chadly roommates”; archived post, date of information unknown; [www.reddit.com/r/IncelTears/comments/7b9ao7/how\\_to\\_deal\\_with\\_chadly\\_roommates/](http://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTears/comments/7b9ao7/how_to_deal_with_chadly_roommates/); accessed 18 January 2019; Source is an unidentified subreddit r/Incel user.

<sup>4</sup> (U) Online document; Obtained through documentcloud.org, “Elliot Rodger: My Twisted World”; May 2014; <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1173808-elliott-rodger-manifesto.html>; accessed on 18 April 2018; Website is an online repository for documents.

<sup>5</sup> (U) Online news article; Businessinsider.com; “The Toronto Van Attack Suspect Warned of an ‘Incel Rebellion’ on Facebook Hours Before the Attack – Here’s What that Means;” 24 April 2018; <http://www.businessinsider.com/incele-alex-minassian-toronto-van-attack-facebook-post-2018-4>; accessed on 24 April 2018; Source is *Business Insider*, which has no known bias for this subject matter.

<sup>6</sup> (U//FOUO) FBI; Case Information; 7 November 2018; 2 November 2018; “(U) RFI- Information from SoundCloud”; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is a document obtained by a foreign law enforcement agency.

<sup>7</sup> (U) Online news article; NBC News; “Florida yoga shooter spouted misogynistic and racist views on YouTube”; 4 November 2018; <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/florida-yoga-shooter-spouted-misogynistic-racist-views-youtube-n931036>; accessed on 3 May 2019; Source is NBC News, which has no known bias for this subject matter.

<sup>8</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; “(U) [Name withheld] E-Tip: Individual on Facebook Idolizing Mass Shooters (TP)”; 20 February 2018; 17 February 2018; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source was a one-time contact.

<sup>9</sup> (U) Online news article; CBC News; “Why Incels are a real and present threat for Canadians”; 27 January 2019; <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/incele-threat-canadians-fifth-estate-1.4992184>; accessed on 7 February 2019; Source is CBC News, which has no known bias for this subject matter.

<sup>10</sup> (U) Online news article; *Washington Post*; “Incels, 4chan and the Beta Uprising”; 7 October 2015; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/.../incels-4chan-and-the-beta-uprising-making-sense>; accessed on 7 February 2019; Source is *The Washington Post*, which has no known bias for this subject matter.

<sup>11</sup> (U) Website; Grinnell College; “Subcultures and Sociology”; <http://haenfler.sites.grinnell.edu/subcultures-and-scenes/incels/>; accessed on 22 May 2019; Source is an article posted to Grinnell College’s Sociology Department website.