Domestic Extremism Violence Facing U.S. Law Enforcement, How Can These Threats Be Mitigated?

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“Domestic Extremism Violence Facing U.S. Law Enforcement”
How Can These Threats Be Mitigated?

by
Matthew R. Gilbert
A Dissertation Presented to the
Department of Justice and Human Services
of Nova Southeastern University
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Approval Page

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Throughout this process, I am forever grateful with my committee for all of their time, patience and overall support with this journey. I want to thank all of those participants in this research project who volunteered their valuable time in giving me valuable insight on this topic. My ultimate hope with this research is to make the law enforcement world rethink their operations, policing tactics, intelligence gathering techniques, and overall community relations/partnerships as this domestic extremist threat is not going away anytime soon. If I could save one law enforcement officer’s life as a result of this project, then every second spent on this research was well worth it.

I have been extremely lucky to have such a giving, patient, and supportive family, especially during these past 25-plus years employed as a public servant. This all starts with my spouse, Yvonne, who is always in my corner every step of the way, and I would not be where I am today without her. A special thank you to my patient kids who kept hearing me say, “I’m almost done, I’ll be right there” (as I finish up assignments). Finally, a response to my son, Brendan, who asked me recently, “Dad, why are you still in school, aren’t you old?” Yes, son, I am old, but almost done!

It has been my utmost professional goal in giving back to the community in a teacher/mentor role in the academic field, especially in the criminal justice and/or Intelligence field, and to give those students guidance, I was lucky to have, when I started out in this fascinating field 29 years ago. Thank you Nova Southeastern University for providing me this outstanding educational foundation and learning experience in order to make me a better public servant and mentor.
Abstract


The barbaric and targeted killings of police officers have become a growing epidemic facing the nation. An immediate consequence has created the monumental task in protecting the men and women who daily put their lives on the line on behalf of the public. Staggering national numbers over these last ten years has indicated a strong surge in the number of law enforcement officers being ambushed by domestic extremists. The purpose of the current research study was to present an overall awareness and threat picture to the law enforcement and academic communities to better educate men and women in law enforcement and to explain who exactly are these domestic extremist groups and/or individuals carrying out this violence and their ideologies and traits that make them crave such an outcome. The current research study utilized a strong exploratory qualitative focus by interviewing several law enforcement members and intelligence personnel in the Hampton Roads, Virginia, area to (a) gauge their jurisdictional domestic extremist threat picture; (b) to understand what policing tactics were being employed currently to produce effective “officer safety” protocols while embracing community relationships (if any); and (c) what recommendations they may have for other jurisdictions that will keep safe law enforcement men and women. If one law enforcement life can be saved from the current research study, then every second spent on the research was well worth it.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The barbaric and targeted killings of police officers has become a growing epidemic facing people in the United States. An immediate consequence has been that it has become a monumental task to protect the men and women who daily put their lives on the line on behalf of the public. Staggering national numbers over the last ten years have indicated a strong surge in the number of law enforcement officers being ambushed by domestic extremists. The 2017 ambushed shooting death of a New York City police officer in the borough of the Bronx signaled the latest in a growing number of officer deaths, up 20% in 2017 (“Police officer deaths,” 2017). In 2017, a total of 46 police officers died from gunfire, mostly from domestic extremists, emphasizing the surge in violent crime against the nation’s police officers (Officer Down Memorial Page, 2018a). The disturbing facts about the attacks are that there is no one region where they take place. The events are occurring nationwide, involving individuals from all walks of life (Bureau of Justice Assistance, Valor, 2016). Not only was 2017 a deadly year for officers, but during the first half of 2016, there was a large increase in police officer deaths, with 57 between January 1 and July 5, 2016 (“Police officer deaths,” 2017).

The weapons of choice for the police officer killings have been primarily handguns. The handgun-related deaths have risen by 9%, from 22 to 24 for 2017 (“Police officer deaths,” 2017). The data indicates is that 2016 was one of the deadliest years for police officers in 5 years; a, total of 135 officers died in 2016 (“Police officer deaths,” 2017). What does this mean for police officers and the potential for further increases in violence? Unfortunately, it means more violence toward law enforcement officers, especially from domestic extremist groups and individuals, and the overall disrespect for
the badge and uniform has greatly increased during the last ten years. Randy Sutton, a national spokesman for Blue Lives Matter, stated, “People are now more willing to engage the police in combat” (“Ambush murder of cops,” 2017).

The year 2017 and parts of 2016, were particularly deadly for police officers; 2016 was especially violent, with approximately 50,000 law enforcement officers having been severely assaulted or shot (“Police officer deaths,” 2017). Specifically, in 2016, 58 officers were killed in the line of duty by gunfire; 20 were ambushed and killed, compared to 6 officers in 2015. The statistics are staggering, because they show more than a 300% increase in ambushes over the previous year. Furthermore, since the beginning of November 2016, ambush attacks involving multiple officers and 10 line-of-duty deaths have resulted from gunfire. These are not just numbers; these are the lives of people who are dedicated to service.

According to a preliminary report from the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF; 2017b), the number of law enforcement officers shot and killed in the line of duty increased sharply in 2016, compared to 2015. The overall number of officer fatalities rose by 10%, remaining lower than average for the previous 10 years. The NLEOMF officials found that 64 officers were killed in firearm-related incidents in 2016, which was a 56% increase from 2015, when 41 officers were killed. It was the highest number of firearms-related deaths recorded since 2011, when the tally was 73.

As police violence against police officers significantly increased, officials at NLEOMF (2016) reported, “Those shooting deaths included 21 deaths in ambush-style shootings, the highest total in more than 2 decades.” The increase was caused partly by a
few high-profile shootings that took the lives of multiple officers. Officials noted:

Eight multiple-shooting death incidents claimed the lives of 20 officers in 2016, tied with 1971 for the highest total of any year since 1932. Those incidents included five officers killed in ambush attacks in Dallas (TX) and three in Baton Rouge (LA) spanning only 10 days in July. (National Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Fund, 2016)

Finally, 1971 was a very deadly year for law enforcement, as struggles between the community members and the police officers, and racial overtones provided the incentive in many police shootings (in which Black Panthers were involved), the first year of the Nixon administration’s “war on drugs,” and the Attica Prison riot, which resulted in officer casualties. A strong comparison of reasons/factors can be made between the violence in 1971 and with modern violence.

Relevant to current times is the emergence of the alt-right movement. According to officials at the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), “2017 was the most violent year of the alt-right movement, and the average age of these groups is 27 years old, with the youngest being 17” (Hankes & Amend, 2018), which showed that the domestic extremist movement is getting more and more violent and becoming younger, no matter who is their intended target. To properly define the alt-right movement, according to the SPLC:

The alternative right, commonly known as the alt-right, is a set of far-right ideologies, groups and individuals whose core belief is that “white identity” is under attack by multicultural forces using “political correctness” and “social justice” to undermine white people and “their” civilization. Characterized by heavy use of social media and online memes, Alt-Righters eschew
“establishment” conservatism, skew young, and embrace white ethno-nationalism as a fundamental value (Hankes & Amend, 2018).

President and chief executive of the NLEOMF, Craig Floyd, said in response to all this violence against the police, “We've never seen a year in my memory when we've had an increase of this magnitude in officer shooting deaths" (Pane, 2016). Floyd further stated, “These officers were killed simply because of the uniform they wear and the job they do” (Pane, 2016).

**Background and Significance**

The threat against U.S. law enforcement officials increased dramatically in 2017, to the point where U.S. law enforcement officers were unfortunate visible targets to domestic extremists and their hatred. Other vital secondary data used to underscore the severity of the threat was noted by NBC news officials:

There were 135 U.S. law enforcement fatalities in 2016. That’s the most officers killed in five years (2012–2016) and a 10% increase over 2015. Firearms were the popular choice used by these “police killers” in 2016 (firearms 64; traffic 53, and other 18), 56% (firearms deaths) increase from 2016 and 21 out of 64 shooting deaths were ambush-style (33% of firearms deaths), the highest in our country in more than two decades (NBC Washington News, 2016).

Chapter 1 of the current research study is used to discuss the unfortunate number of ambush-style deaths of U.S. law enforcement officers and the sinister backgrounds of the extremists who caused these unnecessary deaths. Chapters 3 and 4 of the research examine from a law enforcement community counter-extremism perspective, the recommended programs from the U.S. Department of Justice (Community Oriented
Policing Services–COPS) Community Awareness Program and other programs globally, including one from Lt. Col. (ret.) D. Scott Mann, U.S. Army, author of *Game Changers: Going Local to Defeat Violent Extremism* (Mann, 2015), regarding combating extremism and rebuilding and stabilizing villages from the bottom-up perspective. Mann’s perspectives are used to reinforce the community policing and/or community participation impetus on his bottom-up stabilization approach. As part of the current study, critical program elements/concepts from the programs/ideologies were examined and added to private research, particularly when analyzing existing law enforcement domestic extremists’ prevention/mitigation programs.

The current study is critical for modern law enforcement officers’ overall well-being and is important for the senior leadership of the agencies to examine, evaluate, and possibly use some of the themes that were garnered during the current research study, especially the themes uncovered from the various domestic extremists, as well as offering some possible solutions (success stories) from the law enforcement members who were interviewed. One of the major reasons for the current study was to examine the known gap regarding this pertinent topic and determine what additional research needs to be conducted to offer solutions and/or remedies to save lives of law enforcement officers, while producing rich community relationships. It was important to understand the ways that members of the law enforcement community are facing the domestic extremist threats and to know specifically what each agency has been doing to make officers safer.

The methodology chapter (Chapter 3) of the current research study is used to describe the interviewing of 17 law enforcement officers and intelligence members from various government levels in the Hampton Roads, Virginia, area. The regional research
area and exploratory approach provided a large, diverse law enforcement sample, because the Hampton Roads area is rich in law enforcement, military services, and educational institutions, all within close proximity. Approximately 25 law enforcement agencies are within a 50-mile radius in the area, which provided the researcher with a rich law enforcement target area to interview for community policing/stabilization programs aimed at curtailing the domestic extremist threat and determine the overall threat. Finally, the Hampton Roads area offered a diverse population (see Figure 1), in addition to representing approximately 20% of Virginia’s overall population from the 2010 census. The researcher felt that the demographic statistics would be invaluable for the overall study, because many different ethnic/race backgrounds and many different levels of law enforcement (federal, state, county, local, university, and military) and intelligence personnel are represented in the Hampton Roads area. Once the researcher received approval from the school regarding his proposal being accepted on September 25, 2017 and approval from the Institutional Review Board was received on October 29, 2017, various secondary data collection sources were established and the sampling of field interviews in the Hampton Roads, VA area commenced.
Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the current research was twofold. First, it was used to examine the available secondary data (for example the Officer Down Memorial Page, National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, Bureau of Justice, and other similar collecting organizations and agencies) and to compare and contrast the increase and/or decrease of violence on law enforcement from the hands of domestic extremists. As part of this section, the researcher identified the domestic extremist individuals/groups responsible for the violence and provided an ideological background and case studies associated with
these perpetrators. The audience of the research study were members of the academic field in furthering the research, and senior law enforcement leaders, to give them the necessary information to make important remedies for their officers and communities about the propensity of violence associated with these groups.

Second, the current study was used in an attempt to offer solutions to the critical issue facing U.S. law enforcement members by first researching a significant sample size of various government levels of law enforcement and intelligence agencies (federal, state, and local) and to determine if the agency officials have programs for combating the domestic extremism threats from a community-based policing model (for example, the Community Oriented Policing Services–COPS), then to offer a bottom-up perspective to connect community leaders. Themes or key words were collected through interviews with various law enforcement personnel, knowledgeable individuals who utilize vital concepts from such programs as Lt. Col. D. Scott Mann’s (2015) *Game Changers: Going Local to Defeat Violent Extremist*.

By utilizing COPS and Mann’s perspectives, the next phase in the current study was to determine if the agency officials had a counter-extremist/community-based program (such as COPS and/or the Mann approach) and to see how the program was received within the community, and to gain feedback, particularly from the agency itself and within the community. How are such programs deployed within the department and community? What are the main goals of the program, and how long has it been implemented? What are some of the costs and risks associated with the program?

Finally, if the selected agencies’ officials did not have some sort of a counter-extremist/community-based program, the study was used in an attempt to ascertain why
not and to ask if they planned to have some sort of a program in the future. Additionally, if not an extremist prevention program, did the agency officials have a similar community interaction program already in place? If the agencies officials did not have a program in place, what were some of their reasons—monetary, lack of personnel, other needs within the agency/community (gangs, drugs, guns, and any other pressing agency need)?

**Research Questions**

With increasing violence being used against U.S. law enforcement, the main goals of the current research study were:

1. Accurate profiling of the individuals or groups responsible for the documented increase in violence against the police (through secondary data sources).
2. Detailed descriptions of the ideologies motivating such individuals or groups and associated case studies.
3. Increased understanding of the “lone wolf terrorist”—as the term is used by law enforcement—and if this term factors in some way to any involvement in domestic extremism terrorism.
4. To determine solutions for the law enforcement community to mitigate these threats and subsequent violence.

Specifically, the project’s research questions were as follows:

**RQ1.** What, if any, evidence/data is there to indicate the increase in violence targeting law enforcement from U.S. domestic terrorists’/extremists groups today?

**RQ2.** Who exactly are these domestic extremist groups and what are their ideologies/motivations?

**RQ3.** What are some practical solutions from a community policing/intelligence
perspective? From existing studies/research, what are some common themes in attempting to alleviate this targeted and barbaric violence on U.S. law enforcement members and what do law enforcement members perceive as the greatest threat today?

Chapters 2 and 4 of the current study was used to focus on Research Question 3.

Additionally, how much does mental illness have a part in a terrorist world/mind-set? Is there a reason to be concerned with undiagnosed mental illness, especially with regards to a lone wolf actor? Corner and Gill (2017) documented mental illness diagnoses in terrorist activities/individuals/groups around the world, including the U.S., and found that “domestic terrorist (far-right)” were diagnosed as having “40.4% (lone wolves having a mental diagnoses) vs. 7.6% (far-right groups having a mental diagnoses)” (p. 1). Data were used to underscore the need for more research and corrective ways to address the violent issues in the nation currently, especially pertaining to the lone wolf type of domestic terrorism.

The problem statement for the current research study was that based on the increased violence against law enforcement officers, especially in the last 10 years, mostly at the hands of domestic extremists, a heightened systematic law enforcement community awareness and coordinated community involvement effort must be in place to curtail the barbaric and targeted violence against our law enforcement officers. Additionally, the current research study was used to discuss, based on a law enforcement community awareness model with key community action recommendations, how to bring a unified perspective with the law enforcement community and with the communities they serve. Moreover, because the problem is of national concern and not a regional issue or a certain jurisdictional challenge in terms of growing violence against law
enforcement, the current study was used to offer some general remedies to mitigate the volatile social problem.

To collect the valuable data on the Hampton Roads law enforcement research, 17 law enforcement and intelligence-based personnel (both sworn and civilian personnel) were interviewed to gauge their knowledge of the topic. Furthermore, the current research was used to try to determine if the agencies’ participants believed they had any domestic extremists in their area of responsibility, what (if any) their agency was doing to curtail this threat (if any). Finally, what were some possible solutions to make a healthier police/community relationship. The following questions were asked of each interviewee, and the answers were coded by the researcher to capture key words and/or concepts.

1. What is your definition of a domestic extremist?
2. Do you believe you have domestic extremists in your area of responsibility? If so, how many individuals/groups do you think you have?
3. How has your agency perceived the domestic extremist threat in your area of responsibility? How about agencies around the country?
4. Does your agency currently have a program aimed at combating this type of extremism or any type of law enforcement program similar to this?
5. How about a community-based program aimed at preventing domestic extremism or any other criminality issues seen in your jurisdiction?
6. If not, did your agency have a program combating this type of extremism?
7. If your agency does not currently have a program combating this type of extremism, why not?
8. If your agency does have some sort of a community awareness and/or extremist
prevention program, how would you describe its overall missions, goals, processes, and any other positives and/or negatives?

9. If you could start a new program within your department, what would it be?

10. What is your opinion on the best way to combat this type of extremism?

11. Have you heard of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Community Awareness Brief or the department’s community awareness program aimed at preventing extremism?

12. What would you say is your agency’s relationship with the public?

13. How would you improve your relationship with the public: more community involvement with joint programs (i.e., ride-along programs, fundraisers, class instruction, and describing police actions)?

Any other comments?

Data Collection and Analysis

A qualitative data analysis approach was utilized for the current research study. Specifically, key secondary data collection and case study research methods were applied to pinpoint causations behind the national threat to law enforcement members. Crucial secondary data collection points were utilized from the following sources: (a) National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF), (b) Bureau of Justice Assistance, (c) Anti-Defamation League (ADL), (d) the International Security Program at the New America Foundation, (e) Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), and (f) the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, and various other vital open source information networks. Leaders at these entities regularly collect timely information on domestic extremist activity/violence and any violence toward law enforcement, the researcher continuously checked the websites and communicated/requested any
additional data with/from the respective agencies.

**Secondary data collection methods.** Records approach is a data collection instrument that was vital in collecting necessary and timely data to complete this portion of the current research study. The researcher looked at statistics on the amount of law enforcement violence suffered at the hands of domestic extremists; therefore, acquiring records over this time period was crucial. Finally, these records were collected from sound law enforcement type associations reporting these ambushes and violent acts upon law enforcement officers. The researcher looked at the secondary data sources to determine if an increase of violence against law enforcement from domestic extremists existed over the past 10 years compared to violence against law enforcement from international extremists (i.e., ISIS, Al-Qaeda). The focus with collecting the secondary data was to research any increase or decrease in the amount of violence against U.S. law enforcement at the hands of domestic extremists, within the last 10 years or so. The researcher also looked at a variety of secondary data sources and compared them to determine the overall threat of violence against U.S. law enforcement.

Chapter 4 of the current research study incorporated a qualitative method by collecting data by interviewing 17 Hampton Roads law enforcement and intelligence personnel and coding their responses regarding domestic extremist threats against law enforcement members working the Hampton Roads area, including educational institutions. Once permission from members of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was granted, the researcher sent out approximately 25 e-mails to Hampton Roads law enforcement agencies to determine the level of interest in participating in the current research and subsequently placed an additional 25 phone calls to these agencies, with
some of the phone calls to different agency representatives. After a few weeks, only one
police agency responded with interest and an interview was set up. Over the next few
months, the researcher was able to interview 16 more law enforcement personnel either in
a secured office at their request and/or performed electronically to protect confidentiality.

This portion of the research was relevant in terms of understanding the domestic extremest groups and/or individuals who were currently in the participants’ jurisdiction, their agency’s overall threat level toward the groups, and how they were dealing with the threat (if any). Specifically, the researcher wanted to know if the police agency personnel being interviewed were employing some sort of a domestic extremism prevention program, and/or a community policing model or community awareness program aimed at curving domestic extremist violence in their jurisdiction. Furthermore, the researcher sought to determine the programs, and if were they considered successful in their respective jurisdictions in preventing violence against law enforcement officers.

By conducting 17 interviews of various federal, state, and local law enforcement and intelligence members, the researcher collected valuable data and analyzed the findings as applicable to the open-ended questions (with some close-ended questions as well). The researcher looked for certain themes, such as a law enforcement agency having a community program in place that was very effective, by having law enforcement actively engaged with the public at public events, trainings, and fundraisers. Additionally, if an agency did not have a community program in place, the administrators were asked why. Possible answers included funding, lack of personnel, and not seeing the perceived threat as possible themes to this question, which would all be analyzed very carefully as part of the research project.
The researcher looked at the responses from the interviewees and compared the themes with community-oriented and/or stabilization concepts, such as the U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), Community Awareness Program, and other global programs, including the one from Mann (2015). The researcher compared and contrasted the responses from the interview questions with the known programs and analyzed them to see if any of the answers align with any of the key concepts.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

Anderson (2010) stated,

Qualitative research is often criticized as biased, small scale, anecdotal, and/or lacking rigor; however, when it is carried out properly it is unbiased, in depth, valid, reliable, credible, and rigorous. In qualitative research, there needs to be a way of assessing the “extent to which claims are supported by convincing evidence. (p. 141)

The aim of the current study was to collect unbiased, in-depth, credible information secured from experienced law enforcement personnel and to ask thought-provoking questions in an attempt to provide answers and guidance to help curtail the increase of violence toward law enforcement members at the hands of domestic extremists.

Concerning limitations and delimitations, every attempt was made to conduct the interviews in person to ensure that communication was clear and understood pertaining the grave meaning and concepts of the topic. The researcher performed the following methods to ensure the topic was understood:
1. Each interviewee read the consent package, including definitions, and all advised that they understood the topic area.

2. The researcher spoke about the topic and what the background was all about in regard to the domestic extremist threat.

3. A brochure was given to each interviewee beforehand to give more information on the topic.

4. An e-mail was sent to each agency leader to discuss the research and to solicit his or her participation in the overall research.

To address the validity and reliability with the limitations and delimitations portion of the research study, the researcher went to 10 of the 15 police agencies without an appointment and spoke with a desk officer, requesting to speak with one of their law enforcement members knowledgeable in the field (usually just asking for a detective or investigator working this type of criminality). This type of questioning and/or validity asking for a law enforcement member knowledgeable in this field of research was paramount to the overall findings to eliminate any inaccuracies, for example, when a law enforcement member may not know anything about this type of criminality. Pogrebin stated, “The problem of validity in field research concerns [in qualitative research] the difficulty of gaining an accurate or true impression of the phenomenon under study” (Pogrebin, 2003, p. 8). Each law enforcement member interviewed stated that he or she understood the meaning of the current research.

Another significant portion of the current qualitative research was:

Qualitative research is usually described as allowing a detailed exploration of a topic of interest in which information is collected by a researcher through case
studies, ethnographic work, interviews, and so on. Inherent in this approach is the
description of the interactions among participants and researchers in naturalistic
settings with few boundaries, resulting in a flexible and open research process.

The main goal of the current study was to conduct research through case studies,
while collecting secondary data to show the increase of the overall threat, in addition to
having the interviews performed via open-ended questions with the interviewees able to
express their true key opinions on this topic and how their respective agency was
handling this threat (if any) in a confidential manner. The interviews were conducted in a
positive environment where engaging conversations and opinions were expressed to the
researcher, and the interviewees were able to express their opinions openly and without
any interference and possible backlash from their agency.

Limitations of the Study

One major limitation of the current research study was the unfortunate fact that
this topic is very fluid in its outcomes and with staggering increases in incidents. When
the researcher began collecting secondary data information and case studies about the
domestic extremist groups and individuals, law enforcement deaths continued. Late in
February 2018, the researcher decided to add an epilogue to the current study with a list
of the 2018 law enforcement homicides at the hands of domestic extremists. Sadly, the
list continued to grow.

Another limitation of the research was the lack of involvement with all Hampton
Roads law enforcement agencies. The researcher contacted approximately 25 law
enforcement agencies, but members from only 14 were subsequently
interviewed/participated. One agency representative declined to participate after the research topic was discussed with an emphasis on officer safety opinions. Even though 14 agencies, representing the federal government, state government, local government and a public university, were all interviewed, creating a diverse group, the researcher would have liked to work with at least 25 agencies to gather more opinions from a larger population.

The third limitation of this research was that since this topic nationally was so fluid concerning law enforcement members being killed by gunfire, in many situations, the background of the shooter was never known or not revealed until much later in time. The current study involved the increased violence of domestic extremists against law enforcement members, and many of the secondary data sources listed only the unfortunate shooting occurrence as an ambush, domestic situation, and/or a mentally unstable individual without mentioning any allegiance to any domestic groups, ideologies, and/or the real motive behind the officer shooting. Any officer’s death on duty is tragic, senseless, and unnecessary, so any solution to prevent any future deaths is worth the time and effort.

Another limitation discovered during the research was that of the lone wolf background as it pertained to possible mental health issues. Law enforcement officers are often unable to find out if a certain subject is legally allowed to carry a weapon, due to privacy laws and the need for more law enforcement training about subjects with mental illnesses. As one participant responded, “The lone wolf threat keeps me up at night, as you really don’t know where the violence is coming from and when.” A prime example of this was the Las Vegas massacre. However, a robust community initiative is the first
start in knowing your enemies and where the threats are. Impressively, all law enforcement agencies the researcher interviewed in the Hampton Roads area employed a healthy and vigorous community awareness and/or community policing model, a key successful perspective Mann (2015), and Schanzer et al. (2016) had in their research.

Finally, during the course of the interviews of the law enforcement officers, it was suggested that the researcher should study the whole state of Virginia instead of one area such as Hampton Roads. One participant suggested that since the Hampton Roads area was mostly urban, many of the domestic extremist groups didn’t have the space to set up a gun range, and the western portion of the state would have more groups based on the ability to create their own compounds. Most likely, the researcher would’ve received different opinions on threat groups in the western part of the state, but the goal of the present study was to look at a particular area with a diverse population.

Definition of Terms

Alternative Right (alt-right):

“The alternative right, commonly known as the alt-right, is a set of far-right ideologies, groups, and individuals whose core belief is that “white identity” is under attack by multicultural forces using “political correctness” and “social justice” to undermine white people and “their” civilization.” (Hankes & Amend, 2018)

Characterized by heavy use of social media and online memes, alt-righters eschew establishment conservatism, skew young, and embrace white ethno-nationalism as a fundamental value.” (Hankes & Amend, 2018)

Anti-Defamation League (ADL):

The ADL is a nongovernment organization that collects pertinent extremist (hate
groups and domestic extremists) data and includes several up-to-date data collections on domestic extremists’ violence toward law enforcement and the number of hate crimes across America. (Anti-Defamation League, 2018c)

Bureau of Justice Assistance Valor Initiative:

The Officer Robert Wilson III Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement Officers and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Initiative is an effort to improve the immediate and long-term safety, wellness, and resilience of law enforcement officers. Through a multifaceted approach that includes delivering no-cost training (professional education), conducting research, developing and providing resources, and establishing partnerships that benefit law enforcement officers, VALOR seeks to provide our nation's law enforcement officers with innovative, useful, and valuable resources. (Bureau of Justice Assistance, Valor Initiative, 2018)

Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS):

The BJS mission is to collect, analyze, publish, and disseminate information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government. These data are critical to federal, state, and local policymakers in combating crime and ensuring that justice is both efficient and evenhanded. (BJS, 2018)

Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS):

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of
community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources (Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, 2017b).

Community policing:

Community policing emphasizes proactive problem-solving in a systematic and routine fashion. Rather than responding to crime only after it occurs, community policing encourages agencies to proactively develop solutions to the immediate underlying conditions contributing to public safety problems (Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, 2017a).

Domestic terrorist:

People who commit crimes within the homeland and draw inspiration from U.S.-based extremist ideologies and movements, including individuals who commit crimes in the name of ideologies supporting animal rights, environmental rights, anarchism, White supremacy, antigovernment ideals, Black separatism, and anti-abortion beliefs (Bjelopera, 2012).

Far right:

There are three major ideological movements within the American violent far right: a racist/white supremacy movement, an anti-federalist movement, and a fundamentalist movement (Perliger, 2012, p. 2).

International Security Program at the New America Foundation:

Leaders of the group database pertinent information on American citizens and permanent residents engaging in violent extremism activity within the United States from 2001 to 2015. Every year, the foundation leaders produce informative statistics on the
valuable data collected for the year.

Lone wolf terrorist:

A lone wolf actor terrorist is defined in Corner and Gill (2017) as “an individual lacking any ties to a terrorist/violent extremist group. … The individuals typically engage in violence in support of a group and/or ideology within the sample, including those inspired by Islamist, right-wing, leftwing, nationalist, and single-issue ideologies” (Corner & Gill, 2017, p. 1).

National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund (NLEOMF):

“The Memorial Fund serves as a nationwide clearinghouse of information and statistics on law enforcement line-of-duty deaths” (NLEOMF, 2017a). Furthermore, the Memorial Fund officials maintain current statistics on law enforcement line-of-duty deaths, how the law enforcement member perished, and will give statistical analysis of any trends in death rates and individuals/groups responsible.

Officer Down Memorial Page (ODMP):

The Officer Down Memorial Page, Inc. (ODMP) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring America's fallen law enforcement heroes. More than 22,000 officers have made the ultimate sacrifice in the United States since 1791, and it is with great honor that the ODMP officials preserve their memories within its pages. (ODMP.org, 2018a)

Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC):

The SPLC group collects pertinent hate groups and domestic extremist data and produces several vital informational studies/documents outlining the propensity for violence of these domestic extremist groups against U.S. law enforcement. The SPLC
leaders continuously collect information on the violence stemming from the domestic extremist groups.

Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START):

National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence led by the University of Maryland, “committed to the scientific study of the causes and human consequences of terrorism in the United States and around the world.” (START, 2018)

Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security:

Sponsored by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke University, and Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International, the center’s mission is to “enhance the understanding of terrorism and the means to combat it through education, research and the development of partnerships between universities, industry and government.” officials perform critical research on the dynamic terrorism (both internationally and domestically) discipline and subsequent challenges. (Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security at Duke University, 2018).

**Importance of the Research**

The targeted and ambush-style killings of police officers have become a growing epidemic facing America and protecting the men and women who serve the public daily has become a monumental task. Significant national numbers over the last 10 years has indicated a strong surge in the amount of law enforcement officers ambushed by domestic extremist individuals. The domestic extremists are affiliated with groups and/or movements such as sovereign citizens, White Supremacy, Black separatists, militia extremists, and/or antigovernment extremists.
The researcher contacted as many Hampton Roads law enforcement representatives as possible. The personnel were from federal, state, local, and university law enforcement government levels. The purpose was to gauge the overall threat level (if any) that the domestic extremists pose to law enforcement members in their respective jurisdictions. Additionally, the researcher shared some of the statistics collected from a national perspective and associated case studies to underscore the severity of the threat. The second goal in gathering information from the law enforcement organizational perspective was to identify currently used techniques (i.e., community policing, community outreach, various law enforcement tactics, etc.), whereby the identification and threat from the various extremists are being addressed and keeping both officers and the community safe from these severe threats of violence.

The final and most important goal of the current study was to share the research with the law enforcement community members regarding domestic extremist threats, not just in the Hampton Roads, VA, area, but nationally, through professional law enforcement organizations. It was the researcher’s intention to share the overall results with each participating agency to learn what works in one jurisdiction, and/or bring up possible solutions, such as a Hampton Roads law enforcement task force dealing with extremism. The point of sharing the information among the participating agencies was for raised awareness and increased officer safety. Saving even one law enforcement life through the current research would be worth the countless hours collecting the important information. Finally, the extremists who affect one area of Hampton Roads will likely travel to other areas of Hampton Roads in an effort to spread their views.
Chapter 2. Literature Review

Based on modern world events and the propensity for violence, most of U.S. law enforcement officer safety awareness and recognition is centered on the sinister violence surrounding international terrorism groups and is so warranted. However, U.S. law enforcement’s overall safety and security has been at a staggering crisis level due to the increased violence against police from domestic extremist groups (i.e., sovereign citizens, militia extremist groups, White supremacists, Black separatists, and/or any other antigovernment group/individual) and their overall propensity to violence on U.S. soil.

National numbers over the last 10 years have indicated a strong surge in the number of law enforcement officers ambushed by domestic extremist individuals. Moreover, the 2017 ambushed style shooting death of a New York City police officer in the Bronx signaled the latest in a growing number of officer deaths in 2017, up 20% from this time in 2016 (“Police officer deaths,” 2017). In fact, a total of 134 police officers died in 2017 alone, and of those deaths, 46 were from gunfire, 1 was stabbed, 6 died from vehicular assault, and 5 were killed by assaults (Officer Down Memorial Page, 2018a). Other data indicated that 2018 would be another violent year against law enforcement members. According to the National Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Fund’s (NLEOMF) website, for preliminary 2017 law enforcement officer fatalities, 98 law enforcement officers lost their lives (National Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Fund, 2017b), which is a minus 6% reduction from 2016 during this time, but it is still a very troubling number. Of the deaths, 36 of 98 officers were killed (a minus 22% change) during this time 2017, when 46 law enforcement officers were killed by firearms (National Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Fund, 2017b).
Unprecedented law enforcement deaths have occurred at the hands of these domestic extremist/right-wing/antigovernment groups for about 10 years from 2007 - 2017, but a dramatic surge in the senseless and sinister violent acts over the last 10 years has shocked law enforcement members. From reviewing literature/studies, what data is available about this surge against law enforcement members? Also, who exactly are the groups/individuals causing the violence, and how do they continue to operate and carry out their attacks? What are some possible solutions from the law enforcement organization/community in reviewing vital literature/studies? Finally, what are some research gaps the researcher identified about the process? Perhaps law enforcement is not properly, or even at all, identifying a shooter’s background/domestic extremist group affiliation, or even reporting the information to the various data collection agencies, such as the National Law Enforcement Memorial, BJS, or any other national data source pertinent to this topic.

**Domestic Extremist Violence Data**

The first part of the literature review was used to examine relevant secondary data and case studies to explore the domestic extremist threat against U.S. law enforcement.

Extreme ideologies cause right-wing radicals to attack officers. Antigovernment extremists, such as militia groups and sovereign citizens, believe that police are agents of an illegitimate government, while White supremacists believe that police are tools of a Jewish-controlled government. The same ideologies sometimes cause extremists to act out violently when they randomly encounter police in routine situations. Moreover, because right-wing extremists frequently engage in criminal activity—both ideological and nonideological—police responding to reports of criminal activity may encounter
extremists committing a crime or who are fugitives from justice. Such situations can turn deadly. Unfortunately, relatively few officer safety courses incorporate information about the dangers to police from domestic extremists.

As officials of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) purported, not one domestic extremist group has a monopoly on creating the most violence against law enforcement around the nation. However, a large number of police officers have been killed at the hands of Black nationalists. The ADL officials noted that in two 2016 occurrences—in Dallas, TX, and Baton Rouge, LA—8 police officers were killed in the ambushes, in Dallas by Micah Xavier Johnson, a member of a Black nationalist group, and in Baton Rouge by Gavin Eugene Long, a member of a Black nationalist group and an antigovernment sovereign citizen movement (Anti-Defamation League, 2016).

The troubling issue regarding these police killings was the fact that the officers killed in the ambushes were killed as acts of retaliation. Specifically, both Johnson and Long killed these officers in retaliation for African Americans being killed by the police in other jurisdictions around the nation. ADL officials reported:

These killings represent the worst spate of Black nationalist-related murders of police officers since the late 1960s and early 1970s, when more than two dozen police officers and several more corrections officers were killed by Black nationalists, particularly from the Black Liberation Army and the Black Panther Party (no relation to the New Black Panther Party). (Anti-Defamation League, 2016)

The first half of 2016 showed an increase in police officer deaths, with 57 officer deaths between January 1 and July 5, 2016 (“Police officer deaths,” 2017). Not
surprisingly, the weapons of choice for the police officer killings were guns. Gun-related deaths have risen by 9%, from 22 to 24 for 2017 (“Police officer deaths,” 2017). What all of the key data indicated was that police officers’ murders in 2016 made it the deadliest year for police in 5 years, with a total of 135 officers killed (“Police officer deaths,” 2017). What does this mean for law enforcement officers on the streets and for future potential violence? Most appalling is the fact that “people are now more willing to engage the police in combat,” as Randy Sutton, stated (“Police officer deaths,” 2017).

In 2016, approximately 50,000 law enforcement officers were severely assaulted and even shot (“Police officer deaths,” 2017). Specifically, in 2016, 64 officers were killed in the line of duty by gunfire, while 20 were ambushed and killed, compared with only 6 killed in 2015. The statistics showed more than a 300% increase in ambushes from 2015. Furthermore, since the beginning of November 2016, ambush attacks involving multiple officers and 10 line-of-duty deaths (LODD) resulted from gunfire. But, these are not just numbers; these are lives of people who are dedicated to service. What is so disturbing about these attacks is that there is no one region where these attacks are taking place. The events are happening all over the country and involve individuals from all walks of life (Bureau of Justice Assistance, Valor, 2016).

Moreover, according to a preliminary report from officials of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF), the number of law enforcement officers shot and killed in the line of duty increased sharply in 2016 compared to 2015. The overall number of officer fatalities increased by 10%, though remaining lower than the average for the previous 10 years. “The NLEOMF officials found that 64 officers were killed in firearm-related incidents in 2016 — a 56% increase over 2015, when 41
officers were killed. That was the highest number of firearms-related deaths recorded since 2011, when the tally was 73.” (National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 2016)

As police violence has significantly increased, NLEOMF (2016) officials reported in a statement, “those shooting deaths included 21 deaths in ambush-style shootings ... the highest total in more than two decades.” The increase was partly caused by a few high-profile shootings that took the lives of multiple officers, NLEOMF (2016) officials noted, "Eight multiple-shooting death incidents claimed the lives of 20 officers in 2016, tied with 1971 for the highest total of any year since 1932.

The year 2014 was on track to be the deadliest year on record since 2001. Many law enforcement officers lost their lives in the World Trade Center attacks in New York City and the Pentagon, just outside Washington, DC. According to the NLEOMF, at one point in 2014, there were 23 law enforcement shooting deaths, compared with 15 shooting deaths at the same time the previous year (2013). In 2014, there was one point where 62 police officers had been killed, while 45 were killed in 2013 at the same time of year. The figures included traffic-related incidents. Finally, with loss of two Las Vegas police officers in 2014, and with a 53% increase in shooting deaths from last year (2013), according to Riddell (2014), the factors have contributed to the growing concern about the influence of radical groups (Riddell, 2014).

The ADL officials took this growing domestic concern a step further and reported a “de facto” war (Anti-Defamation League, 2014) against law enforcement members by radical right-wing extremists, which included both antigovernment extremists and White supremacists, as shown in the targeted murder of two Las Vegas
police officers. The ADL (YEAR) officials reported that these extremists have intentionally embattled law enforcement officers, while other extremists have conducted violent acts when dealing with law enforcement in unexpected encounters with the police. What was the most troubling, according to the ADL officials, was that the violent acts against the police are not a joint and long-planned effort to kill the law enforcement officers in cold blood. Rather, they are a multitude of independent attacks stemming from right-wing ideologies (ADL, 2014).

The murder and extremism rates in the United States increased significantly in 2016. According to the ADL (2016) officials, “more domestic extremists killed more people in 2015 than in any previous year since 1995, the year of the Oklahoma City bombing.” (ADL, 2016) However, based on the June 2016 Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting, 2016 quickly became the deadliest year in terms of extremist killings in the United States. Furthermore, the ADL (2016) state that “the domestic extremist murder tally keeps rising as law enforcement officers uncover the motivation and ideology behind these killings, because it sometimes takes months and/or years to unmask this motivation.” (ADL, 2016) The ADL (2016) officials reported:

ADL’s preliminary tally for 2016 is already at 69, a figure that includes the 49 killed by Mateen (Orlando nightclub shooter), as well as 20 other murders committed by White supremacists, antigovernment extremists such as sovereign citizens, and Black nationalists.

The year 2016 was the deadliest on record in the United States for attacks by domestic extremist since 1970, when the ADL first started collecting data on these killings. Many people who were not killed by an extremist were severely wounded and
injured. According to the ADL (2016) officials, “police uncovered more and more sinister plots and prevented more such senseless violence from occurring.” (ADL, 2016)

To underscore the severity of the increased domestic extremist violence, the ADL (2016) officials reported that from the years “2012–2016, at least 56 shooting incidents between police and domestic extremist occurred (the vast majority of them shootouts or incidents in which extremists shot at police)” (Anti-Defamation League, 2016). “During these encounters, extremists shot 69 police officers, 18 fatally” (Anti-Defamation League, 2016, p.3).

The police ambushes in Dallas and Baton Rouge were approximately one-third of that earlier multiyear total (See Table 1). Table 1 also shows the massive disparities in right-wing extremists’ killing of police officers as compared to domestic Islamic extremist killings.

Table 1.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>By Left-Wing Extremists</th>
<th>By Right-Wing Extremists</th>
<th>By Domestic Extremists</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965 - 1970</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971 - 1980</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981 – 1990</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991 – 2000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 – 2010</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 – 2016</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Although officials from the ADL reported (2016) a massive increase in Black
Nationalist violence against law enforcement and violence in general across the United States, White supremacy violence rates decreased in 2016. Moreover, ADL representatives reported that the “White supremacists were responsible for only 7 of the 69 extremist-related murders committed in the United States in 2016” (Anti-Defamation League, 2016). The ADL spokesperson alluded the low White supremacy violence rate was caused by other domestic extremist groups being active, specifically centering on the 2016 presidential election race. (ADL, 2016)

To show the severity of violence and death against law enforcement in 2016, “118 law enforcement officers were killed in the line of duty, of which 66 police officers were killed as a result of a felonious criminal act.” (FBI, 2016) The number of police officers killed in 2016 increased by 25 officers from 2015 and showed an increase of 17 deaths from 2012, with an increase of 8 deaths from 2007 (“White nationalists,” 2017). What is unclear from the data was who were the perpetrators responsible for the increase in violence. Were they part of a domestic extremist group and/or ideology? There has been a growing intelligence gap with this topic and with the data collected. Who are these people and what are their motivations behind these law enforcement killings?

A disturbing trend with the 2016 statistics was the fact that “17 of the police officers were killed via ambush (entrapment/premeditation), which showed that the killers were waiting to murder these officers,” (FBI, 2016) a common tactic among domestic extremists, notably the ambush killings in Dallas and Baton Rouge, surrounding Black separatist and antigovernment extremism. Also, three police officer killings were a result of unprovoked attacks (“White nationalists,” 2017), which followed the same idea that these officers were either targeted and were just going about the normal course of the
law enforcement business. Figure 2 shows the increased number of ambush deaths of law enforcement officers in 2007–2016, and the ambush category itself ranks as one of the highest categories in terms of officer deaths since 2007.

![Figure 2. Law enforcement officers feloniously killed. Figure courtesy of the FBI: UCR. Retrieved from https://ucr.fbi.gov/leoka/2016/officers-feloniously-killed/tables/table-23.xls](https://ucr.fbi.gov/leoka/2016/officers-feloniously-killed/tables/table-23.xls)


An additional 2014 study conducted by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) showed another alarming violent trend toward law enforcement, as right-wing extremists have been killing law enforcement at a consistently growing rate. To expand on the point,
ADL representatives reported that in the 1960s and 1970s, it was left-wing groups like the Black Liberation Army who targeted police for killing. However, by the 1980s, right-wing extremists began to surpass left-wing extremists in causing police deaths.” The number of officers killed by right-wing extremists more than doubled in the 1990s, then increased by 50% more in the first decade of the 2000s. Five officers were killed by right-wing extremists from 2011 to 2014, not counting the Las Vegas incident (Anti-Defamation League, 2014, p.1).

Adding more credence to the growing violent trend toward law enforcement, members of the ADL (2014) stated that from 2009 to 2013, 43 separate violent incidents between domestic extremists (of all types) and law enforcement in the United States took place. The violent incidents included situations in which gunfire was exchanged between police and extremists (shoot-outs), situations in which extremists fired at police but police subdued the extremists without having to return fire, and situations in which officers had to use their firearms to protect themselves against extremists. Surprisingly, of the 43 incidents, 39 incidents involved extremists sporting some sort of extreme right-wing ideology. Analyzing the different domestic extremist groups, White supremacists took part in 21 incidents, while antigovernment extremists were involved in 17 more. An anti-Muslim extremist was involved in one incident (the other four incidents included one with a left-wing extremist and three with domestic Islamic extremists). In the shooting incidents, the extremists shot 30 officers, of which 14 were fatal. Many other officers sustained nongunfire injuries during some of these encounters (Anti-Defamation League, 2014). Figure 3 and Figure 4 clearly show the vast propensity of violence by the domestic
right-wing extremists. A thorough explanation with case studies regarding exactly who
are these domestic and/or right-wing extremists will be given in the next section of the
chapter.

Figure 3. Shooting incidents between domestic extremists and law enforcement, 2009-
2013, by ideology. Figure courtesy of the Anti-Defamation League, 2014, p.1. Retrieved
from https://www.adl.org/blog/officers-down-right-wing-extremists-attacking-police-at-
growing-rate
Firearms were the weapons of choice in most of the domestic extremist incidents noted in the ADL study from 2016. Representatives from the ADL reported that almost all of the 69 victims killed by domestic extremists were killed with firearms. The ADL officials stated, “Though it is common for people to associate extremists with exotic weapons such as bombs or other weapons of mass destruction, overwhelmingly extremists in the United States, regardless of movement, are at their most lethal when employing firearms” (Anti-Defamation League, 2016, p.3)

Building on the firearms theme regarding domestic extremism violence with the
literature review, Gruenewald (2011) examined far-right perpetrated homicides from 1990 through 2006, studying individuals arrested on terrorism charges and found terrorists were relatively more likely to be charged with firearm offenses. According to Gruenewald (2011), far-right extremist-perpetrated homicides were primarily committed with firearms and committing the homicide itself without ideology-based factors.

The possible nexus between firearms and gun control challenges for the mentally ill and their possible association with the domestic extremist threat poses a serious test to the overall safety and security of law enforcement members. Wolf and Rosen (2015) shared the opinion that “people assume those with mental illnesses are more prone to violence than those without these issues” (p. 853). Furthermore, Wolf and Rosen (2015) stated, “the truth is that individuals falling in the category of mentally ill only account for a small fraction of all violent conduct. Simply having a mental illness is not a strong predictor of future violence” (Wolf & Rosen, 2015, p. 853). Finally, Wolf and Rosen (2015) argued that the real factors in gun control and the mental health system were to understand genuine mental illness (getting people the necessary help and medication) and gun control policies (different states/different policies).

The researcher has reported data found on domestic extremist threats and violence statistics for the current literature review. However, what about other sources in relation to domestic extremist information? Furthermore, how reliable is this information? These were some of the questions asked by Chermak, Freilich, Parkin, and Lynch (2012) in their study, American Terrorism and Extremist Crime Data Sources and Selectivity Bias.

Chermak et al. (2012) posited that collecting information on domestic terrorism, or terrorism in general, could lead to misleading statistics/data based on a selectivity bias,
especially utilizing open source data as what was (and still is) used in many areas of terrorism research. Chermak et al. (2012) examined the analysis performed on the far-right homicides rates “captured from 10 of the sources used by the Extremist Crime Database to identify homicides committed by far-rightists in the United States between 1990 and 2008” (p. 198):

These 10 sources include 3 noted scholarly databases or academic listings (Global Terrorism Database; American Terrorism Study; Hewitt’s chronology of “lone wolf” violent crimes), two law enforcement and official sources (FBI; the State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training listings), two major watch-group organizations (Anti-Defamation League; Southern Poverty Law Center), and systematic media searches through LexisNexis web-engine; the Ross Institute Internet Archives for the Study of Destructive Cults, Controversial Groups and Movements, as well as incidents uncovered by ECDB [United States Extremists Crime Data Base] coders as they reviewed information generated from the previous 9 sources. (Chermak et al., 2012, pp. 198–199)

Chermak et al. (2012) were very skeptical on the way information was being collected from the 10 sources, most notably the ECDB, as this data could be misrepresented or uncorroborated, and they had questions on validity of the data. For example, Chermak et al. (2012) pointed out that perhaps the homicides mentioned in the ECDB were miscategorized by the police, and possibly these “deaths” were in fact suicides, natural death, or even nonideological in nature, but were counted as “far-right extremist homicides.” Another valid point made by Chermak et al. (2012) concerned nonprofit advocacy organizations, such as the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern
Poverty Law Center making claims of far-right extremist violence without any substantive evidence, perhaps to underscore their belief on the rise of hate crimes.

Finally, what about the international influence and the international threat picture facing individuals in the United States regarding overall safety and security, notably the threats against law enforcement members? How does the international influence compare to the domestic influence and threats? Concerning this point, the current study was used to address the growing threats of violence against U.S. law enforcement from antigovernment individuals—extremist’s groups and the ever-growing sovereign citizen movement—and vital data was collected to show these alarming trends. From the New America Foundation group, pertinent data was collected on deadly Jihadist attacks and deadly right-wing attacks in the U.S. since 9/11, with a disturbing amount of right-wing attacks outnumbering Jihadist attacks by 38 to 26. (newamerica.org, 2016). After the unfortunate San Bernardino (March 2015) and Orlando (June 2016) nightclub shootings, the Jihadist attacks outnumbered the right-wing attacks 94-48 (New American Foundation Group, 2016). However, the right-wing attacks were still actively involved in national violence in 2018. Cases in point include the 2016 Dallas police ambush, the 2015 Charleston Church shooting, and the 2015 Colorado Planned Parenthood shooting.

To further show the smaller numbers of anti-Muslim extremists, Charles Kurzman (2013) conducted a significant qualitative case study research project, titled *Muslim-American Terrorism: Declining Further*. The vital research, beginning in 2001, showed that the number of Muslim American–involved terrorism cases continued a downward trend. Furthermore, according to Kurzman (2013), the spike in terrorism cases in 2009 renewed these concerns (of an increase in Muslim American terrorists), as have repeated
warnings from U.S. government officials about a possible surge in homegrown Islamic terrorism. According to Useem (2012), the predicted surge has not materialized, and thus the international influence seems to more about a myth.

Additionally, Kurzman (2016) conducted a similar qualitative case study research titled, *Muslim-American Involvement with Violent Extremism, 2015*. During the research, Kurzman found that “eighty-one Muslim-Americans were associated with violent extremist plots in 2015, the highest annual total since 9/11” (Kurzman, 2016, p. 1). Despite this massive increase in Muslim American international influence arrests, the most in one year since 9/11, the majority of the arrests were for traveling overseas or attempting to travel overseas in an attempt to join an international terrorist group and not part of a violent act. However, Kurzman (2016) made the assessment that the last part of 2015 was relatively quiet for Muslim Americans being arrested or part of a terrorist incident, but the San Bernardino incident brought the international influence back into the spotlight. Finally, Kurzman (2016) attempted to put the international versus domestic extremist violence in the U.S. into perspective by stating:

“Five plots (multiple subjects involved in violent plots) engaged in violence in the United States in 2015, killed 19 people, and raised the total killed since 9/11 to 69.” (p.1) Over the same period, more than 220,000 Americans were murdered. In 2015 alone, 134 Americans were killed in mass shootings (Kurzman, 2016).

Another interesting research topic that is investigated annually by Charles Kurzman, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and published by the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, was his research on *Muslim-American Involvement with Violent Extremism*. Most notably from his last research,
published on January 26, 2017, “Forty-six Muslim-Americans were associated with violent extremism in 2016, a 40% drop from 2015, but higher than the annual average since 9/11 (27 per year, for a total of 414 over more than 15 years)” (Kurzman, 2017, p. 2). Kurzman studies were particularly vital to the current study because they showed the disparity in the decrease in internationally inspired U.S. attacks versus the increase in domestic extremist-inspired attacks across the nation. To underscore the domestic extremist U.S. threat, Kurzman (2017) wrote, “In 2016 alone, 188 Americans were killed in mass shootings; this figure does not include the victims of Muslim-American extremist” (p. 2).

Furthermore, Kurzman (2017) noted only those two incidents occurred with a nexus to U.S. police violence. Specifically, during the late hours of January 7, 2016, in Philadelphia, PA, perpetrator Edward Archer shot officer Jesse Hartnett multiple times (who miraculously survived), and told police investigators, “I follow Allah. I pledge my allegiance to the Islamic State, and that’s why I did what I did” (Whelan, Schaefer, Roebuck, & Farr, 2016). The other case involving law enforcement violence was that of subject Khalil Abu Rayyan, from Dearborn, MI, who was being arrested for intending to shoot up a Detroit-area church in support of ISIS (Ellis, 2016). Post arrest, Abu Rayyan pledged to kill the police officer who arrested him on these charges. (Ellis, 2016)

To conclude, and to underscore the severity of the ongoing domestic extremist threat, according to ADL representatives, White supremacist murders more than doubled in 2017. The alarming murder rate among White supremacists “far surpasses murders committed by domestic Islamic extremists and makes 2017 the fifth deadliest year on record for extremist violence since 1970” (Anti-Defamation League, 2018a, p.1). Two correction officers and one police officer were killed by extremists in 2017, stressing the
need for officer safety vigilance. The increase in right-wing extremism violence from 2016 was responsible for 59% of all fatalities in the U.S. (Anti-Defamation League, 2018b). Figure 5 shows the right-wing extremism violence surge since 2008.


**Domestic Extremist Identification and Ideology**

**Research Question 2:** Who exactly are these domestic extremist groups and what are their ideologies/motivations? With increasing violence being used against U.S. law enforcement, a deeper understanding about this phenomenon is essential. Doing so can lead to insight about who exactly are these individuals and/or groups and what are the ideologies responsible for the sinister violence against U.S. law enforcement. Furthermore, are these just groups with violent natures, or are individuals involved with a domestic extremist theme? What about the lone wolf persona? What is a lone wolf terrorist? How does mental illness play a part in the mind-set of a terrorist? These are just some of the questions that the current research study was used to address and provide
some clarity.

To better understand the domestic extremist threat, a basic understanding of the groups and ideologies must be achieved before any subsequent research is performed. The last step is vital for law enforcement on many various fronts, most notably for officer safety concerns and proper identification of these threats. For the current study, the following American far-right definition was used. “There are three major ideological movements within the American violent far right: (a) a racist/White supremacy movement, (b) an anti-federalist movement, and (c) a fundamentalist movement.” (Perliger, 2012, p. 2)

According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) leaders (2013), membership in the militia arm of the patriot movement has more than quintupled over the 5 years (2008 – 2013), and those participating in the sovereign citizen movement have increased their numbers over the same period. The ADL (2018a) officials defined the patriot movement as:

A collective term used to describe a set of related extremist movements and groups in the United States whose ideologies center on antigovernment conspiracy theories. The most important segments of the “Patriot” movement include the militia movement, the sovereign citizen movement, and the tax protest movement (p. 1).

Mark Pitcavage, director of investigation research at ADL pointed out, the nation is at the largest reemergence of right-wing antigovernment groups since the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. Pitcavage also stated that most of his training for police officers in the past was pretty much split between teaching White supremacist information and about
antigovernment groups. It has become a 90/10 split in favor of antigovernment groups. Pitcavage stressed how this is a huge concern as reported in Riddell 2014).

As the violent trends continue, the need for robust law enforcement training is necessary in terms of officer safety issues or for staying extremely vigilant in dealing with these types of individuals, groups, or with sovereign citizens. With officer safety in mind, the Anti-Defamation League (2014) officials made a convincing assessment, “Because right-wing extremists frequently engage in criminal activity—both ideological and non-ideological, police responding to reports of criminal activity may encounter extremists committing a crime or who are fugitives from justice. Such situations can also frequently turn deadly” (ADL, 2014, p. 2). Essentially, the right-wing extremists’ lure police into a police matter without knowing how dangerous or depraved these extremists are until it is too late. ADL representatives stressed the need for more police officer training that deals exclusively with domestic extremist or far-right issues (Anti-Defamation League, 2014).

To underscore the amount of hate groups around the nation, Southern Poverty Law Center leaders stated that there were 939 known hate groups operating across the country, including: (a) neo-Nazis, (b) Klansmen, (c) White nationalists, (d) neo-Confederates, (e) racist skinheads, (f) Black separatists, (g) border vigilantes, and others (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2014a). Furthermore, the Southern Poverty Law Center leaders have seen hate groups increase by 56% since 2000. This has undoubtedly been fueled by anger and fear over the nation’s ailing economy, an influx of non-White immigrants, and the diminishing White majority, as symbolized by the election of the nation’s first African American president. These factors are creating a powerful
resurgence of the antigovernment patriot movement, which in the 1990s led to a string of domestic terrorist plots, including the Oklahoma City bombing. Interestingly enough, the number of patriot groups, including armed militias, increased following the election of President Obama in 2008, rising 813%, from 149 groups in 2008 to an all-time high of 1,360 in 2012. The number decreased to 1,096 in 2013 (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2014a). In addition to the economy issues, and according to speaker Laurie Wood (2014), senior intelligence analyst at the Southern Poverty Law Center, “Housing/mortgage issues have been an impetus in the formation of these patriot groups, as these groups blame the U.S. government for the economic failures, just like the Sovereign Citizen movement” (Wood, 2014).

Finally, to highlight the overall propensity for violence against law enforcement at the hands of these extremists, ADL leaders stated these “extreme ideologies cause right-wing radicals directly to attack officers” (Anti-Defamation League, 2014a, p.1). Furthermore, these extremists view law enforcement members as “illegitimate government employees,” as expressed by various militia extremist and sovereign citizen’s groups and members, while White supremacists believe that police are tools of a Jewish-controlled government. The belief is very problematic and can become extremely violent when law enforcement members unexpectedly encounter an extremist without any warning or knowing the background of the individual, only to have the extremist lash out against the officer. Having officers trained to understand these extremist ideologies and their propensity of violence is an area where the ADL believes the law enforcement community is lacking and could prevent more lost lives.

The domestic extremist groups and individuals researched in the present study are
listed below, as relevant case studies are discussed to illustrate and underscore these severe threats against law enforcement members: (a) White Supremacy, (b) Antigovernment/Sovereign Citizen Movement, (c) Black Separatist Extremists, and (d) Lone Wolf.

**White Supremacy**

“Pat asked me if I could hurt, beat or kill the cop what would I do. I told him I would kill him” (Convicted felon White supremacist telling confidential human source about his plan to kill a law enforcement officer.)

Another area of great concern for the lives of U.S. law enforcement officers regarding the domestic extremism threat is an area that epitomizes another significant threat for the overall safety and security of the American public—that of the White supremacy extremist group. According to the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), led by the University of Maryland, White supremacy extremists can be best defined as:

Actors who enable the execution of violence indirectly through assistance—such as providing funding, transportation or logistical support, and/or training—or directly participate in acts of unlawful violence directed at the federal government, ethnic, racial, and/or religious minorities, including Jewish persons in support of their belief that Whites are intellectually and morally superior to all other races. (START, 2017, p.1)

White supremacy groups include the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), neo-Nazi groups, White nationalist groups, and the racist skinhead groups, to name a few of this large domestic extremist’s category. Most of their victims are Jewish and/or of African
American descent or any unfortunate victims who get in their way concerning their political and/or ideological goals as exhibited in the next few case studies.

Who exactly are these White supremacists? How do they recruit and radicalize individuals to join their cause and wreak havoc on the American public? According to Holt and Bolden, (2014), the way the White supremacists communicate on the Internet makes them different from many other more sophisticated criminal organizations. By viewing White Nationalist Web sites, forums, blogs, and other social media sites, the researchers were able to find many significant methodologies and ways in which these White supremacists communicate with each other.

White nationalists begin their recruitment and attempt to hide their identities. Approximately 30% of all threads \( n = 18 \) began with a user asking a question, and the majority of these questions focused on some sort of protective technology to hide an individual's location or identity. (Hold & Bolden, 2014). For instance, “several users asked questions about the use of Tor, a free proxy service that helps to anonymize an individual's web traffic.” (Holt & Bolden, 2014, p. 84). Utilizing Tor software helps hide a person’s identity, often sought by law enforcement and any other investigative agencies.

Holt and Bolden (2014) found another tool used was how the White supremacist users came out and asked on these extremist topic forums on how to conceal their identities and do IP tracing more discreetly:

One user wanted information on IP tracing to minimize his on-line footprint: I ask because I am part of some non-racialist forums, and the thought has crossed my mind that I would most likely be immediately banned from them if it were
discovered that I am a regular poster over here (Holt & Bolden, 2014, p. 85)

Holt and Bolden (2014) make a compelling argument that “since a small number of forum users had demonstrable technical skill, they act as a key resource for the broader population of unskilled users” (p. 89). The individuals act as their group’s IT department and don’t hide their ways to skirt the system in these forums. Rather, they instruct others on ways to hide their own identities, then, once established online, trade their sinister views. Finally, Holt and Bolden (2014) asserted that the reason why they make these forums technologically easy for users to enjoy online discreet posts is that they want to make this more of a community recruitment, one where there is a united front pitch rather than an aggressively technological enterprise dependent on expensive software and resources.

Other vital data concerning domestic extremists’ violence revolves around the White supremacy movement. According to members of the ADL officials:

Among domestic extremist movements active in the United States, White supremacists are by far the most violent, committing about 83% of the extremist-related murders in the United States in the past 10 years and being involved in about 52% of the shootouts between extremists and police. White supremacists also regularly engage in a variety of terrorist plots, acts and conspiracies. However, White supremacists also have a high degree of involvement with traditional forms of criminal activity as well as ideologically based criminal activity. Most of the murders committed by White supremacists are done for nonideological reasons. However, even if such murders are ignored, White supremacists still commit the most lethal violence of any domestic extremist

A prime example of the callous nature of this extremist group and the overall threat to American law enforcement is when Polk County, Iowa, attorney John Sarcone spoke of the November 2, 2016, calculated killings of Urbandale police officer Justin Martin and Des Moines police sergeant Anthony “Tony” Bemino. The two police officers died at the hand of suspect Scott Michael Greene, in which Sarcone portrayed Greene as a sick, demented killer who hated the police. In fact, “Sarcone said that Greene simply did not like police officers.” He noted Greene’s documented struggles with mental illness but dismissed it as a justification for the killings. “He planned this out completely” (Rogers, 2017).

Even more disturbing during the Greene investigation press conference was that the county attorney showed a hit list of members that Greene either had already killed or wanted to kill, as he inscribed these names on his jail cell wall (Rogers, 2017). Greene even had a tally like a score for a baseball game: “greene-2, UPD, DMPD-0” with check marks next to both of the police victims (Rogers, 2017).

To highlight his White supremacist background, Greene had a longstanding battle with law enforcement in which he was kicked out of a high school football stadium for waving his Confederate battle flag in front of several African American subjects and was arrested in 2014 for first-degree harassment in which he threatened to kill an African American male and called him racist names. This domestic extremist background epitomizes the overall threat seen in the nation today, especially how deeply rooted this hatred is and how it can simply boil over when feeling threatened by people from other races and/or considering law enforcement the enemy.
Other notable examples in which the White supremacy extremist group led the violence against law enforcement was that of Wade Michael Page, the August 5, 2012, Wisconsin Sikh temple shooter. An ex-army soldier and self-proclaimed member of the Hammerskins Nation, a large violent White supremacist skinhead group based in Texas, Page grew tired of the different races threatening the so-called “White nation” and felt that he had to act, in addition to leading others to fight and to stop hiding behind the computer or making excuses (Bauer & Richmond, 2012). Page attacked the Oak Creek, Wisconsin, Sikh temple and killed 6, severely wounding 4 others, including a police officer.

Another White supremacy hatred example in the ongoing White supremacy threat toward U.S. law enforcement was that of vocal White supremacist Christopher Cantwell, who garnered national attention after the infamous Charlottesville rally on August 12, 2017. He was quoted as saying in a documentary, “These people want violence, and the right is just meeting a market demand.” Cantwell had a history of violent threats that also extended to law enforcement (“5 things to know,” 2017).

Cantwell had also expressed grave threats toward the government and the police. Cantwell called for ousting the government and advocated killing government agents (to include police officers). Cantwell even celebrated the ambush murders of New York City Police Department officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos and said he once considered going on a bloody rampage like Vegas police ambush killer Jerad Miller (“5 things to know,” 2017).

Finally, one of the largest and unfortunate police killings in America was perpetrated by White supremacist Richard Andrew Poplawski. On April 4, 2009, three
City of Pittsburgh police officers (Paul Sciullo III, Stephen Mayhle, and Eric Kelly) were fatally shot, and a fourth, Timothy McManaway, was wounded after responding to a domestic dispute (Poplawski’s mother called 911) at the home of Richard Andrew Poplawski (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2015). Poplawski, a discharged Marine, was afraid that the government would take his weapons, and he single-handedly picked off the officers one-by-one with his AK-47 assault rifle and a .22-caliber rifle. Poplawski was also wearing a bulletproof vest. Poplawski “who had posted his racist and anti-Semitic views on White supremacist websites” (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2015, p. 1), was afraid that the U.S. government may soon be used against American citizens and that the government was easily influenced by Jews. Furthermore, Poplawski told police investigators that he fired additional shots into the bodies of the police officers “just to make sure they were dead” and said he “thought I got that one, too” when told that the fourth officer survived (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2015). At the time, it was the largest and deadliest single act of violence against law enforcement members by a domestic political extremist since the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. Poplawski was sentenced to death in 2011.

On January 11, 2018, Aryan Nations gang member Ronnie Lucas Wilson shot at a Knoxville, Tennessee, police officer during an attempted traffic stop, wounding the officer. Wilson was eventually captured while jumping out of a burning house a few days later, but the mentality and propensity of violence associated with these domestic extremist groups continues.

What these deadly examples/case studies clearly show is that these domestic extremists threats toward law enforcement are not going away. Strong arguments can be
made that these threats and overall violence will increase due to the unfortunate race wars and senseless violence as seen at the Charlottesville protest. What makes these extreme threats so troublesome, let alone the violence acts, is that the individuals and views are in the country and are at times unpredictable, as seen in the 2012 Sikh shooting. Who would keep score on the number of killings someone has made against government officials? Unfortunately, this is the type of sinister violence facing U.S. law enforcement.

Regarding violence in general (minus the law enforcement threats) around the United States today, the White supremacy threat remains real. According to Bjelopera (2017), FBI and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials released a joint intelligence bulletin stating that White supremacists “were responsible for 49 homicides in 26 attacks from 2000 to 2016 ... more than any other domestic extremist movement” (Bjelopera, 2017, p. 16). According to an FBI bulletin, “White supremacist groups were likely to commit more violent attacks and continue to post a threat of lethal violence over the next year” (“White nationalists,” 2017, p. 1).

Other vital data concerning domestic extremists’ violence revolves around the White supremacy movement. According to the Anti-Defamation League,

Among domestic extremist movements active in the United States, White supremacists are by far the most violent, committing about 83% of the extremist-related murders in the United States in the past 10 years and being involved in about 52% of the shootouts between extremists and police. White supremacists also regularly engage in a variety of terrorist plots, acts, and conspiracies. However, White supremacists also have a high degree of involvement with traditional forms of criminal activity as well as ideologically-based criminal
activity. Most of the murders committed by White supremacists are done for nonideological reasons. However, even if such murders are ignored, White supremacists still commit the most lethal violence of any domestic extremist movement in the United States. (Anti-Defamation League, 2015, p. 1)

To fully understand and mitigate the domestic extremist threat associated with this violent group, a robust federal investigation needs to be performed to address all of violence. As surprising as it may sound, Senator Claire McCaskill (D-Missouri) advised during a Senate hearing that violence at the hands of White supremacists almost tripled in America compared to international-inspired terrorist groups such as ISIS (“White nationalists,” 2017). Furthermore, the senator made a very important point in terms of how government leaders are taking this threat seriously. “Congress has held multiple hearings on ISIS, but we have had zero hearings on the threat of domestic terrorists, and the threat they pose, and our response to it” (“White nationalists,” 2017, p. 1). Even civil rights supporters claim that since the term terrorism has been much discussed, but only with Muslims responsible for terrorism. Terrorism is not mentioned in the same breath as violence by these White supremacist groups, antigovernment groups, and any other far-right groups. Several FBI investigations are used to support the notion that the federal government leaders should be doing more in terms of mitigating violent white supremacy. FBI Director Chris Wray told the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee that his office had approximately 1,000 open international terrorism cases and approximately 1,000 open domestic terrorism cases (“White nationalists,” 2017). Wray stated that he did not have the statistics comparing White supremacist attacks versus the number of internationally inspired attacks (i.e.,
ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and others). Other sources have indicated that the “number of White supremacist attacks and foiled plots is as high as two-to-one relative to Islamist attacks and foiled plots” (“White nationalists,” 2017).

One federal challenge in recognizing this growing domestic threat is based on what U.S. attorneys and/or local district attorneys charge these domestic extremists. Many of these White supremacist, antigovernment extremists and/or Black extremists are given weapons charges, explosives charges, homicide, manslaughter, and/or hate crimes charges, but not terrorism charges like many of the internationally inspired Jihadists are charged. It is very uncommon to see a domestic extremist charged with a federal and/or state terrorism charge. These statutes are mostly utilized for the internationally inspired perpetrator. As a result, many of these domestic extremists are not recognized in the criminal justice system as being domestic extremists. Instead, they are convicted as gun felons with their ideology and/or extremist affiliation left out of the criminal history report. As a result, the methodology or cause in the increase of gun arrests may be categorized as an increase in gang and/or drug activity, not as a result of domestic terrorism.

**Antigovernment Extremists**

The dawn of a new day. May all our sacrifices be worth it. (Warren, 2014). Jerad Miller’s Facebook page – a day before the killings

“He came in, shouting, ‘The revolution is about to start,’ something about a war, and that the cops were on their way,” (p.1) according to a witness in the brutal and senseless murders of two Las Vegas police officers, Alyn Beck and Igor Soldo. What triggered this event on June 8, 2014, as killers Jerad Miller and his wife, Amada, walked
into a pizza restaurant and started shooting the officers who were innocently having lunch? After shooting the policemen at point-blank range, the husband and wife killers took the officers’ weapons and reportedly covered them with a Revolutionary War-era Gadsden flag, which depicts a coiled snake and the words “Don’t Tread on Me.” The killers had been at Clive Bundy’s ranch during his standoff with federal officials in April, though the rancher’s family said Monday the two had been chased away (Riddell, 2014), due to the couple’s extreme radical views and self-admission by the Bundy bunch that these two were too extreme toward their cause.

Why are these two murders so significant, besides being obviously heinous acts committed against two dedicated public servants, as it pertains to the resurgence in violence against law enforcement? They are another example of a domestic extremist far-right group committing violent acts against law enforcement.

What exactly are antigovernment groups? According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) officials, (2017)

antigovernment groups identify with their own governing style and warn of potential government violence toward government officials (mainly law enforcement), stating that a revolution is coming.” These groups vehemently abide by the New World Order philosophy and often participate in baseless conspiracy theories and implement their own antigovernment policies and procedures. (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017, p.1)

Another definition of this domestic extremist group is “these attacks motivated by opposition to government forces without the expressed goal of establishing an alternative government” (Quinn, 2016).
The SPLC has reported that there are 623 active antigovernment groups (both militia and other antigovernment groups) nationwide, including Alaska and Hawaii (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017). Of special note is the fact that these groups have their highest numbers since 1996, the year after the Oklahoma City bombing, when there were 858 groups (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017).

Concerning the Las Vegas police officer murders, “The Millers had an ideology that was along the lines of militia and White supremacists: and that law enforcement was the oppressor,” said Assistant Sheriff Kevin McMahill (Riddell, 2014). According to officials at the International Union of Police Associations, there is more direct violence against law enforcement from these extremist groups, which is very concerning. Another alarming trend is how the Internet and social media sites are spreading anticop rhetoric around the country, where these demented groups constantly feed each other. (Riddell, 2014)

The year 2014 was on track to be one of the deadliest years since 2001, the year of the World Trade Center attacks, for U.S. law enforcement. There was a 53% increase in shooting deaths from 2013, which led researchers to conclude that this alarming trend is a result of these radical extremist groups. (Riddell, 2014)

To underscore the severity of these domestic extremist threats, large law enforcement associations, such as representatives from the International Union of Police Associations and National Sheriff’s Association, say they have seen increased activity by members of the sovereign citizen movement, an antigovernment, White supremacist organization, and that the antigovernment patriot and militia movements that targeted officers. This increase from the last few years (2009 – 2014) (Riddell, 2014), has
garnered the attention of law enforcement, especially as it pertains to the sovereign citizen movement. According to the National Sheriff’s Association, the sovereign citizen movement is well armed and unpredictable when dealing with them for the first time. More information about the sovereign citizens is covered in the next section.

To better understand the antigovernment movement, its propensity for violence, and the groups affiliated with this movement, ADL staff reported that membership in the militia arm of the patriot movement has more than quintupled over the past 5 years (2009 – 2014), and those participating in the sovereign citizen movement have increased their numbers over the same period. ADL speaker Mark Pitcavage stated, “We are 5 years into the largest resurgence in right-wing antigovernment groups since … the Oklahoma City bombing” (Riddell, 2014). Additionally, Pitcavage stated that back in 2008; ADL’s briefings for police officers were evenly split between providing information on White supremacist organizations and antigovernment groups. Riddell (2014) reported it was more like a 90/10 split in favor of antigovernment groups, according to the ADL, showing how this has become a huge concern.

Jerad and Amanda Miller are prime examples of the domestic extremism threat currently seen in the United States and how their militia style patriot movement possesses hatred and threats of violence toward law enforcement. Specifically, Jared Miller’s Facebook “manifesto spoke of a tyrannical government needing to be overcome through citizen rebelling” (Riddell, 2014), which makes law enforcement (and other government officials) their natural enemies. According to members of the ADL, this is just one of the disturbing trends seen in U.S. law enforcement, especially in the area of offering antigovernment/extremists views on social media and the need for citizen revolt.
To further illustrate Jerad Miller’s manifesto ramblings, see Miller’s Facebook blog (see Figure 6) 6 days before the attack on Las Vegas police officers Alyn Beck and Igor Soldo.

Figure 6. Jerad Miller Facebook blog. Facebook blog courtesy of Lydia Warren, Online messages White supremacist couple Amanda Jerad Miller gunned two police officers Wal-Mart Shopper Taking Lives.
Sovereign Citizens

“We have the right to keep and bear arms in order to shoot our own politicians. We have the right to keep and bear arms to shoot the police, to shoot your local government officials, your state officials, your president, your congressman, your senators.” (Quote from Sovereign “guru” Alfred Adask, who stated this message in one of his writings) (American Crime Prevention Institute, 2012, p. 11)

The sovereign citizen movement has been mentioned in the current study as it relates to far right/antigovernment extremists and the threat of violence. How exactly does this movement relate to the current study, and who makes up this group? How threatening is this group and what is its background and movement size?

A good definition by the FBI of this movement is:

The FBI defines sovereign citizen extremists as individuals who openly reject their US citizenship status, believe that most forms of established government, authority, and institutions are illegitimate, and seek, wholly or in part, through unlawful acts of force or violence, to further their claim to be immune from government authority. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute extremism, and may be constitutionally protected.

(“White nationalists,” 2017, p.1)

One significant study stated, “Law enforcement is much more concerned about sovereign citizens, Islamic extremists, and militia/patriot group members compared to the fringe groups of the far right, including Christian Identity believers, reconstructed traditionalists (i.e., Odinists), idiosyncratic sectarians (i.e., survivalists), and members of
the doomsday cults. In fact, according to Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, and Neville (2014), sovereign citizens were the main threat toward law enforcement; however, in terms of other domestic extremist groups (e.g., KKK, Christian Identity, neo-Nazis; racist skinheads; extremist environmentalists; extreme animal rights extremists), these threats were perceived as not as threatening as the sovereign citizen movement.

The Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) researchers Carter, Chermak et al. (2014) completed in-depth surveys with more than 364 officers representing 175 state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to examine perceptions of: the threat of terrorism; the nature of information sharing; and whether agencies are prepared to deal with terrorist attacks. Based on Carter et al. (2014) surveys and overall research, Rivinius (2014) stated that the far-right/antigovernment sovereign citizen movement was the most highly ranked perceived threat among law enforcement members, with 86% of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing that it was a serious terrorist threat. Additionally, these surveys indicated that sovereign threats have increased dramatically in rank over the years from an earlier survey implemented in 2006-2007, which showed Islamic extremists to be law enforcement’s top concern. In that survey, approximately 67% agreed or strongly agreed that Islamic extremists were a serious threat (Rivinius, 2014).

To further show this significant opinion from U.S. law enforcement regarding the “far right/extremist’s groups” threat, Schanzer, Kurzman, Tolliver, and Miller (2016) surveyed approximately 382 U.S. law enforcement agencies of all sizes from January through May 2014. The researchers asked members of these U.S. law enforcement agencies, “What are the main violent extremist threats that your agencies face?”
Very similar to the START survey, the category of antigovernment violent extremism was the most popular choice among the law enforcement agencies, much more popular than Al-Qaeda inspired violent extremism. This clearly shows a domestic extremist threat pattern among law enforcement members and affected agencies.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (2014b), the sovereign citizen movement holds a truly bizarre ideology that can be very violent. Growing at a fast pace since the late 2000s, members of this complex antigovernment group believe that they, not judges, juries, law enforcement or elected officials, get to decide which laws to obey and which to ignore, and they do not think they should have to pay taxes. In fact, they exhibit a strong animosity toward the federal government with a deep distrust of law enforcement in general. (Southern Poverty Law Center (2014b)

Paper terrorism seems to be their theme, according to representatives from the SPLC, as sovereigns are clog up the courts with indecipherable filings and then can get violent, when cornered, many of them lashing out in rage and frustration. In the most extreme cases, they perpetrate acts of deadly violence, usually directed against government officials. A prime example of sovereign citizens lashing out toward law enforcement occurred in May 2010, when a father-son team of sovereigns murdered two police officers with an assault rifle when they were pulled over on the interstate while traveling through West Memphis, Arkansas. Unfortunately, these two West Memphis police officers had no chance to defend themselves, nor did they know who they were dealing with on the side of the road.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (2014b), the sovereign citizen
movement is rooted in “racism and anti-Semitism, though most sovereigns, many of whom are African Americans, are unaware of their beliefs’ origins. From their formation in the early 1980s, the sovereign citizen movement mostly attracted White supremacists (discussed more in the next chapter) and anti-Semites, mainly because sovereign theories originated in groups that saw Jews as working behind the scenes to manipulate financial institutions and control the government (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2014b). Whites were heavily recruited in becoming sovereigns back at the implementation of this movement, and this ideology still holds true to a high degree. According to the SPLC, the sovereign movement argued that the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, which guaranteed citizenship to African Americans and everyone else born on U.S. soil, also made Black Americans permanently subject to federal and state governments, unlike themselves (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2014b).

Since its inception, the sovereign belief system was that of a conspiracy theory in which at some point in American history, the U.S. government set up by the founding fathers—with a legal system the sovereigns refer to as “common law”—was secretly replaced by a new government system based on admiralty law, the law of the sea and international commerce. Under common law, or so they believe, the sovereigns would be free men. Under admiralty law, they are slaves, and secret government forces have a vested interest in keeping them that way. Some sovereigns believe this perfidious change occurred during the Civil War, while others blame the events of 1933, when the U.S. abandoned the gold standard. Either way, they stake their lives and livelihoods on the idea that judges around the country know all about this hidden government takeover but are denying the sovereigns’ motions and filings out of treasonous loyalty to hidden and
malevolent government forces (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2014b).

One of the dangers of the sovereign citizen movement and a challenge to the U.S. government is that it is impossible to accurately gauge the number of sovereign citizen members present in the U.S., which is mostly based on the fact that the movement generally does not have a central governing body or organizational leadership structure as most groups/movements have to carry out their missions/goals. Consequently, many affiliated sovereign splinter groups/organizations exist in today’s society, as well as numerous outspoken individual sovereigns. However, according to the SPLC (2014b), in the mid-1990s, the IRS estimated that there were approximately 250,000 tax protesters in the U.S., people who believe that the government has no right to tax income. Not all of them were full-blown sovereign ideologues. Since the late 1990s, an abundance of evidence suggests that the sovereign citizen movement’s growth has been explosive, although there have been no more recent IRS estimates, because Congress in 1998 prohibited the agency from tracking or labeling those who file frivolous arguments in lieu of paying their taxes. A conservative estimate of the number of all kinds of tax protesters today would be about 500,000 according to the SPLC. Using this number and information derived from trials of tax protestors and reports from government agencies, a reasonable estimate of hard-core sovereign believers in early 2011 would be 100,000 with another 200,000 just starting out by testing sovereign techniques for resisting everything from speeding tickets to drug charges for an estimated total of 300,000. As sovereign theories go viral throughout the nation’s prison systems and among people who are unemployed and desperate in a punishing economy, and with fertile prison recruitments, this membership number is anticipated to grow rapidly. (SPLC, 2014b)
In terms of extreme violence, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center (2014b), “when a sovereign feels particularly desperate, angry, battle-weary and cornered, his next government contact, no matter how minor, can be his final straw” (p. 1). The resulting rage can be lethal. In 1995 in Ohio, a sovereign named Michael Hill pulled a gun on an officer during a traffic stop. Hill was killed. In 1997, New Hampshire extremist Carl Drega shot and killed two officers and two civilians and wounded another three officers before being killed himself. In that same year in Idaho, when brothers Doug and Craig Broderick were pulled over for failing to signal, they killed one officer and wounded another before being killed themselves in a violent gun battle. In December 2003, members of the Bixby family, who lived outside of Abbeville, S.C., killed two law enforcement officers in a dispute over a small sliver of land next to their home. In May 2010, Jerry and Joseph Kane, a father and son sovereign team, shot to death two West Memphis, AR, police officers who had pulled them over in a routine traffic stop. Later that day, the Kanes were killed in a fierce shoot-out with police that wounded two other officers (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2014). The case involving the Kanes became the main reason why law enforcement officials reported to the START survey on why these sovereign citizens are law enforcement’s primary concern, especially as it pertains to officer safety issues and not knowing who is being stopped alongside the road.

To validate the seriousness of the sovereign citizen violence, lecturer Laurie Wood (2014), from the Southern Poverty Law Center, stated the following in her in-depth presentation on sovereign citizen extremism:

There were 7 LEO deaths associated with sovereigns since 2010:

- May 20, 2010: Brandon Paudert and Bill Evans, West Memphis, Arkansas,
Police Department

- Aug. 16, 2012: Brandon Nielsen and Jeremy Triche, deputies, St. Johns the Baptist Parish, Louisiana, Sheriff’s Department.
- Sept. 4, 2012: California Highway Patrol Officer Kenyon Youngstrom, near Alamo, California.
- June 8, 2014: Igor Soldo and Alyn Beck, Las Vegas, Nevada, Police Department. (Wood presentation, 2014)

Sovereign citizen ideology states that America is a national illegitimate police state. Members can be so extreme that they have been known to open fire on officers at traffic stops (Jerry and Joe Kane, West Memphis, AR, May 20, 2010, as a prime example). Such people pose an extensive threat to law enforcement officers. According to an FBI 2011 report, the sovereign citizen domestic threat will most likely increase rapidly in the future due to the growing unrest and unemployment rates around the country. Neiwart (2017) stated, “Sovereign citizens alone, according to the database, have been responsible for 14 attacks on law enforcement from 2008 to 2016, which led to the deaths of nine officers and injuries to 12” (p. 37). “Of the 40 total plots and attacks targeting police, 83% involved right-wing antigovernment extremists, resulting in 23 fatalities, which is higher and more volatile than any other domestic extremist groups and/or international extremist groups.” (Neiwart, 2017, p.37)

A more recent killing of a law enforcement officer came at the hands of antigovernment extremist Matthew Riehl, a veteran of the Wyoming Army National Guard. On New Year’s Eve, 2017, Douglas County (Colorado) sheriff’s deputies responded to a domestic disturbance at Riehl’s apartment complex, where he waited and
ambushed six people, including killing one deputy, Zackari Parrish, 29 years of age, and severely injuring four other deputies. Riehl’s ultimate rage was over a speeding ticket he received a month earlier in which he sent numerous harassing (and possibly threatening) e-mails to the court and to a sheriff’s sergeant. Riehl also “purchased nine guns and two receivers, including a plum crazy AR-15 receiver with a magazine that can hold 100 rounds” (Matthews, 2018, p. 4). Unfortunately, all of these Riehl purchases were made before he was placed on a mental health hold for his suspicious and erratic behavior following his honorable discharge from the Wyoming Army National Guard in 2012. This case example is a perfect illustration of the intelligence gaps and challenges facing the law enforcement community and the mental health community when dealing with a subject’s mental health condition and the need to either prevent him or her from owning firearms and/or taking them away in order to avoid another such ambush.

Another law enforcement officer death at the hands of an antigovernment movement is that of the May 16, 2017, murder of Broadwater County, Montana, Deputy Sheriff Mason Moore. Deputy Moore was shot and killed while pursuing a vehicle driven by Lloyd Barrus, while his son, Marshall, continued shooting at law enforcement. Ultimately, Marshall was shot and killed by police at the scene. Deputy Moore lost his life not knowing who he was dealing with. An investigation revealed the Burrus’s were involved in a prior violent encounter with law enforcement in Idaho in 2000, where they were involved in another police chase and ended up shooting and bringing down a police helicopter involved in the chase (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017). “Barrus’ other son, Jeffrey, then 20, is still serving a 25-year prison term after pleading guilty to attempting to kill police officers” (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017). Per the Southern
Poverty Law Center, Lloyd Barrus also served time after that incident, and his antigovernment beliefs appear to have hardened while in prison. Lloyd Barrus’ bail was set at $2 million, and he faced 16 counts of murder, 14 of which were for deliberate attempted homicide, and prosecutors were seeking the death penalty (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017).

Another violent law enforcement killing at the hands of an antigovernment inspired individual looking to make a name for himself and for his beliefs is that of murderer Eric Frein. “Accused murderer Eric Frein thought killing police would spark a national revolution bringing political change” (Brelje, 2014, p.1). This incident is just another prime example from the years 2008 – 2017 in which an antigovernment extremist looked at the federal government as the enemy and took action into his own hands, ending an innocent life by fatally shooting one Pennsylvania state trooper and severely injuring another. The attack happened on September 12, 2014, at the Blooming Grove State Police Barracks. After leading law enforcement on a massive manhunt for approximately 7 weeks through the Poconos region in Pennsylvania, Frein was eventually captured. He had already sent a letter to his parents explaining some of his motives:

Our nation is far from what it was and what it should be. There is so much wrong and on so many levels only passing through the crucible of another revolution can get us back the liberties we once had. Tension is high at the moment and the time seems right for a spark to ignite a fire in the hearts of men. What I have done has not been done before, and it felt like it was worth a try. (Barbash, 2014)

What is so disturbing about the Frein incident and for many other domestic extremist violent acts toward law enforcement, and/or violence in general, is that often
there are no clues, or a known identified pattern/plot recognized by law enforcement, let alone apparent to people close to the killers. Frein, with his antigovernment views, went unknown about his plot until it was too late. Unfortunately, one state trooper lost his life, while another one ended up fighting for his own life. It is here, as a classic example from the Frein case study, in which law enforcement clearly has the disadvantage in recognizing/identifying these domestic extremist threats in an expeditious manner (or even at all). Frein ambushed Pennsylvania state trooper Byron Dickson II as he opened the barracks door and stepped outside. This is the trend with domestic extremists as it relates to their sinister violence toward law enforcement based on their extremist ideology and/or views, whether the perpetrator is antigovernment, sovereign citizen, White supremacist, black separatist, extremism individual, and/or a combination of those views.

**Black Separatist Extremist**

“The suspect said he was upset at White people. The suspect stated that he wanted to kill White people, especially White officers.” (“Dallas police shooting,” 2016)

Comments made by Dallas Police Chief David Brown, July 8, 2016

Black separatist extremists, or what the FBI calls Black identity extremists (BIE), are another domestic extremist group of concern, especially as it applies to the safety of law enforcement members. The FBI concluded that BIEs are very likely to be the catalysts for an increase in premeditated, retaliatory lethal violence against law enforcement and will advocate for this violence against law enforcement in the future (Chia, 2017). To get a good perspective on what this group is, its ideology, and its mission, and how this threat applies to the law enforcement community, some definitions
have been added.

One good definition of this group came from the State of New Jersey, Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness website, dated January 17, 2017:

Black separatist extremists are individuals or groups that seek to establish an independent nation for people of African descent through force or violence. These groups claim superiority over Whites, are typically anti-Semitic, and oppose integration and racial intermarriage. (State of New Jersey, Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, 2017, p.1)

However, the FBI defines Black identity extremists as the following:

As individuals who seek, wholly or in part, through unlawful acts of force or violence, in response to perceived racism and injustice in American society ... of establishing a separate Black homeland or autonomous Black social institutions, communities, or governing organizations within the United States. This desire for physical or psychological separation is typically based on either a religious or political belief system, which is sometimes formed around or includes a belief in racial superiority or supremacy. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute extremism, and may be constitutionally protected. (“Black Identity Extremists,” 2018, p.1)

Of importance to the current study, the BIEs started as a result of “perceptions of police brutality against African American spurred an increase in premeditated, retaliatory lethal violence against law enforcement” (Chia, 2017, p. 1). This domestic extremist group’s identity began recently, according to Chia, who suggested that the Black identity
extremists term advocates a cohesive, all-encompassing ideology (Chia, 2017). One ex-
government official told *Foreign Policy*, “they (government) are grouping together Black
Panthers, Black nationalists, and Washitaw Nation” (Chia, 2017).

To put this ideology in the proper context with the current study, Black separatist
extremist ideology contributed significantly to the law enforcement death statistics that
became part of this research project, with many senseless killings of law enforcement
killings around the nation. The August 2014, Ferguson, MO, killing of Michael Brown
was the spark that started the massive gunfire around the nation as it pertains to the
senseless killings of law enforcement members. Moreover, FBI representatives asserted:

BIE perceptions of police brutality against African Americans have become
organizing drivers for the BIE movement since 2014, resulting in a spike of BIEs
intentionally targeting law enforcement with violence. In all six targeted attacks
since 2014, the FBI assesses it is very likely the BIE suspects acted in retaliation
for perceived past police brutality incidents. Even though five of these attacks
occurred following controversial police shootings of African Americans by White
police officers, BIE targeting of officers was not, in every incident, based on their
specific race. (Chia, 2017, p. 4)

Black separatist extremist member Micah Johnson was responsible for killing five
police officers and injuring nine others at a Black Lives Matter protest in Dallas on July
Johnson, a member of the New Black Panther Party’s (NBPP) Houston Chapter for about
6 months, was asked to leave the group since he was unable to follow the chain of
command protocols. He carried out his attack on the Dallas police, because he was upset
over the shootings of Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, LA, and Philando Castile near St. Paul, MN, that occurred a few days earlier (State of New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, 2017). This one incident perpetrated by Johnson was the largest death toll for U.S. police officers in a single event since 9/11. According to the FBI, during Johnson’s standoff with police, he “told police negotiators he was upset about recent police shootings and White people, and expressed a desire to kill White people, especially White officers” (Chia, 2017, p. 1).

On October 23, 2014, Black extremist Zale H. Thompson attacked four New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers in Queens, with a hatchet. Thankfully, none of the officers were killed, however, one officer sustained an injury to the side of his head, while another officer sustained an injury to his arm. The two remaining NYPD officers shot and killed Thompson (Chia, 2017). To underscore the severity of threats against law enforcement members from these extremist groups, according to the FBI:

Thompson was angered after a recent spate of deaths at the hands of the police. In his own writings, Thompson advocated for armed struggled against “the oppressors” and “mass revolt” against the U.S. social, economic, and political systems, which he perceived to be “White dominated.” He also described the United States as a “beast” and called for “chopping off” its head, hands, and feet. (FBI, 2017, p. 4)

Another prime example of Black separatist extremist violence against U.S. police officers is that of the Lakeem Keon Scott case study. On Thursday, July 7, 2016, just a day after the Philando Castile police shooting outside of St. Paul, MN, and the day before, in which Alton Sterling was killed by Baton Rouge, LA, police, Scott fired at a
motel and at passing cars on a highway. According investigators from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, Scott wanted to harm police officers and others because he was angered by the Castile and Sterling shootings just hours before. Scott was Black, and all four of his victims were White, including a wounded police officer who was shot in the leg (Salinger, 2016).

Particularly troublesome about this section of the study was the fact that most of the law enforcement violence suffered at the hands of these Black extremists was a direct result of a police officer deadly interaction with an African American subject elsewhere in the nation. The 2014 Ferguson, MO. incident has become viewed as the spark that started this so-called war on cops, and/or the Ferguson effect, the unfortunate interactions between the police and the community that still continues.

This has had a profound effect on the policing tactics being employed currently. MacDonald (2016) stated:

The incessant drumbeat against the police has resulted in what Sam Dotson, police chief of St. Louis, called the “Ferguson effect.” Cops are disengaging from discretionary enforcement activity, and the “criminal element is feeling empowered” (p. 56).

Furthermore, in respect to the Ferguson effect:

As 2015 progressed, few law-enforcement practices escaped attack for allegedly imposing unjust burdens on Blacks. But it was the virulent anti-cop rhetoric that was most consequential. Officers working in inner cities routinely found themselves surrounded by hostile, jeering crowds when they tried to make an arrest or conduct an investigation. Cops feared becoming the latest YouTube
pariah when a viral cell-phone video showed them using force against a suspect who had been resisting arrest.

As a direct consequence of how the police were effectively performing their jobs, the police began to disengage from proactive policing. Rather than getting out of their squad cars to question an individual who appeared to be hiding a gun, officers increasingly just drove on by, waiting for the next robbery or shooting to come over the police radio. Criminal summons and misdemeanor arrests for public-order offenses plummeted. (MacDonald, 2016, p. 3)

Finally, as a direct result of this change in police tactics, MacDonald suggested that criminal organizations and criminals in general were getting away with crimes they had been arrested for in the past. Furthermore, violent crime increased since the Ferguson incident. MacDonald wrote, “Homicides in the country’s 50 largest cities rose nearly 17% in 2015, the greatest surge in fatal violence in a quarter-century, reports the Washington Post” (MacDonald, 2016, p. 1). Unfortunately, as the protests continued in the aftermath of police officers using deadly force on an African American subject, this increase of crime wave and/or rates also soared. The increased violence against law enforcement officers rose with it, as shown in the case studies.

**Lone Wolf Extremism**

Much of the current study’s discussion has centered on domestic extremist individuals and/or affiliated domestic extremists’ groups and their propensity for violence against U.S. law enforcement and violence in general. Pertinent case studies were also discussed on how these extremist groups violently protect their own image and/or turf and how deeply rooted these groups are in terms of overall hatred. The current section of
the discussion breaks away from the group mode and/or the extremist organizations perpetrating all of this violence. How about individuals and/or those loosely affiliated with these domestic extremist groups, perpetrators who cause violence against law enforcement and the concern of how to track down these individuals before such senseless violence occurs? Officers working in the field for a number of years will know the troublesome groups and their propensity for violence, their beliefs, and their general location. However, with individuals’ private beliefs, those who do not commit to any group, few people know what they believe in, what makes them tick, and what might make them erupt. A practitioner of law enforcement will not have any information, such as possible motives, and/or steps leading to any sort of violence, on an individual until the act of violence occurs. The situation is very troublesome. Since little research has been conducted on these individuals, including a lack of central definition(s) on these lone wolf offenders, and how that might apply to the current level of violence seen in America, the researcher’s main motive was to add some clarity and perspective on how dangerous and violent this particular group of people can be. A lone wolf terrorist is best defined as:

A lone actor (wolf) terrorist is defined by Horgan, Gill, Bouhana, Silver, and Corner as “an individual lacking any ties to a terrorist/violent extremist group … These individuals typically engage in violence in support of a group and/or ideology within the sample, including those inspired by Islamist, right-wing, leftwing, nationalist, and single-issue ideologies. (Corner & Gill, 2017, p. 1)

Another pertinent definition is:

Lone wolf terrorism involves terrorist attacks carried out by persons who (a)
operate individually, (b) do not belong to an organized terrorist group or network, and (c) whose modi operandi are conceived and directed by the individual without any direct outside command hierarchy. (Bjelopera, 2017, p. 53)

The reason why both definitions were mentioned was to add some clarity to the lone wolf persona and/or offender perspective, because many questions have been asked about who these people are. A significant takeaway from these definitions is that typically these violence attacks are carried out by a single individual who may have been influenced by another group and/or organization. According to Bjelopera (2017), “when it comes to violence attributed to White supremacist extremism (WSE), lone wolves play a prominent role” (p. 53). Furthermore, “lone wolves filter in and out of WSE groups and they can either get dismissed from these groups because of their ‘violent tendencies’ or voluntarily leave because they find the organizations too passive” (Bjelopera, 2017, p. 53).

An excellent example of how a lone wolf violent encounter occurred as a result of being dismissed from a larger extremist group, to make his or her name known is that of the unfortunate shooting death of Stephen T. Johns, 39, a Holocaust Museum security guard on June 10, 2009, at the hands of extremist James von Brunn. After the shooting, as von Brunn wrote to the leader of the large White supremacist group, Church of the Creator, looking for respect and acknowledgment of his extremist neo-Nazi views, the leader of the group ignored von Brunn’s political views and viewed von Brunn as too incorrect. “My trial was not mentioned in their publications or discussed at their meetings” (Keller, 2009). Unfortunately, this example shows just how extreme these individuals can be in terms of bringing attention to themselves and being too extreme (or
in this case too politically incorrect) for an extremist group’s views and/or ideology.

In terms of the current discussion, lone wolf, lone actor, and lone perpetrator will all be considered the same philosophy when elaborating this type of threat to U.S. law enforcement. Another prime example of this type of lone perpetrator threat as it relates to the domestic extremist and antigovernment-influenced ideology and threat is the senseless violence perpetrated by Gavin Long with his July 17, 2016, ambush on the Baton Rouge Police Department. As a response to the Alton Sterling death (suffered by the Baton Rouge Police Department on July 5, 2016), Long shot and killed two Baton Rouge police officers and one East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff’s Office deputy. Long ended up shooting six police officers in total, killing three of them, before ending his own life. Traveling from Dallas, TX, Long, a former Marine (discharged in 2010), spent the last few days of his life in protest over his perception of law enforcement as the oppressors after a recent wave of police shootings around the nation, most notably in Baton Rouge and in Falcon Heights, MN (Philando Castile).

What is so troublesome for members of law enforcement in the Long case study violence is the difficulty in tracking/mitigating individuals who spew hatred toward law enforcement. Even though Long posted his own video on YouTube a few days before his ambush of the Baton Rouge Police Department, it was not found until it was too late, long after the violence against the police officers. Investigators at the crime scene found a card on Long’s body stating that he was possibly a member of the Washitaw Nation (Berlinger, 2016), a sovereign citizen tribe per the Southern Poverty Law Center. Other reports have Long affiliated with a Black separatist group, but this has not been confirmed (Berlinger, 2016). In any event, per Long’s YouTube posting a few days
before the traffic Baton Rouge shootings, Long stated the following:

I just wanted to let y'all know, don't affiliate me with nothing, he says. He says he wanted people to know that his actions were his alone. He then goes on to list organizations that he says he has no affiliation with—including the Nation of Islam, Floyd Mayweather's The Money Team (he's wearing their hat), and terror groups like ISIS. (Berlinger, 2016)

Zierhoffer (2014) made a compelling argument regarding the tracking/investigating of a lone wolf, because they are loosely affiliated with a group (if at all). Lone wolves present a significant challenge in identifying before attacks. Zierhoffer (2014) in his research project titled, *Threat Assessment: Do Lone Terrorists Differ from Other Lone Offenders*, raised national intelligence community issues when it came to the lone wolf threat:

Research into terrorism is predominantly focused on organizations and the concepts of social psychology that explain the influence of groups on the recruit. Research on lone offender terrorism has been minimal, seemingly because terrorism is most often regarded as a collective activity. From the perspective of social psychology, it is relatively easy to understand how a disenfranchised individual can be drawn into a terrorist group. With a rise in individual attacks since 9/11, it may be important to research other forms of terrorism. (Zierhoffer, 2014, p. 48)

Zierhoffer (2014) based her threat assessment on 10 criteria, including mental illness and organization, then applied these criteria to the overall case study research project, which included the following lone wolves: Theodore Kaczynski (the
Unabomber), Eric Rudolph (the 1996 Olympic bomber), and Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad (Carlos Bledsoe). Furthermore, what makes these three more elusive to track is that they were already American citizens living ordinary lives before they engaged in criminal acts. Zierhoffer (2014) made a compelling point that these lone wolves are very difficult to detect in the first place, because they are not tied to an organization already under surveillance.

To mitigate these lone wolf attacks, Zierhoffer (2014) stressed the need for community involvement in reporting any suspicious activity/behavior to the appropriate law enforcement, which can be rather difficult, because many of these lone wolves are very introverted and are often disconnected from their communities. However, Zierhoffer (2014) stated the following regarding the mind-set of these lone terrorists:

Research suggests how lone terrorists tend to be intelligent individuals who look internally for the authority needed for taking action rather than relying on others, and most were unsuccessful in their social lives. In spite of the lack of deep connection, there were people in the lives of each of these terrorists who could report on changes in behavior and bring their concerns to authority, as happened in the case of Kaczynski. (p. 60)

The last opinion is true in preventing a lone wolf attack. However, it is very difficult regarding community involvement when the lone wolf attacker is introverted, as was the unfortunate Las Vegas mass shooting case involving perpetrator Stephen Paddock. With very little law enforcement involvement and no known international and domestic extremist group and/or inspired involvement, Stephen Paddock symbolizes the greatest fear in today’s volatile world, an unknown person killing massive innocent lives
for no apparent reason. On October 1, 2017, when Stephen Paddock took 59 innocent lives, including a police officer and wounded hundreds more on the Las Vegas strip, he made all of these “lone wolf” fears and/or persona characteristics come true at the evilest levels. How can law enforcement stop people like this?

One criminal profiler stated, “Paddock was a pathological gambler, psychopath, and a sociopath. He was predisposed from birth and childhood to harbor extreme internalized shame, low self-esteem, depression, and aggressive anger” (Harris, 2017). However, how, using the law enforcement community and academic research, can anyone mitigate this type of threat of mass violence to people they are dealing with perpetrators with these types of personalities and/or mental disorders? The Las Vegas incident is especially troublesome when someone like Paddock really never had any law enforcement dealings. He had no previous arrests, encounters with the police, official police investigations, or traffic tickets, just to name a few background bits of information that could shed some light on why Paddock did what he did and how to stop the next lone wolf attack. Perhaps America’s leaders should look into exploiting that gray area of undiagnosed (or even diagnosed) mental illness and gun control as it pertains to the lone wolf persona.

The next section will be used to investigate the question of how significant mental illness is in a terrorist’s world/mind-set. Is there a reason to be concerned about undiagnosed mental illness, especially regarding a lone wolf actor?

According to Corner and Gill (2017), when researching the mental illness diagnoses in terrorist activities/individuals/groups around the world, including the U.S., domestic terrorists (far-right) were diagnosed as being 40.4% lone wolves having a
mental diagnosis versus 7.6% (far-right groups having a mental diagnosis). The data indicated the need for more research and corrective ways to address the violent issues plaguing the modern nation, especially pertaining to lone wolf right-wing domestic terrorism.

The case study examples showed the greatest law enforcement/intelligence community challenge in trying to mitigate the domestic extremist threats against members of law enforcement. More research is needed on the lone wolf topic. It was very difficult to track and monitor these types of lone offenders, who may have adopted some ideology from a group, but ultimately plan to carry out their sinister plots on their own.

**Domestic Extremist Prevention Strategies**

**Research Question 3:** What are some practical solutions from a community policing/intelligence perspective?

Based on existing studies and research, what are some common themes in attempting to alleviate the senseless violence perpetrated against U.S. law enforcement members? What do law enforcement members perceive as the greatest threat?

Americans are now confronted with a growing threat from homegrown extremists, and solutions need to be generated to mitigate the threats. Mantel (2015) stressed that members of the American public and the federal government should pay more attention to far-right extremism and its potential for mass-casualty violence, instead of international inspired attackers (Mantel, 2015). This part of the literature review is used to offer some solutions from journals and other sources to mitigate the domestic threats. A government, community, and an intellectual approach was used during this portion of the literature review to gauge any intelligence gaps or if there is too much
research in a particular area.

To battle the threats in modern America, a multifaceted tactic must be taken by the intelligence and law enforcement communities, which should begin on two fronts at the top: the executive branch of the U.S. government and with the National Security Staff (NSS)–Homeland Security Council. Leaders of the two organizations can set the agenda on how to combat this serious issue and how to deploy valuable resources to fight back.

In August 2011, the executive branch created the Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States strategy in conjunction with the 2010 national security strategy, in a proactive effort to enhance partnerships and understanding of what tools and methods are most effective in the fight against homegrown extremism. (The White House, 2011) Specifically, the strategy looks to:

1. enhance federal engagements with and support to local communities that may be targeted by violent extremists;

2. build government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism; and

3. to counter violent extremist propaganda while promoting our ideals (The White House, 2011).

Moreover, the community awareness and policing association initiative is empowered as the main objective in getting communities involved with the issues at hand, enabling the individual to take ownership of and responsibility for being a part of positive change for communities. In concert with the 2011 Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violence Extremism in the United States initiative, the Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States
was presented to members of the public, most notably, to the law enforcement and intelligence communities members, later in December 2011, to provide guidance, and, according to White House representatives, “to describe the range of actions we are taking to improve or expand these efforts” (White House, 2011, p. 7). Specifically, the Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States builds upon the Empowering Local Partners theme and incorporates more of a community policing model, as well as government and police expertise in handling these threats.

Another crucial initiative created to act in concert with the White House’s Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States initiative is that of the Using Community Policing to Counter Violent Extremism: Five Key Principles for Law Enforcement developed by the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program through the U.S. Department of Justice. According to the members of the Department of Justice, the real principle to realize for U.S. law enforcement nationwide is to detect and solve problems, in addition to identifying the problem areas to mitigate these senseless violent extremist acts (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2014).

However, the research conducted by Schanzer et al. (2016), titled *The Challenge and Promise of Using Community Policing Strategies to Prevent Violent Extremism*, addressed a more totality of community resources and community approach, not just with law enforcement, in order to foster better relationships between law enforcement and the public in the mission to curb homegrown extremism violence. Taylor and Russell (2012) stated that regarding law enforcement members’ reliance on modern technology in
combating crime, human relationships/effective communication with the community at large is still the most important in preventing crimes.

To expand on the vital research of 382 national law enforcement agencies, and in concert with the 2011 White House initiative, Empowering Local Partnerships to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States, the main focus by Schanzer et al. (2016) was to gauge how the initiative was working. Schanzer et al. (2016) were interested in collecting data on the community and law enforcement pulse regarding if violent extremism really was in those jurisdictions and to decipher how these law enforcement agencies were or were not handling violent extremism. Schanzer et al. (2016) recommended that if any violent extremism can be mitigated in a particular community, a robust and fruitful relationship must exist between the police and the community they serve.

Although Schanzer et al. (2016) concentrated on combating international-inspired violence extremism across many U.S. jurisdictions, many of the challenges recognized by the researchers can (and should be) applied to the domestic violent extremism. Schanzer et al. (2016) presented the following law enforcement challenges in mitigating this violent extremism threat:

1. Muslim American communities are perceived as the ones that are being discriminated against, as they are given the extra burden from law enforcement in stopping internationally inspired terrorism (Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and other international influenced and/or sponsored terrorist organizations). Muslim Americans feel that other communities and/or cultures are not being pressured to do the same. The Muslim American community is pushing back, saying that other non-Muslim communities are not being pressured to stop antigovernment violence and/or racism or other domestic violent
extremism actions. Schanzer et al. (2016) found that leaders of many police agencies around the nation had presented sufficient efforts and programs to work with the Muslim community in preventing extremism, but not so much with other communities in mitigating domestic extremists.

2. “Some Muslim Americans believe that policing outreach and engagement initiatives may be linked to efforts to conduct surveillance on Muslim American individuals and/or organizations” (Schanzer et al., 2015, p. i). This is a very important challenge in restoring public and police cooperation and building a bridge of trust. Without trust and cooperation, it does not matter which community the law enforcement serves, no cooperation and/or peace will ensue. The challenge is very important to the domestic extremist arena, because many of these extremists are U.S.-born citizens and can easily blend into their respective societies. Hence, the community is vital in reporting any suspicious and/or potential criminal behavior, especially as it pertains to any possible violence against law enforcement.

3. Schanzer et al. (2016) portrayed a very positive relationship between the Muslim community and local law enforcement that serve their communities. However, this cannot be said about the relationship between federal law enforcement officials and leaders of the Muslim community, since Muslims pointed out issues with airport screening and with the ongoing national immigration agenda (especially with the 2017 travel ban in certain Muslim countries, part of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), 8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq., and section 301 of title 3, United States Code and subsequent amendment of said act due to the political backlash in certain Muslim communities around the world). What is positive about the research data was that local
law enforcement appears to have a healthy relationship with the Muslim community, which can lead to other positive crime-mitigating factors such as an increased number of tips and/or sources the Muslim American community can report. Members of the Muslim American community can work more hand-in-hand with their respective local police department officials and make a difference in combating violence crime. Since members of local law enforcement are the eyes and ears of their jurisdiction, the relationship between the Muslim American community and law enforcement is vital for mitigating violent extremism. However, the challenge rests with the local law enforcement agencies developing the same kind of relationships with other members of their respective communities to curb domestic extremism and other associated violent criminality.

4. Schanzer et al. (2016) found if law enforcement is effective in handling other non-terrorism and/or non-criminality issues in the Muslim American communities they serve, they are more prone to get more support and compliance with these communities. For example, recognizing various Muslim events and/or celebrations will go a long way to help law enforcement with this relationship, especially if the local police agency administers traffic control and/or security at a particular venue, for example, which would unfortunately be considered a dangerous precedent for law enforcement in terms of domestic extremist events, such as a White nationalist parade or an antigovernment protest. The domestic angle would be very difficult to coordinate and get members of a community to accept unless law enforcement is proactive in their security mind-set and can communicate with those community members and/or groups that might have an adverse effect on these racist groups’ protests and/or activities. Finally, law enforcement officials being prepared for these events and quelling potential acts of violence is very
much needed in that particular community.

5. The last vital challenge found by Schanzer et al. (2016) was that the lack of local law enforcement community policing resources and other pressing policing and/or community priorities have made it difficult for the police to maintain effective community outreach. The research has indicated that when police departments across the nation experienced budgetary issues, getting a well-trained officer (or even one at all) could be a real challenge, especially with many other pressing law enforcement and community needs, such as an increase in drug abuse (notably heroin), an increase in gang activity, and more firearms crimes. “We found that preventing violent extremism, while a pressing national issue, is not a top priority for local police that must address violent crime, drugs, gangs, and a host of other public safety concerns” (Schanzer et al., 2016, p. ii).

One of the major data points from Schanzer et al. (2016) was how administrators from individual law enforcement agency was tackling this violent-extremist issue. Specifically, Schanzer et al. (2016) asked the question of members of all law enforcement agencies (regardless of agency size), “Please indicate which strategies your agency uses to address violent extremism” (p. 13). One of the lowest responses to the question was the “Lack of outreach and engagement with the communities that may be targeted for recruitment to violent extremism” (Schanzer, 2016, p. 15), which raised the question of whether this is common for all jurisdictions across the nation. If so, then this is a major research gap and needs to be investigated in specific areas around the U.S. Such an answer indicated that members of these law enforcement agencies do not think there is an extremism issue in their own jurisdiction and do not use community policing techniques
and/or community outreach to address these concerns. Perhaps they do not have the personnel to create a dedicated community policing program to combat the extremism in their community.

According to Schanzer et al. (2016), antigovernment violent extremism was seen as the major violent extremist’s threat. Interestingly, each category of law enforcement agency (state agency, small, midsize, large, and all agencies) had antigovernment overwhelmingly selected as the main threat in each of their jurisdictions. Other domestic extremism threats, such as “racist violent extremism, environmental violent extremism and anti-capitalist violent extremist” scored high, but less than Al-Qaeda inspired violent extremism (Schanzer et al., 2016, p. 63). This research illustrates how many of the members of those law enforcement agencies considered the domestic extremist angle more threatening overall when compared to internationally inspired extremism. (Schanzer et al., 2016)

Another vital theme generated from Schanzer et al. (2016) was the overall lack of trust and relationship between the police, the government in general, and the community they served. Overall, the highest percentage of responses received from law enforcement in terms of barriers they have seen in employing a community policing strategy to mitigate violent extremism were (a) lack of trust in the police and government, (b) language barriers, and (c) cultural misunderstanding, indicating that the community policing framework is simply not working. Perhaps the agency does not have dedicated officer(s) to fulfill the community policing role due to budgetary and/or funding reasons (as stated in the study), it wasn’t a high priority for the agency, and there were not enough training opportunities for their members. The barriers were very telling in terms
of a lack of communication and harmony with the community and also showed a lack of dedication to the community policing model to mitigate the threat of violent extremism.

Another vital theme found during the study was how members of law enforcement agencies did not know the pulse of their own community when it comes to evaluating the effectiveness of its work with communities to counter violent extremism (Schanzer et al., 2015). According to the results, a majority “(62.3%) of all agency leaders do not evaluate this effectiveness, which shows that the agency leaders have other pressing needs and/or do not value such a relationship with the community when facing the violent extremism challenge.” (Schanzer et al., 2015, p.87)

With the counter violent extremist programs mentioned in this section of the literature review, a few challenges were also found. Vidino and Hughes (2015), in the research titled, *Countering Violent Extremism in America: Program on Extremism*, explained there was no agency clearly taking ownership of the overall program. “While Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and National Counter-Terrorism Center (NCTC) have done an admirable job coordinating Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) despite poorly scoped policy directive, the effort would benefit from clear leadership” (Vidino & Hughes, 2015, p. 18). The three-city pilot program and research project showed no clear direction on the overall national program’s objectives. While it seems that state and local levels of law enforcement/intelligence agencies have their priorities established for the program, the priorities are not evident at the national level or from a federal manager’s perspective on running countering violent extremist programs.

Addressing racism in America and attempting to mitigate domestic extremist
groups like White supremacists, fundamental changes need to be employed positively in the community and among failed criminal justice policies. In the study, *Image Isn’t Everything: Contemporary Systemic Racism and Antiracism in the Age of Obama*, Ostertag and Armaline (2011), shared the opinion that as “public intellectuals we all must tackle this race issue as a community at large.” (p. 284) Finally, building on the community togetherness/involvement angle, Lyons and Roberts (2014) stated that the public would be more forthcoming with crime tips and overall assistance knowing that the authorities would take them, and the crime being reported seriously. Lyons and Roberts (2014) made their assessment as part of their overall research on the need for more reporting, defining, and investigation of bias crimes.

Additionally, Lyons and Roberts (2014) pointed out the failed government implementation of the war on drugs back in the 1980s and the mass incarceration policies that resulted in the failure, which formed a racial divide, resulting in the current race wars. One example, according to Lyons and Roberts (2014), was that “White unemployment, economic destabilization rates continue to rise and immigration rise.” (p.270) Furthermore, according to Ostertag and Armaline (2011):

White supremacist organizations and ideology continue to poison and drive debates over everything from immigration reform to domestic economic policy. We might learn from the Southern Poverty Law Center and take such threats more seriously by adopting a markedly less liberal (“just ignore them, and they’ll go away”) and more active approach to boldly confronting White supremacy in our communities and their legitimacy in policy debates. (p. 284)

In furtherance of the vital relationship between the community and the police
theme being discussed, mitigating the far-right domestic extremism/hate group threats starts right at the center of the community. Adamczyk, Gruenewald, Chermak, and Freilich (2014) researched a vast number of U.S. counties from the 1990–2000 and 2001–2012 periods. Not surprisingly, Adamczyk et al. (2014) found the areas of the country in which the far-right hate groups were rampant in their views also had a higher number of ideologically motivated homicides.

The results are striking for many reasons. First, law enforcement can use the data to effectively mitigate the threats by building a better rapport with the members of the hate groups (understanding of amendment issues but violent crimes will not be accepted nor tolerated). Furthermore, more understanding and awareness, but yet law-abiding, could be raised by both sides (hate groups and police) and better communications can be made to alleviate a considerable proportion of violent acts. Adamczyk et al. (2014) made it known that if members of the communities and counties do not make any significant changes the relationship between the groups and with the community members (police and private citizens), violent acts will unfortunately continue. During their research, Adamczyk et al. (2014) made an interesting assessment of how economics and poverty levels did not play a major role in their study when it came to the variable causing the far-right groups to commit more violence. However, more community involvement between the far-right groups, the police, and community leaders is necessary and needs to be dealt with proactively, or this violence will continue.

This portion of the literature review has involved more of a community and law enforcement themed approach in mitigating the domestic extremist threat. From a law enforcement perspective on dealing with these domestic threats, the Study of Terrorism
and Responses to Terrorism (START), Carter et al. (2014) completed an in-depth survey with more than 364 officers representing 175 state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies around the nation. Carter et al. (2014) examined the perceptions of their respective organizational dynamics and/or terrorism threat readiness. Moreover, Carter et al. (2014) focused on the threat of terrorism, the nature of information sharing, and whether agencies were prepared to deal with terrorist attacks. As part of the study, Carter et al. (2014) provided a snapshot of law enforcement members’ opinions of dealing with these domestic extremist threats.

One vital trait for law enforcement and its personnel to be successful in meeting the goals in mitigating domestic extremist threats was that the agency must be prepared. Carter et al. (2014) stated being prepared means having adequate and trained personnel, acceptable resources of equipment and funding, sufficient training, and also possessing what Carter et al. (2014) said was excellence in working with other agencies.

Building on the preparedness theme, Carter et al. (2014) found a large amount of responses from their survey stating that one of the most crucial elements of preparedness was having the respective agency consider the importance of training in day-to-day preparedness and understanding the many threats presented to law enforcement. Similarly, Carter et al. (2014) found that most of the responses from law enforcement members showed they felt that if their respective agency leaders would release needed assessment reports and analytical documents pertaining to the threats, it would help the overall preparedness for mitigating domestic threats. Having key relationships with other government levels of law enforcement scored a huge response in the survey. Awareness of an agency’s key resources and personnel, and utilization of this component, would also
help each individual agency’s preparation for domestic extremism.

Fisher, Oddsson, and Wada (2013) asked if class and/or racial factors impacted police force size, which raised the question if their question also aligned with domestic extremist issues and/or challenges. Are these social and policing factors important in securing modern communities and producing better community/policing relationships? Fisher et al. (2013) found city leaders were more apt to increase policing tactics in those areas of the city where poverty and economic inequality exist at the same time. Also, hiring a diverse police force was very significant, even if not being done as it should around the nation. Based on Fisher et al. (2013) view, the police force’s makeup should mirror the community it serves.

Another theme was the continuously expanding job description for a modern police officer, which included an awareness of what a police officer must politically and professionally endure on a daily basis, what characteristics or traits an officer on patrol should be able to readily recognize, and whether the individual’s actions may be indicative of a domestic extremist threat. Gruenewald, Kiefer, Suttmoeller, Chermak, and Freilich (2016) attempted to answer the questions by studying the violence in police officers’ case studies.

Routine traffic stops were unfortunately the case of most of the law enforcement homicides committed by these far-right domestic extremists. Gruenewald et al. (2016) pointed out, “Many deadly far-right attacks on police are often triggered by seemingly routine traffic stops that quickly escalate into deadly violence” (p. 233). As such, since the state, local and tribal police perform many of these traffic stops, advanced awareness and training is needed for the officers who risk their lives on a daily basis doing routine
traffic stops. Since many of these deadly traffic stops came at the hands of sovereign citizens, by recognizing their symbols, such as “Don’t tread on me” bumper stickers, fictitious license plates, not rolling down their windows, and other identifiers could save police officer lives if the officer is properly trained.

Another significant finding by Gruenewald et al. (2016) was the assessment that most law enforcement homicides by domestic extremists were directly related to recent racial incidents of deadly force on a subject elsewhere in the nation. Notable was the uproar of the Black Lives Matter movement. As a result, lone actors retaliate against the police in a violent way. Gruenewald et al. (2016) pointed out; little can be done to mitigate these ambushes.

Finally, Gruenewald et al. (2016) shared their opinions in regard to other criteria in which law enforcement members have been killed by far-right extremists. The most prevalent criteria were: (a) defending family, (b) defending property, (c) avoiding arrest, and (d) mission offense. The mission offense category was what the study authors deemed one of the most undetectable in terms of identifying the suspect, since many times far-right suspects are not part of any organization/group but are lone wolves, sometimes described as a “ticking time bomb,” ready to carry out violence (Gruenewald et al., 2016).

Much of this portion of the literature review was used to discuss how U.S. law enforcement leaders have shifted priorities and changed since 9/11, especially in dealings with U.S. domestic extremists; there are other deeply rooted police practices. In *American Policing at a Crossroads: Unsustainable Policies and the Procedural Justice Alternative*, Schulhofer, Tyler, and Hug (2011) looked at the procedural justice model
Schulhofer et al. (2011) reported that Whites and minorities wanted the same thing from the police: fair treatment and respect. Schulhofer et al. (2011) made recommendations on how policing could have a heavy influence on the community being served and overall public perception. The perception should give law enforcement administrators the pulse needed to change/modify existing law enforcement functions, operations, or programs and possibly to devote resources to a particular need in the community (Schulhofer et al., 2011). Schulhofer et al. (2011) stated that forming policing methods toward the public perception of needs would make for a more lawful society and especially alleviate conflict between the police and the public.

What exactly is the pulse of America as it relates to the view of the police and the job the police are performing around America? According to Ekins (2016), 68% of White Americans have a favorable view of the police, while only 40% of African Americans and 59% of Hispanics have a favorable view. Furthermore, when broken down by political party, Republicans had an 81% favorable view, Independents had a 59% view, while Democrats had a 59% view (Ekins, 2016). Ekins (2016) stated that two major categories surround the political parties’ views: confident gaps matter and “no cop” or “anti-cop.”

The confident gaps matter category stemmed from how the public perceived how the law enforcement agency did its overall job. Ekins (2016) indicated the higher the rate, the less conflict between the police and their citizens.

Ekins (2016) pointed out that no one group was considered “anti-cop,” but that the public perception and confident gap meter was very important to the overall
relationship between the community and the police:

The right people are out there now, and they are ready to move. The choice is clear—we have to change the game to defeat violent extremists. For the sake of our future, and that of our children, I pray we make the right choice now. (Mann, 2015, p.280)

Chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation will be used to focus on possible solutions from a community perspective and how to mitigate the domestic extremist threats toward law enforcement members. Furthermore, chapters 4 and 5 will attempt to offer solutions to this critical issue facing U.S. law enforcement members by first researching a significant sample size of various government levels of law enforcement agencies (federal, state, and local) around the Hampton Roads, VA (Norfolk), area and determine if these agencies even have programs for combating domestic extremism threats or some sort of a community-based policing model (i.e., the Community Oriented Policing Services–COPS through the U.S. Department of Justice or some sort of a bottom-up method for getting community leaders together). Themes or key words were collected through interviews with various law enforcement personnel about their agency’s programs, utilizing vital concepts from programs from Mann’s (2015) Game Changers: Going Local to Defeat Violent Extremists:

We need people to unify around a game-changing methodology that works. This is sorely needed in today’s rapidly changing and dangerous world. These true believers are the junior to mid-level leaders of today. They may not be in charge yet, but they will be soon. It may take five to ten years for these future senior leaders to move to positions of influence, but they will get there. And when they
do, this book and the network behind it will be there for them (Mann, 2015, p. 279).

What is the significance of Mann’s book and his perspectives? How does a retired U.S. Army Green Beret officer offer solutions to the problem of U.S. domestic extremist issues plaguing society? How do these perspectives, which were originally geared more toward repairing and stabilizing Afghan villages during the global war on terrorism influence the nation’s policing efforts and relationships with the communities they serve? What Mann offers from his dedicated service to our country through the U.S. Army are approaches that offer stability in war-torn, savaged areas such as Afghanistan, and, applied properly, can lead to positive results between the police and the citizens they serve. (Mann, 2015) Mann teaches these concepts in other areas of the world and, most importantly, in the U.S. to law enforcement as a way to curb the extremist challenge. As Mann stated in his book, he “proposes a local, or as it if often called, bottom-up stabilization approach, which is a paradigm shift from how we (the U.S. government) operate today” (Mann, 2015, p. xix).

The discussion will be used to center on how law enforcement leaders and members of the intelligence community should employ, adapt, and apply the vital tools that have been utilized effectively around the globe, especially during the Afghanistan village stabilization operations (VSO) post 9/11, which will help defeat the extremism threat, and, more significantly, improve law enforcement relations with the communities they serve to address the root of the problem.

According to Mann (2015), “Any time you can remove a key enemy leader from the equation, that’s a good thing.” However, Mann (2015) added “Air strikes and drone
strikes will never defeat this problem, no matter how senior the leaders are whom we kill” (p. 26). Mann (2015) often describes this method of killing targeted leaders as only “Band-Aids to the real problem.” Furthermore, Mann’s theory and vision extend to the mistaken theory of how the best way to combat these extremists; vast resources, personnel, and ability to recruit, is for foreign powers, such as the United States to flex their muscles and dictate their authority and power over these fragile Third World nations (Mann, 2015). The mistake in this belief was that the strong power’s government, vast money and resources, and top-down government approach will stimulate the invaded country’s economy and will allow for a buy-in and overall trust of the U.S. government in these war-torn areas.

According to Mann (2015), this is the exact opposite of what happened in Afghanistan and other areas of the world. Mann wrote, “The real center of gravity in this epic fight is local clan populations and the tribal societies, which provide men, resources, money and ideas. Our enemy gets this and does it every day. Look at how ISIS exploits marginalized Sunni clans in Iraq to fight against the largely Shia-dominated and U.S.-supported Iraqi government” (Mann, 2015, p.26). In other words, leaders as a government work with the locals (tribes, clans, other societal groups), no matter if it’s in Afghanistan, Colombia, or somewhere else. Extreme measures like drones being employed overseas is a prime example of how a community buy-in will not be effective unless America utilizes a bottom-up community approach. The same concepts and/or themes are applicable to the nation’s domestic extremist mitigation strategies in getting the necessary buy-in within communities.

In the current volatile world, ISIS and other extremist groups know that the U.S.
will not deploy resources or personnel until at the very last moment—or not at all—based on lack of resources, so these extremist groups take advantage of their geographical locations and clan affiliations. These extremist groups take advantage of the U.S. government’s misadventures with operations such as counterinsurgency actions and failed rebuilding efforts with critical infrastructure that leave the area worse off than before. Mann (2015) stated, “This is a leadership issue. The days of American isolationism have long passed. Violent extremists will exploit the actions we don’t take more than the actions we do take. It won’t be easy. There must be a patient will to win that transcends policy and politics. Our leaders must embrace policies that stretch beyond political terms of office by putting our country – not politics – first” (p. 26).

“Understanding the gap between status and contract society is the first step of understanding local realities of Afghanistan – and other countries where violence extremists operate. Since the terror attacks of 9-11-2001, we have struggled to do this” (Mann, 2015, p. 26). This is the main thesis behind Mann’s (2015) argument in his book *Game Changers*. Utilizing Mann’s model, the contract society is the formal government in a particular society/state, and the status is illustrated by the marginalized villages and communities in that particular society. The model is used to make a strong argument that shows how as a society leaders are failing their own people in their own country with an incorrect mind-set, thus leading to discontent between the government and its people. According to Mann (2015), especially since 9/11, the gap between the government and its people is continuously getting wider and wider, which is demonstrated by the unfortunate volatile nature existing between the police and the citizens they serve.

“Relationships are critical to maintaining balance between clans and preventing
honor-based feuds from getting out of hand” (Mann, 2015, p. 33). *Relationship building* is the main impetus behind stabilizing villages and communities. Mann discusses four huge game-changer items that must be executed accurately to see positive societal results:

1. “Get surrounded and conduct bottom-up VSO” (Mann, 2015, p. 217). The main point behind this game changer is to essentially live with the community you are attempting to stabilize and reestablish a real trust factor. In fact, the U.S. Army Green Berets did this several times, along with other military service members, in an attempt to stabilize the Afghan nation. Encompassing this vital approach and showing a particular community that their identity and overall self-worth is respectful and admirable will go a long way in bridging that gap between the contract society (centralized government) and the status society (villages and communities). A successful approach will garner respect between the two entities and squash any threat of extremism. A prime example of bridging the gap, in the U.S. law enforcement world with respect to the community they are servicing is that of the eruption of violence after the 2014 Michael Brown, Ferguson, Missouri, incident. One of the major reasons why the chaos ensued after this shooting was the distrust among the Ferguson police and the citizens of the city of Ferguson. As Mann (2015) stressed, trust is vital in establishing harmonious relationships with the community at large.

   “Living among the people is a team effort. It is not just for the advisors at the tip of the spear. It involves politicians, senior headquarters leaders, and others all the way down to the local community leaders. We should employ all available resources and relationships to gain swift entry into communities. If not, intimidation takes over and YouTube beheadings take center stage” (Mann, 2015, p. 132). This is where U.S.
societies are failing to get community leaders involved with social issues such as policing, crime, and overall security concerns that need a total societal approach.

2. “Meet them where they are.” (Mann, 2015, p. 218). The researcher of the current study was deployed from 17 May through 16 July 2010 with the U.S. Coast Guard during the Deepwater Horizon incident in the Gulf of Mexico, where he used the VSO approach effectively. Mann (2015) felt awful for the victim’s families of the explosion and the people living in the gulf area who had to endure yet another tragedy. It was just five years earlier that Hurricane Katrina hit the same area. Being from the north and never having visited Louisiana, the researcher depended on the locals to assist him in providing/allocating the resources needed in order to prevent oil from reaching the delicate land/shore. He learned a great deal about their local customs, their culture, and especially their passion for the marine life in their area. The researcher said he was not going anywhere until he felt their area was safe from the oil. He worked 16 hour days to accomplish this and made himself always available to parish presidents, civic leaders, and concerned citizens. It took a while to gain their trust, but he did, to the point where a few parish presidents told him that they didn’t want him to leave the area, and one sheriff offered him a full-time job. (He already had one and was currently on active duty.) The researcher’s initiative and drive during this tragedy was to make things right, utilizing local resources and strong accountability.

3. “Connect through extreme collaboration” (Mann, 2015, p. 218). A robust community buy-in plan is needed for a community to be successful in mitigating extremist threats. Everyone must work together, which includes youth service organizations, county housing and health officials, local and state elected officials (to
include leaders, mayors, budget administrators, etc.), criminal justice and law enforcement officials, educational leaders, business leaders, representatives of the faith community, and private funding organizations. Incorporating all these entities in a community plan will get a better representation of the community’s population sample, with better input on how to address the various threats. Most importantly, community mitigating solutions can be addressed from the bottom up instead of top down. Establishing fruitful and meaningful relationships/partnerships will go a long way in protecting the good of the community.

4. “Tell a story that sticks” (Mann, 2015, p. 218) is a key concept very similar to the previous concept in which generating a key community action plan, connecting all of the community’s pertinent resources (agencies) and establishing sound relationships is key to the community’s overall success in preventing extremism. Providing a narrative in terms of a sound counter-extremism community action plan and then backing it up with the operational portion of the plan with the necessary key resources/relationships is needed for a successful extremism mitigation program/safeguards from violence extremism.

U.S. Community Policing Plan

“The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2011, left a lasting impression on national homeland security policies and law enforcement strategies at federal, state, and local levels. A recent report indicates that there are now 1,271 government organizations and 1,931 private organizations involved in homeland security, intelligence-gathering, and counterterrorism issues. The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) alone has contributed more than $340 billion between 2004 and 2009 toward the development of new agencies centered on the goal of
improving the coordination of policing agencies through intelligence sharing. If we learned anything from 9/11 it was that proper coordination of police and security agencies as well as the sharing of intelligence information in this country was almost non-existent prior to the attacks” (Taylor & Russell, 2011, p. 184).

Besides the unfortunate bloodshed of all of these traumatic events, what is the common ingredient of all of these violent shootings: (a) 2015 San Bernardino shooting; (b) 2015 Chattanooga, TN, military shooting; (c) 2015 Colorado Planned Parenthood shooting; (d) 2015 Charleston church shooting; (e) 2014 Las Vegas Police ambush; (f) 2013 Boston Marathon bombing; (g) 2012 Sikh Temple shooting; (h) 2012 St. John’s Parish police ambush; (i) 2009 Fort Hood shooting? What can the government do to curb these senseless violent acts in the future? This discussion includes the vital White House initiative Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States, developed in August 2011, to act as a force multiplier for all government levels of law enforcement and intelligence agencies in order to attempt to curb the challenge of homegrown extremism. Also, this discussion will utilize the community policing model through the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) to address/offer solutions to the homegrown extremism issue, instead of the easy solution to creating another military branch made up of cops and police administrators, which would spend countless amounts of money on military equipment and operate on a military operations plan.

**The Challenge**

“Now, at this pivotal moment, we continue to face serious challenges to our national security, even as we are working to shape the opportunities of tomorrow. Violent extremism and an evolving terrorist threat raise a persistent risk of attacks on America
and our allies” (White House, 2015, p. 2). “We have emphasized community-based efforts and local law enforcement programs to counter homegrown violent extremism and protect vulnerable individuals from extremist ideologies that could lead them to join conflicts overseas or carry out attacks here at home” (White House, 2015, p. 2). These statements from the 2015 National Security Strategy reiterated the gravity of the homegrown extremism challenge America faces and attempts to deal with.

Over time, the greatest threat to the U.S. homeland came to be posed not so much by groups operating overseas (although a number of plots conceived by al Qaeda and its affiliates have been thwarted over the last decade), but from “self-radicalized, homegrown extremists in the United States (Vidino & Hughes, 2015, p. 2).

In 2010, then-Attorney General Eric Holder indicated that the terrorist threat had: ... changed from simply worrying about foreigners coming here, to worrying about people in the United States, American citizens—raised here, born here, and who for whatever reason, have decided that they are going to become radicalized and take up arms against the nation in which they were born (Vidino & Hughes, 2015, pp. 12–13).

Between 2001 and 2013, more than 200 U.S. citizens and permanent residents were convicted of terrorism-related activities. This figure clearly indicates that a small but significant number of American citizens and residents embrace Jihadist ideology and are committed to using violence, at times against fellow Americans, to this end (Vidino & Hughes, 2015, p. 13).

This is another example in which a diverse and robust community policing and/or
intelligence mitigation plan is needed to address these potential violent acts, since not only is the domestic extremist a viable threat, but Jihadist ideology has been a major threat since 2001.

According to the New America Foundation’s International Security Project (2015), which houses a database to track homegrown extremism since 2001, the increase in numbers of homegrown extremists is staggering. According to the New America Foundation International Security Project (2016) website:

The purpose of this database is to provide as much information as possible about American citizens and permanent residents engaged in violent extremist activity as well as individuals, regardless of their citizenship status, living within the United States who have engaged in violent extremist activity. We examine both those individuals motivated by Jihadist ideology, understood as those who worked with or were inspired by al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups, as well as those motivated by other ideologies that are non-Jihadist in character, for example right wing, left wing, or idiosyncratic beliefs. Here I provide some of the core findings including the number of extremists indicted or killed by year, the overall number of extremists indicted or killed since 2001, and the number of people killed by extremists since 2001. This data was last updated in August, 2015. (New America Foundation Group, 2016)

To break down New America’s database/statistics as of 2015: “499 of total extremists, 317 individuals charged with jihadist terrorism, 182 nonjihadists, 45 victims killed by jihadists and 48 victims killed by right wing extremists” (New America Foundation Group, 2016, part I, p.1). Figure 7 shows the data variables.
To reiterate the significance of the discussion on curbing homegrown extremists, homegrown extremism is examined at both an international influence (San Bernardino shooting) and a domestic influence (right-wing or antigovernment) (Charleston, SC; Las Vegas ambush). A strong argument can be made that the tougher issue in fighting homegrown extremism is that of domestic homegrown extremism. “Some terrorism experts say the American public and the federal government should be paying more attention to far-right extremism and its potential for mass-casualty violence” (Mantel, 2015, p. 771). A major example of the thought of far-right extremist mass-casualty violence is the Black Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC, massacre in June 2015, in which White supremacist Dylan Roof shot and killed nine African American church worshipers in a mass shooting. What does the law enforcement community feel about the increased violence from these far-right groups?

While experts say most adherents of extremist movements are not violent, a
recent survey found that police agencies are more concerned about violence by antigovernment extremists than by Islamic extremists. The threat of violence has spurred debate about the strength of the government’s efforts to fight extremism and whether it should try to prevent far-right radicalization of young people. (Mantel, 2015, p. 771)

**The Remedy**

To combat these threats in America, a multilateral approach must be taken by the intelligence community, and it starts on two fronts at the top: the executive branch of the U.S. government and with the National Security Staff (NSS)—the Homeland Security Council. Leaders of the two organizations set the agenda on how to combat this serious issue and how to deploy valuable resources to fight it. The executive branch in August 2011, created an Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States strategy in conjunction with the 2010 National Security strategy in a proactive effort to enhance partnerships and understanding of what tools and methods are most effective in the fight against homegrown extremism. Specifically, the strategy is used to examine: “1) enhance federal engagements with and support to local communities that may be targeted by violent extremist; 2) build government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism; and 3) to counter violent extremist propaganda while promoting our ideals” (White House, 2011, p.2).

This section of the discussion will give a breakdown of why this initiative is America’s best chance to curb extremism violence and to do so while upholding the Constitution and protecting the public’s freedom and liberty. The model is a community awareness/policing initiative with the main objective of getting communities involved
with the issues at hand, which is a win-win situation for both the public and the law enforcement/intelligence community, as it gives everyone an opportunity to contribute.

In concert with the 2011 Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violence Extremism in the United States initiative, the Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States rolled out a few months later in December 2011 to provide guidance, and, according to White House representatives, “to describe the range of actions we are taking to improve or expand these efforts” (White House, 2011, p. 7). Specifically, the Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States has three major objectives, which are discussed to stress the significance of each: “1) Enhancing federal engagement with and support to local communities that may be targeted by violent extremists; 2) Building government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism; and 3) Countering violent extremists propaganda while promoting our ideals” (White House, 2011, pp. 7–18).

“Enhancing federal engagement with and support to local communities that may be targeted by violent extremists” (p.9) is arguably the most crucial objective in the Strategic Implementation Plan to prevent violent extremism. The objective involves communication and important interactions with the public and the need to develop those vital local government/community partnerships. According to White House staff:

Just as we engage and raise awareness to prevent gang violence, sexual offenses, school shootings, and other acts of violence, so too must we ensure that our communities are empowered to recognize threats of violent extremism and understand the range of government and nongovernment resources that can help
keep their families, friends and neighbors safe (White House, 2011, p. 9).

As noted in the National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners, engagement is essential for supporting community-based efforts to prevent violent extremism, because it allows government and communities to share information, concerns, and potential solutions. Our aims in engaging with communities to discuss violent extremism are to: (1) share sound, meaningful, and timely information about the threat of violent extremism with a wide range of community groups and organizations, particularly those involved in public safety issues; (2) respond to community concerns about government policies and actions; and (3) better understand how we can effectively support community-based solutions. (White House, 2011, p. 7)

The key concept in all of this is effective engagement with the community and highlighting the community policing approach.

The next relevant challenge, then, is how and who drives this initiative at the federal level. According to White House representatives:

A National Task Force led by Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS), was established in November 2010 to help coordinate community engagement at the national level. It includes all departments and agencies involved in relevant community engagement efforts and focuses on compiling local, national, and international best practices and disseminating these out to the field. (White House, 2011, p. 8)

The following are some examples of engagement efforts that are, or will be, coordinated with the Task Force (White House, 2011, p. 9):
• The DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) this year doubled its outreach to communities and expanded its quarterly engagement roundtables to 14 cities throughout the country. During Fiscal Year 2011, CRCL also conducted 72 community engagement events, some of which included CVE-related topics.

• State engaged on U.S. foreign policy with a range of interested domestic communities. The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs alone conducted 80 outreach events over the past year.

• DOJ has produced a number of brochures and other materials on civil rights protections and steps individuals can take to prevent or respond to discrimination, and has disseminated these to various communities, including those being targeted by violent extremists. DOJ has translated these materials into a number of languages, including Arabic, Somali, Urdu, Farsi, and Hindi.

• DOJ, in coordination with DHS, expanded the Building Communities of Trust (BCOT) Initiative, which focuses on developing relationships among local law enforcement departments, fusion centers, and the communities they serve to educate communities on: (1) the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative (NSI); (2) how civil rights and liberties are protected; and (3) how to report incidents in order to help keep our communities safe. DOJ continues to support the BCOT Initiative.

“Building government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism” is the critical objective of the Strategic Implementation Plan in determining exactly what homegrown extremism is and what it is not. As the White House initiative
states, “improve our understanding of violent extremism through increased research, analysis, and partnerships with foreign governments, academia, and nongovernmental organization” (White House, 2011, p. 12). Communication among all levels of law enforcement government is critical with this objective. The passing of significant information on possible extremist individuals with shared partners and getting partners trained on these issues is a monumental challenge in itself, but achieving this objective will act as a major force multiplier by acquiring the necessary intelligence to prevent another major attack.

The third objective of the Strategic Implementation plan is “Countering violent extremist propaganda while promoting our ideals.” According to the White House initiative:

As the National Counterterrorism Strategy emphasizes, [t]he United States was founded upon a belief in a core set of values that is written into our founding documents and woven into the very fabric of our society. Where terrorists offer injustice, disorder, and destruction, the United States must stand for freedom, fairness, equality, dignity, hope, and opportunity. The power and appeal of our values enables the United States to build a broad coalition to act collectively against the common threat posed by terrorists, further delegitimizing, isolating, and weakening our adversaries. (White House, 2011, p. 18)

This major objective encompasses effective relationships among law enforcement partners and the communities they serve. Without this key relationship, this initiative will not work, and, even worse, violence could ensue. The relationship between law enforcement and the community leaders in the areas they service cannot be emphasized
enough. This initiative requires everyone agreeing to address community/national concerns. To underscore this last statement, the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) in 2010 developed a Community Awareness Briefing (CAB) to inform members of the public about efforts by al-Qaida and its adherents and affiliates to recruit Americans. The CAB highlights recruiting videos and examples of violent extremist propaganda, while underscoring the fact that these materials are often easily available on the Internet. Most importantly, the CAB aims to facilitate a discussion about what government and communities can do, together and independently, to counter the threat of violent extremist narratives. The NCTC continues to deliver the presentation at forums composed of community leaders, educators, and parents in cities across the United States. In March 2011, NCTC held a workshop for local, state, and field-based federal officials on how the CAB could be used in engagement efforts when it makes sense and is appropriate. The researcher experienced firsthand this CAB training back in 2015, and how to get the community engaged with this pertinent awareness.

Using Community Policing to Counter Violent Extremism

Another crucial initiative created to act in concert with the White House’s Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States initiative is that of the *Using Community Policing to Counter Violent Extremism, 5 Key Principles for Law Enforcement* developed by the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program through the U.S. Department of Justice. The goal of this project is to “increase the capacity of law enforcement nationwide to develop problem solving strategies to identify, prevent, and eliminate terrorist ideologies and behaviors.” (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2014, p.9) This initiative is community policing based,
thus effective relationship building, communications, and working harmoniously with community leaders is required. Additionally, building strong community bonds will turn into intelligence/information gathering on both sides, leading not only to extremism prevention but perhaps drugs, gangs, and other violence associated with criminality.

Utilizing the COPS initiative centers on five key principles:

**Key Principle 1: Foster and Enhance Trusting Partnerships with the Community.** “Trusting partnerships are the cornerstone of community policing. When based on trust, transparency, respect, and mutual understanding, partnerships can foster the common purpose of keeping communities safe from all types of violent extremism.” (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2014, p.9). Taylor and Russell (2012) stated regarding law enforcement’s reliance on modern technology in combating crime, “However, modern technology and sophisticated analysis programs cannot replace the need to foster and maintain human relationships with members of the public at large” (Taylor & Russell, 2012, p. 86).

**Key Principle 2: Engage All Residents to Address Public Safety Matters.** Engaging individuals on a broad array of public safety and quality-of-life issues allows individuals and groups to address their concerns. Various subsets of the community may have different priorities. Providing each group with a forum to address their specific grievances, which may also be underlying causes of radicalization to violence, can help community members feel more involved. Engaging residents can be a valuable force multiplier for law enforcement. (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2014, p.12)
Key Principle 3: Leverage Public and Private Stakeholders. Leveraging the strengths of public and private stakeholders allows law enforcement to utilize resources from the entire community, share valuable information across the entire spectrum of services, and increase public recognition and visibility of countering violent extremism initiatives. The stakeholders can also serve as liaisons between law enforcement and their communities. (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2014, p.15)

Key Principle 4: Utilize All Partnerships to Counter Violent Extremism. Serving in a supporting role as educators, facilitators, and representatives of local government, law enforcement agencies can empower all of their partners—community members, public stakeholders, and private companies—to create counter-narratives, build resilience, and counter violent extremism. (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2014, p.18)

Key Principle 5: Train All Members of the Department. Training that complements the fundamental principles and tactics of community policing is necessary to facilitate the successful implementation of community policing training should be up to date and unbiased, stress the differences between countering violent extremism and counterterrorism, and be mandatory for all members of the department. (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2014, p.21)

Closing

“Social control must deal not merely with the maintenance of order, but with the quality of the order that a given system is capable of sustaining and the procedures appropriate to the achievement of such order” (Skolnick, 2011, p. 207). “Thus, a given set of social and legal conditions may lead to order in a stabled democracy but not in a
stable totalitarian society” (Skolnick, 2011, p. 207). The statements by Professor Jerome Skolnick stressed the real need for the community policing model as set forth by the federal government and re-created by the COPS program to avoid exacerbating the poor relationships in certain areas of the country between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Additionally, “The factors that shape whether an organization is viewed as legitimate and trusted are simultaneously easy to understand and difficult to precisely define, and they have been a focus of study for many years” (Jackson, 2015, p. 3).

When there is a match between the values or ideas associated with the actions that an organization takes and the norms of acceptable behavior in the society around it, the organization is viewed as legitimate. When that organization is also viewed by an individual as fair, honest, reliable, competent, responsive, and – particularly relevant to police – acting with the right intentions, the organization is trusted. (Jackson, 2015, p. 3)

Why is it necessary to discuss the legitimacy and trusted terms and the statement by Skolnick on social control in a stable democracy? All of these vital concepts are needed in the modern fight against homegrown extremism and to create a community concept where the practices being employed by law enforcement are legitimate, because acts are within the social means/appropriateness, and they are therefore trusted by the community. Without any of the effective communication and organizational concepts, the community will not buy in, and these key initiatives will go to waste, possibly leading to battles with law enforcement. Most significantly, curbing the homegrown threat will fail, because the timely exchange of criminal information will not happen amicably.
Summary

This literature review from a three-pronged attack discussed a variety of sources and studies in which U.S. law enforcement has faced increased threats and violence from U.S. domestic extremists these last 10 years. Furthermore, the literature review addressed three main questions: (a) Is there any data to indicate an increase of law enforcement violence at the hands of these domestic extremists? (b) Who exactly are these domestic extremists and what are their ideologies, identifiers, and methods of operation? and (c) Why they are prone to this violence and what are some current domestic mitigating strategies in place to attack this problem?

All the data and multiple case studies indicated this type of domestic threat is not going away. It has increased similar to international extremism threats as well. Knowledge of these domestic extremist groups has come a long way according to some researchers, especially implementing the Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) as a way to track extremist-led homicides in America. With the ECDB in place, many sources of up-to-date data on violence against U.S. law enforcement will serve future researchers well.

Synthesis

Many intelligence gaps were uncovered by the researcher. For starters, how do we know, as more domestic extremist information is gathered, that every law enforcement agency knows about these individuals and/or groups? Based on the data, it can be assumed that these individuals are from some domestic extremist group or organization. Additionally, how do leaders know that they are capturing information about threats to law enforcement, especially during a volatile time period concerning the health and safety of law enforcement members. Unfortunately, a police shooting could be
categorized by one police agency as just a “police shooting” without investigating the
individual’s background and/or organization affiliations.

In addition to relevant studies in the field (ECDB), the researcher also studied
activist groups data (i.e., Southern Poverty Law Center, Anti-Defamation League, among
others that collect “hate data”), nonprofit organization data (i.e., National Law
Enforcement Memorial Fund and other groups), think tank groups (i.e., New America
Foundation, RAND, and others), and government data (i.e., Bureau of Justice Assistance,
among others) to carefully extract the data for the current study, and, if possible, make
suggestions for future studies.

Finally, the last question posed by the researcher was, “How do we mitigate these
threats as a law enforcement community and as a community in general?” The literature
review suggested ways in which homegrown extremism could be identified, recognized,
and mitigated through both government programs and though community-based
programs. However, how many such programs are being implemented in the Norfolk,
VA, area and in other jurisdictions? The government program Empowering Local
Partners to Prevent Violence Extremism in the United States initiative, and the Strategic
Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the
United States would act as force multipliers in an effort to mitigate the threat of domestic
extremism violence facing the U.S. law enforcement. Is this federal program being
implemented in law enforcement/community joint initiatives to curtail domestic extremist
violence? These are some of the questions that went unanswered. More research is
needed in this area, which the current study attempted to answer.

Schanzer et al. (2016) concluded that to mitigate these violent extremist threats, a
community buy-in, in concert with law enforcement’s visions and missions, is required.

In an effort to counteract this homegrown extremist threat, a real bond based on trust must be established in the community first (especially between community and civic leaders), then a strong bond with law enforcement must be established to enhance efforts to act as force multipliers in this crucial crime prevention measure. These ideas provide future research opportunities. As one researcher pointed out in the Schanzer et al., study (2016), “It seems like there is no direction at the federal level, and the state and local law enforcement has their own programs.” (Schanzer et al., 2016, p.3) This is a huge gap for intelligence and officer safety. It appears there is confusion on which agency runs these federal programs, and also on exactly how the programs should be implemented and what should be included in the training.

Finally, from all levels of government, how are the programs being received in the community and how does law enforcement perceive these programs? Are they a great community resource, a waste of time, or are they not being implemented at all? These are just a few of the gaps found in the literature review that should be examined in future studies to help identify and sample various levels of government law enforcement and research the use (or its lack) of these domestic extremist mitigation programs and community involvement.
Chapter 3. Methodology

The current exploratory qualitative research project was used to focus on two major areas and/or themes to examine the increased domestic extremism threat toward U.S. law enforcement. The current study was used to explore the following question: What evidence and/or data was there to support the argument of a major upswing in violence against U.S. law enforcement at the hands of domestic extremists as compared to internationally inspired attacks? Just as important, in Chapter 2 discussed the various relevant case studies illustrating the propensity of violence directed at U.S. law enforcement by domestic extremist’s groups were also discussed to show who exactly are these groups and what are their ideologies and motivations. Finally, in Chapter 2, showed how each domestic extremist group and/or individual lone wolf has the propensity for violence against law enforcement personnel at unpredictable times.

The second part of Chapter 2 discussed the current research literature to examine how the law enforcement community mitigates these threats from a community-based program initiative perspective. Are there any law enforcement or joint community-based programs in place to mitigate these threats? Perhaps these programs go by a different name but accomplish the same goals, hopefully reducing the amount of community violence. In particular, this law enforcement–based qualitative research section was directed at all government law enforcement levels (federal, state, county, city/town and even university police), in the Hampton Roads, Virginia, area.

Part one of the research study focused on Research Questions 1 and 2. The main methodology and research technique utilized for this chapter utilized both a thematic analysis perspective and a case study approach. This portion of the research study utilized
secondary data. Specifically, the researcher collected key secondary data on the amount of law enforcement fatalities at the hands of domestic groups/individuals (sovereign citizens, White supremacists, militia extremists, Black separatists, and/or any other antigovernment groups/individuals), with no specific demographic (age, gender, ethnicity, only if they were part of a domestic extremist group/shared ideology), and confirmed that there has been a surge in the amount of violence against members of law enforcement. Patterns and/or themes were studied when collecting this secondary data as they pertained to the increase in violence against law enforcement members at the hands of domestic extremists. Specifically, the study was used to attempt to ascertain who and which group was responsible for this law enforcement violence, from a domestic extremist groups perspective, and how many occurrences/incidents of violence against U.S. law enforcement had there been compared to international-inspired extremist groups/individuals, which included determining which groups/individuals were considered by law enforcement as the most threatening. The secondary data, specifically the case study portion, was very telling.

The secondary data was collected but not limited to the following sources, all of which are explained in the definitions portion of the current study:

- Officer Down Memorial Page
- National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund
- Bureau of Justice Assistance
- Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
- International Security Program at the New America Foundation
- Southern Poverty Law Center
Research question 3 was used to implement the grounded theory approach and also utilized the thematic analysis approach along with the open-coding method for the interviews and information gathering data. To collect data on Research question 3, how can the U.S. law enforcement/intelligence community counteract these domestic extremist threats and propensity of violence toward law enforcement, a purposive (selective) and/or expert sampling method was utilized. Regarding the sampling methods being utilized, 17 key law enforcement and intelligence personnel were selected as part of the law enforcement and intelligence expert interview information gathering on each agency’s domestic extremist preventive program and overall threat level perspective as it pertained to the domestic extremist threat. These purposive sample elements were selected from the research’s professional associations and sampling methods around the Hampton Roads area, and by the researcher showing up at various agencies asking to speak with a member knowledgeable in the field of research. The researcher developed a more thorough spreadsheet that listed the Hampton Roads law enforcement agency, along with a point of contact.

After the researcher utilized the purposive and/or expert sampling methods to choose the appropriate law enforcement and/or intelligence personnel to interview based on their knowledge of this subject area and experience in their current position, the researcher received purposeful feedback right away from the participants. For example, three participants said that this topic has never been studied in this area before and that this project is a great idea. Along with job experience and knowledge of this topic, the researcher ensured that each vital law enforcement and intelligence agency were
represented and interviewed to give the researcher an accurate depiction of thoughts and perspectives on this issue from the law enforcement and intelligence communities respectfully. Regarding the vital law enforcement agencies in the Hampton Roads area, the researcher interviewed a participant from the major city police departments (except for one agency who declined after the researcher explained to a supervisor what the research is all about), multiple State Police offices that cover the Hampton Roads area, major university police departments, major federal law enforcement present in the area and town and county law enforcement agencies that cover certain jurisdictions of the Hampton Roads area. A more thorough break down of these agencies is illustrated on page 125. Of the approximate twenty-five law enforcement agencies invited to participate in this research study, fourteen agencies elected to participate. These fourteen participating agencies are, in fact, geographically representative of the Hampton Roads area. This research used a representative law enforcement group inclusive of the varying levels of government including: federal, state, local, university police, and various intelligence agencies. The interviews of the aforementioned agencies, was instrumental to effectively illustrating the diversification that is specific to the Hampton Roads jurisdiction.

To break down the representative sample size with this research study, and to obtain the appropriate sample size with this research project, the researcher utilized the checkmarket.com (2018) “sample size calculator.” Utilizing this tool, the researcher plugged in the sample size of twenty-five (actual amount of law enforcement agencies in the Hampton Roads area, with the goal of interviewing one person from each agency), then the researcher used a four percent margin of error (the margin of error “serves to
quantify the uncertainty associated with sampling in a poll or other survey” Lavrakas, 2008, p.1), with a ninety-five percent confidence level. Per this sample size calculator, the required sample size is twenty-five with fifty people needed to invite with a fifty percent estimated response rate. The researcher used a fifty percent estimated response rate due to his professional associations with these law enforcement and intelligence agencies and by utilizing an email, phone calls and in-person invite methods in order to achieve the required sample size. However, after the four-month invite initiative, in which the researcher reached out to approximately fifty-five Hampton Roads law enforcement and intelligence personnel, only seventeen agreed (from fourteen agencies) to participate in the research project.

Next, the researcher calculated the sample size margin of error from the same useful checkmarket.com website. The research study’s population size stayed at twenty-five, with the actual number of respondents (17) who agreed to participate in the research, plugged into the margin of error equation. With a ninety-five percent confidence level, the margin of error ended up being 13.72 percent. What this tells the researcher is that the smaller the number in terms of a margin of error in a larger population size (say 3 percent for example), the more confidence the researcher would have in the overall results. However, in this research study, the 13.72 percent is a much larger disparity between a lower margin of error, and thus, the farther the views of the participants can wander away from the views of the total population. If the researcher was able to get seven more participants for this research, for example, and have twenty-four respondents, then the margin of error would be 4.08 percent and would represent the total population better but would not add significant value and information to the research study’s content.
The actual number of participants (17) in this research project was significant for a variety of reasons. To begin with, as the researcher interviewed representatives from each agency willing to participate, these participants would recommend to the researcher, “you need to speak with this person, from this agency, to give you a good perspective from their angle.” This “purposive” and/or “expert” sampling method offered the researcher purposeful interviewees who were recognized by their fellow officers as experts on topics relating to my research. Finally, as the researcher approached his fourteenth interview, with all the vital law enforcement agencies having been interviewed and the important information collected, the final few interviews consisted of smaller sized agencies covering a smaller jurisdictional area. These interviews did not add any additional information to the overall research project. In fact, these participants told the researcher to contact other law enforcement agencies in the Hampton Roads area (which the researcher had previously done). At the end of these interviews, the researcher re-canvassed the Hampton Roads area law enforcement spreadsheet which was originally constructed. It was then determined that the researcher had, in fact, interviewed all the significant law enforcement and intelligence agencies desired. All these findings enabled the researcher to present the most accurate information with representative data as the findings specifically pertain to domestic extremist threats upon Hampton Roads area law enforcement members.

The Hampton Roads, VA regional area was chosen for this portion of the research study due mostly to its vast demographic diversity among its population and to give the researcher a better representative sample perspective on this extremist issue among the law enforcement members being interviewed. Table 2 on the next page illustrates the
enormous diversity among its citizens in the Hampton Roads, VA area, as it relates to the state of Virginia and the United States, overall demographic population profile respectfully from the 2010 census.

Table 2


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hampton Roads Population</th>
<th>Virginia Population</th>
<th>United States Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>1,666,310</td>
<td>8,001,024</td>
<td>308,745,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>982,511</td>
<td>5,486,852</td>
<td>223,533,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>532,025</td>
<td>1,551,399</td>
<td>38,929,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>6,790</td>
<td>29,225</td>
<td>2,932,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>57,948</td>
<td>439,890</td>
<td>14,674,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2,059</td>
<td>5,980</td>
<td>540,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>27,772</td>
<td>254,278</td>
<td>19,107,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Races</td>
<td>57,205</td>
<td>233,400</td>
<td>9,009,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Hispanic or Latino (of any race)</td>
<td>1,577,207</td>
<td>7,369,199</td>
<td>258,267,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino (of any race)</td>
<td>89,103</td>
<td>631,825</td>
<td>50,477,594</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[virginalmi.com/report_center/community_profiles/5109000323.pdf]

The researcher determined the size of the law enforcement agency utilized for the present study by utilizing the FBI’s 2016 Uniformed Crime Report, Criminal Justice Information Services Division, categories for law enforcement group ranking based on the size of the population being served in their respective jurisdictions. The categories were instrumental in properly understanding the size of the law enforcement agency interviewed and for proper analysis on the overall size of the community they currently served. Table 3 shows the breakdown of each group determined by population size, how many of these agencies were interviewed for the current study, and how they were
interviewed.

Table 3

*Research Project by Size, Number of Participants, and How Interviewed*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Number of law enforcement agencies interviewed</th>
<th>How Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group I (serving over 250,000 population)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4 interviews in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 via e-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group II (serving 100,000 to 249,000)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 interviews in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group III (serving 50,000 to 99,999)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 interviews in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 via e-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group IV (serving 25,000 to 49,999)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group V (serving 10,000 to 24,999)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 interview in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group VI (serving under 10,000)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 interview in person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Typically, a Group I law enforcement agency includes a federal law enforcement agency such as the FBI, a state agency such as a state police, and a large municipal police agency serving large jurisdictions, such as New York City and the cities of Miami, Tampa, and Jacksonville, Florida, and Austin and Houston, Texas.

A Group II law enforcement agency typically includes a smaller municipal law enforcement agency serving jurisdictions such as Charleston, South Carolina; Rochester, New York; Orlando and Tallahassee, Florida; and Pasadena and Waco, Texas.

A Group III law enforcement agency typically includes a municipal law enforcement agency and/or a county sheriff’s department, such as Daytona Beach and Davie, Florida, and Galveston and Port Arthur, Texas.

A Group IV law enforcement agency typically includes a municipal law
enforcement agency such as Coral Gables and Winter Haven, Florida, and Texas City, Texas.

A Group V law enforcement agency typically includes a municipal law enforcement agency serving jurisdictions such as the cities of Naples, and St. Augustine, Florida, and Katy, Texas.

A Group VI law enforcement agency typically includes a small municipal and college/university law enforcement agency serving areas such as the town of Pembroke Park, Florida, the village of Biscayne Park, Florida, and the city of Cactus, Texas.

Utilizing concepts from existing research on countering violence extremism, the researcher in Chapter 4 collected relevant information and focused on individual interviews with law enforcement members with a background in their respective agency’s law enforcement and/or joint community mitigating programs in the Hampton Roads (Norfolk), VA, area. After the interviews, the researcher studied these responses, looked for common themes, and came up with conclusions relating to the research questions. The concepts and research themes utilized were:

**Center for Cyber & Homeland Security, George Washington University.** A vital research project performed by this university was titled *Countering Violent Extremism in America* by Vidino and Hughes (2015). Vidino and Hughes (2015) studied ways the U.S. government could lead a successful Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) program to address the ongoing domestic violence in the U.S. This center at George Washington University produces key research products on all forms of both domestic extremism and international extremism terrorism research.

*Game Changers: Going Local to Defeat Violent Extremists* by Lt. Col. (ret.) D.
Scott Mann, U.S. Army (2015) gives a vital firsthand perspective on how to stabilize villages globally in order prevent extremism/violence from occurring.

**Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States.** This is a U.S. Department of Justice program aimed at preventing extremism in America.

**The Challenge and Promise of Using Community Policing to Prevent Violent Extremism.** Miller, Tolliver, and Schanzer showed how to create and implement a community outreach program.

At the time of the current research studies, no Hampton Roads regional research had ever been conducted on this topic as it pertains to domestic extremist violence against law enforcement members and the overall threat. The main part of the current study was to gauge law enforcements’ perspective on this topic and ascertain if the threat of violence was valid and needed to be addressed by the law enforcement community in order to safeguard lives.

**Interview Questions**

The following open-ended questions were part of the current research study:

1. What is your definition of a domestic extremist?

2. Do you believe you have domestic extremists in your area of responsibility? If so, how many individuals/groups do you think you have?

3. How has your agency perceived the domestic extremist threat in your area of responsibility? How about agencies around the country?

4. Does your agency currently have a program aimed at combating this type of extremism or any type of law enforcement program similar to this?
5. How about a community-based program aimed at preventing domestic extremism or any other criminality issues seen in your jurisdiction?

6. If not, did your agency have a program combating this type of extremism?

7. If your agency does not currently have a program combating this type of extremism, why not?

8. If your agency does have some sort of a community awareness and/or extremist prevention program, how would you describe its overall missions, goals, process, and any other positives and/or negatives?

9. If you could start a new program within your department, what would it be?

10. What is your opinion on the best way to combat this type of extremism?

11. Have you heard of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Community Awareness Brief or the Justice’s-led community awareness program aimed at preventing extremism?

12. How would you say is your agency’s relationship with the public?

13. How would you improve your relationship with the public, i.e., more community involvement with joint programs (ride-along programs, fundraisers, class instruction, and describing police actions)?

**Research Design**

The major research design involved in the current study was that of exploratory research. An exploratory design is conducted about a research problem when there are few or no earlier studies to refer to or rely upon to predict an outcome. The focus is on gaining insights and familiarity for later investigation or undertaken when research problems are in a preliminary stage of investigation. Exploratory designs are often used to establish an understanding of how best to proceed in researching an issue or what
methodology would effectively apply to gathering information about the issue (University of Southern California, 2018).

The main impetus behind this exploratory research was twofold: (a) to look at the overall national statistics and secondary data information on the number of police officers killed by domestic extremists, acquire valuable perspectives and identification on these extremist groups and individuals responsible for this violence; and (b) perform regional research in the hope of gaining insights and developing a threat picture of the activity of these groups and/or individuals in the Hampton Roads area. The exploratory research design for the current research consisted of two separate entities: (a) a secondary data collection and case study approach, and (b) a grounded theory approach.

The researcher collected key and timely secondary data from the Officer Down Memorial Page, National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the International Security Program at the New America Foundation, Southern Poverty Law Center, and the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security. Once the data were obtained, research into the reasons/motives (case studies) behind the law enforcement senseless killings was used to identify certain domestic extremist groups (sovereign citizens, White supremacists, Black separatists, lone wolves, and antigovernment extremists) responsible for this violence and provide a brief case history on each and its propensity for violence.

The research design portion of the current study involved the use of the case study design. The current qualitative case study was an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources, which ensured that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses,
which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

The researcher regularly monitored the data from these sources, because these sources continuously produce new data on the topic, along with information on killings on U.S. soil inspired by international terrorist groups. When collecting this information, the researcher ensured that the data collected met the criteria (violence caused by domestic extremist group/individual or lone wolf type, as compared to random shootings by an individual with no ties to any extremist group) and to ensure the group/individual’s ideology was mentioned. Furthermore, the researcher also queried these collection sources to ascertain if any other pertinent information with regard to the study was needed. Since these data sources normally break down their reporting/research by domestic extremist groups/individuals versus international-inspired terrorist groups (i.e., ISIS and/or any other international influences terrorist organization), the researcher contacted them when any data was unclear as to which group (domestic versus international) the data belonged to.

The data collection method was used to help answer Research question 1, because the data were timely and continuously updated by the various sources. Utilizing many data sources gave a better picture of the threat compared to the international terrorist group–inspired attacks on U.S. law enforcement.

Research Question 3 was used to ask, what are some practical solutions from a community policing/intelligence perspective? From existing studies/research, what are some common themes in attempting to alleviate this targeted and barbaric violence on U.S. law enforcement members and what do law enforcement members perceive as the
greatest threat today?” The grounded theory approach was utilized to answer this question.

“Grounded theory refers to a set of systematic inductive methods for conducting qualitative research aimed toward theory development” (Glaser, 2018, p.1) This research study investigated ways, such as community programs and joint law enforcement/community-based programs, that might mitigate these threats, from the concepts and/or themes mentioned in Mann’s (2015) book. The main premise of the current study was to link the interviewees’ coded responses to these valuable community-based grassroots joint law enforcement concepts. Following the grounded theory approach, the main study population was in Hampton Roads, Norfolk, VA, a robust law enforcement footprint. Since all government levels of law enforcement were represented in this area, collecting key data through interviews from these sources was invaluable in testing the research questions and Mann’s (2015) claims.

An interview instrument was utilized for this portion of the current study: 17 interviews were performed with at least 15 different law enforcement agencies in order to acquire key themes/concepts dealing with any possible mitigating program dealing with domestic extremism. A main component of the data collection method was to identify key codes/themes during the interviews or any subsequent comments made by the interviewee. This technique allowed the researcher to acquire key information from the police agencies.

The main collection agenda with the interviews was to accurately gauge the domestic threat level in the law enforcement agency’s respective area of responsibility and any subsequent department/community changes over the years as it related to the
topic or created changes within the agency’s community. Additionally, the researcher looked to see if any sort of a domestic extremism program has been established in the interviewee’s jurisdiction, either as a stand-alone law enforcement program or one that combined both the community and law enforcement and acted as a joint awareness initiative and community resource. No names of individuals or agencies was mentioned in the study (unless desired by the interviewee and permission was received).

The grounded theory approach was crucial to this portion of the current study. Not only did the researcher have the ability to collect valuable information from the interviews, but utilizing this information gave a better perspective on the Hampton Roads regions and an overall domestic extremist threat picture as it pertained to violence against law enforcement. The study was used to garner information on the region’s implementation of any law enforcement tactic aimed at curtailing extremism and/or community-based program on this threat that received positive and/or favorable results (i.e., lower crime rates, increased tips/participation from the community, and/or any other positive or negative feedback).

Variables

Variables necessary for the current study, especially for the field interviews, were essential because they pertained to law enforcement’s participation and interest. When the Institutional Review Board (IRB) gave permission to proceed with the study, the researcher immediately sent out 25 e-mails to leaders at the various Hampton Roads law enforcement agencies to request an interview. Only one representative responded. As a result, the researcher spent hours calling and driving around the Hampton Roads area and visiting these agencies to request an interview with a member knowledgeable in this field.
Fourteen agencies participated, while one agency declined. Another variable that had to be addressed was that many of these small agencies didn’t have an intelligence division, so many them had to contend with multiple criminalities without a devoted, specialized unit to handle domestic extremists and/or terrorism threats. From an organizational standpoint, many agencies felt that these domestic extremist threats were not as high as other agency and community priorities and concerns. Many agency representatives responded that they were aware of these extremists in their jurisdiction, but had other concerns, such as officer retention, gang issues, increase in juvenile crime, and suspects constantly being cycled through the criminal justice system with no solution in sight.

Other variables related to the interviewees’ perspectives were the amount of years on the job and overall experience with their law enforcement agency. One had over 35 years on the job, while another has as little as 6 years. That particular variable did not concern the researcher much, as the intention was to interview a participant with knowledge of this topic, compared to a participant with 30 years on the job who just worked traffic and highway patrol. The interviewees gave satisfactory answers compared to personnel with 12–16 years of police experience, because they were more polished law enforcement personnel and had worked in busy and unpredictable times.

**Data Collection**

On October 29, 2017, permission was granted from the school’s IRB committee members, along with authorization to collect data in response to the researcher’s IRB application. Specifically, the researcher was authorized to collect secondary data and associated vital case study information regarding RQ₁ and RQ₂ and to conduct interviews as part of his open-coding analysis based on those interviews. Consent to participate in
the current research study was obtained from the respective law enforcement agencies within the Hampton Roads area.

During the research design discussion, it was indicated that in-depth interviews would be completed using the grounded-theory approach. Once the interviewee read the general informed consent form and agreed to be interviewed, the interviewee signed the consent form and participated in the interview. Each interviewee was advised before the interview started and during the interview that his or her identity and responses would remain anonymous unless he or she chose to make their identity known.

Field notes were taken, which established a written record of the interviews. All interviewees were given the opportunity to clarify any responses and add comments at the end of the interview in order to add any information that was missed and/or to underscore a certain topic/response. The interviewer’s contact information was given to each interviewee at the end of the interview in the event that additional questions and/or information the interviewee wished to be exchanged. A project brochure, produced by the researcher, was given to each interviewee to demonstrate the researcher’s passion for the topic.

**Coding Process and Development of Themes**

As part of the thematic analytical portion of the current research study, coding of the interviews and the data that were collected during those interviews was necessary:

Thematic coding is a form of qualitative analysis which involves recording or identifying passages of text or images that are linked by a common theme or idea allowing you to index the text into categories and therefore establish a framework of thematic ideas about it. (Gibbs, 2007, p. 39)
Coding for the law enforcement interviews was broken down into four steps: (a) fracturing the data, (b) creating codes, (c) interpreting the interviews, and (d) triangulating the data. After the 17 interviews were transcribed, a codebook was developed depicting 30 codes from the original data, in addition to the development of themes as recorded by the interviewer. The data were then coded for a second time, which further reduced the data into a more manageable system of coding. Themes were then developed and are discussed in Chapter 4. The final step was to triangulate.

Triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena. Triangulation also has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources. (Carter et al., 2014, p. 545) Triangulation concept was crucial in this project, because the interviews yielded some surprising data. The comments made by the interviewees off the record were very telling of their opinions on the subject. Additionally, the researcher kept checking open source information as it pertained to threats from these groups and/or individuals or relationships with the public they served. In one interview, when the interviewee asked about his agency’s public perception, he answered, “Good.” The researcher then asked him when this “good” started, because one of their officers shot an unarmed African American man a few years earlier and was subsequently arrested, prosecuted, and found guilty of manslaughter. He replied that his agency has done everything possible to work with the public, including a variety of community-based programs to improve relations.

Verification Procedures

A thorough verification process was applied to the current study to ensure the
correct data was collected and was accurate and reliable. Verification is the process of checking, confirming, making sure, and being certain. In qualitative research, verification refers to the mechanisms used during the process of research to incrementally contribute to ensuring reliability and validity and, thus, the rigor of a research project. These mechanisms are woven into every step of the inquiry to construct a solid product by identifying and correcting errors before they are built into the developing model and before they subvert the analysis (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002).

Investigator Responsiveness

Morse et al. (2002) alluded the overall research is only as good as the investigator’s sound judgment, creativity, sensitivity, and flexibility and awareness in utilizing proper verification strategies that determine the reliability and validity of the evolving study. When the current study began, the researcher knew this would be an evolving project due to the fluidity of the violent times in the United States. The researcher was not naïve and knew that certain jurisdictions would not want to report certain issues in their area to avoid attracting attention to themselves. A prime example would be a gang problem in a certain affluent area, which community leaders didn’t want to address, which was why multiple sources of information were used to portray the topic as accurately as possible, especially in the Hampton Roads area. With the pertinent experience achieved over the years, both vocationally and educationally, the researcher knew what domestic extremism was in terms of ideology, identification, and overall criminality. The researcher knew how to differentiate between these groups and/or individual criminality when compared to a gang shooting. Using a gang shooting as an example, unless this gang shooting was committed by an extremist group, it was not
considered violence toward a law enforcement member.

Verification Strategies

According to Morse et al. (2002), there are five vital verification strategies that must be performed by the researcher in order build reliability and validity:

1. Methodological coherence. With this step, the qualitative research question(s) and the mechanisms of the method must match. With the researcher’s background, he was able to ensure all data collected, as it related to domestic extremism, was properly categorized as such, especially as it pertained to the collection of secondary data as it pertains to this research study. The researcher also ensured that the interview questions were pertinent in the research study, which enabled proper information collection on the scope of the domestic threat in the Hampton Roads area.

2. The sample must be appropriate. The researcher ensured that all interviewees had some sort of knowledge of the topic. He did this by asking the interviewee first if he knew about domestic extremists, then the researcher went over the different definitions as part of the study’s consent process. When the researcher went to various law enforcement agencies, he requested to speak with someone with knowledge of this topic as well, as compared to talking with an officer working pistol permits, for example.

3. “Collecting and analyzing data concurrently forms a mutual interaction between what is known and what one needs to know” (Morse et al., 2002, p.18). The researcher knew what data needed to be collected, especially as it pertained to the study with the Hampton Roads law enforcement group. This type of research has never been performed in this area, one of the main reasons why the researcher undertook this project.

4. Thinking theoretically. The researcher used theoretical concepts from the U.S.
Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services, Community Awareness Program, from Mann (2015), and from The Challenge and Promise of Using Community Policing Strategies to Prevent Violent Extremism: A Call for Community Partnerships with Law Enforcement to Enhance Public Safety research from the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, Duke University (Schanzer et al., 2016). The theoretical concepts from these resources assisted greatly in determining the success of each Hampton Roads law enforcement group utilizing a community policing approach in dealing with extremism in their respective jurisdictions.

5. Theory development. As the researcher proceeded with the acquired data, systematic theories based on his overall findings were generated, especially regarding the field interviews. These theories were built upon comprehensive and robust information.

Summary

The chapter included the methodology for the overall research on the domestic extremist threat facing U.S. law enforcement members today, most notably in the Hampton Roads, VA area. Furthermore, the key data collection platform was mentioned in acquiring secondary data information, including vital case study information on how these individuals and groups are threatening the lives of law enforcement members. The key concepts, including the coding and theme collection, were discussed to accurately gauge the threat stream in the Hampton Roads area and to build upon key theories whether these extremists groups are threatening the lives of the Hampton Roads area law enforcement members.

Chapter 4 includes the qualitative research findings with both parts of the research project resulting from the Hampton Roads area law enforcement and intelligence
members’ interviews, resulting in key thematic coding. The specific coding and
development of themes stemming from the interviews are discussed and were utilized to
build upon the key theories as they related to this national and area law enforcement
officer safety issue.
Chapter 4: Results

Field Interviews

A total of 17 law enforcement and intelligence personnel were interviewed, both sworn law enforcement and civilian intelligence employees. Their law enforcement and intelligence experience ranged from 5 to 35 years, and all lived most of their lives in the Hampton Roads, VA area. These participants included police chiefs, lieutenants, sergeants, detectives/investigators, special agents, police officers, and intelligence analysts/specialists, all of whom had a unique perspective on their own agency’s operations, missions, and the topic at hand. Each participant given a research project brochure illustrating the study’s background, importance, researcher’s background and contact information (see Appendix), and a blank consent form, for them to sign and agreeing to his or her participation in the research study.

A majority of the participant interviews were performed in person, whereas a few were done electronically due to a few participants requesting to fill out the interview sheet at a later time due to their work load/scheduling conflict. Each interview was transcribed as coding was compiled to present and develop themes. Table 3 shows the number of participants from each law enforcement agency size, sworn or civilian, gender (adds to the diversity population sample), race (adds to the diversity population sample), type of interview performed (in person versus e-mail format) and the average years of law enforcement and intelligence experience.
Table 4

Deconstruction of Final Participant Statistical Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number of Law Enforcement Agencies Interviewed</th>
<th>Number of Interviews</th>
<th>Sworn or Civilian</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race Type</th>
<th>Type of Interview (in person or via e-mail)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group I (serving over 250,000 population)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5 Sworn</td>
<td>7 Males</td>
<td>6 White Males 1 Black Male</td>
<td>6 in person 1 via e-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group II (serving 100,000 to 249,000)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 Sworn 1 Civilian</td>
<td>3 Males 1 Female</td>
<td>3 White Males 1 Black Female</td>
<td>4 in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group III (serving 50,000 to 99,999)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 Sworn 1 Civilian</td>
<td>1 Male 2 Females</td>
<td>1 White Female 1 White Male 1 Black Female</td>
<td>2 in person 1 via e-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group IV (serving 25,000 to 49,999)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group V (serving 10,000 to 24,999)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 Sworn</td>
<td>2 Males</td>
<td>1 White Male 1 Black Female</td>
<td>2 in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group VI (serving under 10,000)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Sworn</td>
<td>1 Female</td>
<td>1 Black Female</td>
<td>1 in person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Years of Law Enforcement/Intelligence Experience: 18 years
In Group I, seven interviews were performed from four agencies. Two agencies had multiple participants, which was done to speak to members of an agency with multiple specialties in the law enforcement and intelligence field. The participants each gave a unique perspective on the topic. Another agency had multiple participants due to the working area covered. This particular agency had two offices—one covered the western portion of Hampton Roads, while the other office covered the eastern portion, and the researcher wanted to ensure all areas were covered for the research study.

Another fascinating aspect of the participants was the fact that the researcher was able to interview different ranks in the law enforcement world, giving an interesting perspective based on rank, what the participants saw in that particular area, and how to mitigate possible threats. Eighteen years of service was the average for this population, which was outstanding, because it brought very thought-provoking responses and opinions to study. Many of the interviewees had been residing and employed in their respective areas for a while and had seen many changes in their communities. They knew the Hampton Roads area very well.

It was the researcher’s goal to get opinions from sworn officers, civilians, and both genders in order to see any differences. Approximately one-third of participants were civilians who often performed crime and intelligence analysis and research into the topics from a different perspective.

**Study Questions**

Information gathered through the interview process was organized into units of analysis. Participants were asked 13 questions, which yielded various results that indicated domestic extremist definitions, how each agency perceived these threats, how
to mitigate these threats, and what policy changes were necessary to effectively improve law enforcement handling of domestic extremism threats.

**Individual Textual Description by Question**

**Question 1: What is your definition of a domestic extremist?**

After the researcher read the research’s background, especially of the domestic extremist nexus, the disclaimer, and any other vital ingredient to this research, question 1 was immediately asked. The main premise behind this question was to ascertain the participants’ knowledge about “what exactly is a domestic extremist,” and the topic at hand. Furthermore, the researcher was eager to hear who the participants thought were considered domestic extremists, either groups and/or individuals, and if training is really needed for this Hampton Roads study. The most common response to this question was that of an individual and/or group seeking some sort of violence, death, and/or some serious physical injury to their target(s). Participant 17 stated that he considered all of the domestic extremist groups mentioned before the interview as vital domestic extremists who wanted to cause violence toward their intended targets. Another participant stated that the domestic extremist hoped to cause some “huge event” full of injuries and deaths in order to make known his intentions. Other popular responses include that of a “fanatical” ideology trait in order to achieve their overall goal. Extreme views against the government was another popular theme stated during the interviews, making extremists commit their acts as more of a “political” action and violent act to strike back at the U.S. government. Finally, many participants felt that these extremists were “racist,” and had (and continued to have) carried out their sinister plots against those individuals and/or groups who opposed their views (i.e., White supremacists).
The real goal of the question was to gauge the participants’ overall knowledge of domestic extremist groups and the ideologies often associated with these groups. Even though most of the participants felt that these domestic extremist groups were racist, antigovernment, prone to violence, and associated this definition with the sovereign citizen movement, many felt that an extremist could be international, domestic, and/or homegrown. The opinions were very telling in the respect that these law enforcement and intelligence agencies looked at the totality of threats and not at one particular crime group and/or individual, which is a good thing for mitigating any type of violence in a community. One participant stated that his agency was very proactive, and they were able to shift resources (i.e., personnel or enforcement procedures) in a particular part of their jurisdiction if needed.

From the question, codes and themes were developed and are briefly described as follows:

- Racist Views (RV)
- Antigovernment (extreme views against the government) (AG)
- Violent Acts (seeks harm, injury, and/or death) (VA)
- Fanaticism (ideological) (FI)

Question 2: Do you believe you have domestic extremists in your area of responsibility? If so, how many individuals/groups do you think you have?

The main intention behind this question was to ascertain if the participating agency had domestic extremists currently in their area of jurisdiction, and if so, did they have an idea how many and what type of domestic extremist groups and/or individuals. Since the researcher was new to the Hampton Roads area, (the main reason why he
undertook to study this area), this question centered on situational awareness and the overall area domestic extremist threat stream. Interestingly, most of the participants stated that they had a few sovereign citizens and Moorish Nation (a subgroup of sovereign citizens) and White supremacy groups had increased during the past year in terms of activity/recruiting. White supremacists were the biggest group in the Hampton Roads area. Five participants acknowledged large numbers of domestic extremists in their jurisdiction, but they could not assign a number to the amount. Participant 17 stated that in his jurisdictions, “We have all domestic extremist groups and/or individuals, including animal protestors,” but he was not sure how many. Only two agencies reported having no domestic extremist groups and/or individuals in their area of jurisdiction.

From the question, these codes and themes were developed:

- Yes; few; sovereign citizens/Moorish Nation (YFS)
- Yes; White supremacists (biggest group) (YWS)
- Yes; Unknown/hard to put number on identified individuals/groups (YU)

Question 3: How has your agency perceived the domestic extremist threat in your area of responsibility? How about agencies around the country?

Most of the participants responded that their agency perceived the domestic threat in their area of responsibility as low. However, another common theme was that Hampton Roads law enforcement agencies maintained vigilance and paid close attention to their community’s atmosphere in terms of possible violent acts. One proactive agency (Participant 9) advised that his agency monitored any protests conducted in their jurisdiction in order to avoid any other group/individual disrupting the event and to maintain a peaceful protest. Participant 5 added that even though their threat level was
low, they had a “robust intelligence division that will monitor any suspicious behavior, as this threat cannot be ignored.” Furthermore, Participant 5 added that his agency trains their people concerning the lone wolf threat, and they carefully monitored any threats associated with such individuals. Participant 11 added that his agency did not see the domestic extremist threat as being all that high. Instead, they saw more street gang violence (i.e., Bloods), and as such, they concentrated on mitigating this violence by watching for gang wars. Participant 15 added that his agency greatly assisted the state and local police agencies by helping out with gang problems, “since they are a bigger program as compared to domestic and international terrorism concerns.”

The second most-common theme associated with this question was that of high threats. Participant 4 added that his agency took these threats very seriously by allocating all resources for these threats and added the importance of interagency information sharing. Participant 1 added, “Any reports of domestic extremist activity would be passed to the local Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) as they work well hand-in-hand.”

The most common themes associated with this question were the possible flow of interagency intelligence sharing, an agency having its own dedicated intelligence unit looking at these threats and keeping close watch on their community’s problem areas.

From this question, the following codes and themes were developed:

- Low (L)
- High threat (H)
- Maintain Vigilance (MV)

Question 4: Does your agency currently have a program aimed at combating this type of extremism or any type of law enforcement program similar to this?
The most common response to this question was that most of the agencies did not have a dedicated domestic extremist program. However, Participant 5 quickly answered this question by stating that his department “works with community service agencies and with the mental illness spectrum” in ensuring that a patient did not harm himself and/or others. Participant 6 added to the community service theme by stating that her agency had a robust community stabilization program and crisis intervention program dealing with mentally unstable people. Participant 6 said her officers attended civic meetings and community events in order to address any concerns. Participant 8 stated, “his agency trains church leaders on the various threats.” The second most-popular theme associated with this question was that of the “community service and/or partnership program” aimed at mitigating community threats. Most agency members stated they had a dedicated intelligence unit looking at these various threats, reporting them to other agencies and/or with the JTTF.

Another interesting answer to this question was that a few participants stressed the need for more training within the department for overall awareness and identification of these groups and/or individuals. Some agencies had been training other criminal justice personnel on that subject. Participant 7 stated that his agency trained county judges, bailiffs, and sheriffs regarding the tactics utilized by the sovereign citizen movement.

From this question, the following codes and themes were developed:

- Community Based (CB)
- Intelligence Dedicated Unit (IU)
- Joint Law Enforcement Task Force (JTF)
- No (N)
Question 5: How about a community-based program aimed at preventing domestic extremism or any other criminality issues seen in your jurisdiction?

Every member of an agency participating in the current research study reported that they had some sort of community-based program aimed at curbing violence in their jurisdiction. All but one participant mentioned some sort of a community policing initiative, community stabilization program, and/or robust community outreach done in order to enhance community relations and communications. Participant 9 stated that his agency “tailors community programs toward community needs.” Participant 15, from a federal agency, stated that they “link up with state and local agencies who directly interface with community groups and work with groups such as NAACP, and ADL, in order to ensure no hate crimes/violations have occurred and work at risk communities.”

Fostering community communication with each participant’s agency was another common theme for this question. According to Participant 1, her agency had a “neighborhood watch group, tip lines to call in for anonymous crime tips/suspicious person(s), and programs that encourage citizens to get involved reporting more incidents, since they are the eyes and ears out there.”

From this question, the following codes and themes were developed:

- Community policing (CP) initiative/tactics—to include more community involvement programs, better communication, crisis intervention programs, community programs aimed at community needs, neighborhood watch groups, and tip lines to encourage public calls.

- No (N)—only 1 response.

Question 6: If not, did your agency have a program combating this type of
extremism?

Most agency members participating in the current study responded to this question by stating that they had some sort of a community policing, community awareness, and/or program enhancing communication with the public they served in an effort to curtail any violent criminal acts.

From this question, the following codes and themes were developed:

- No, but a majority (8 agencies) reported a lot of community policing and programs aimed at getting community more involved (NCP).

Question 7: If your agency does not currently have a program combating this type of extremism, why not?

Most (if not all) of the responses from the participants involved in this research alluded to currently employing a strong community stabilization and/or policing program as the real reason why they did not have a specific preventive extremism program. As Participant 15 stated, “Our goal (and continues to be) is relationship building (with the public).” The answer sums up what these Hampton Roads law enforcement and intelligence agencies personnel stressed with their everyday job assignments and proactive community policing tactics, getting the public involved with serious social issues such as domestic extremist threats. Participant 2 stated, “We have community officers who encourage citizens to report any crime or suspicious activity.”

Another common theme associated with this question was the fact that some agency members thought an extremist program was not needed. Participant 9 saw more “situational, juvenile and gang shootings” in his jurisdiction. He added that more attention should be placed at investigating gang violence and juvenile crimes, which was
the real reason for the violence in this jurisdiction. Participant 13 stated that his agency emphasized more vigilance and situational awareness for the patrol officers, as the real reason why his agency did not have a dedicated extremist program.

From this question, the following codes and themes were developed:

- Not Needed (NN) – lack of extremist activity, many of the shootings/violence are situational/gang shootings, already has a strong community stabilization program with great community rapport.

- Currently does (CD)

Question 8: If your agency does have some sort of a community awareness and/or extremist prevention program, how would you describe its overall missions, goals, process, and any other positives and/or negatives?

The main theme associated with this question in terms of an agency’s goals/missions in overall community awareness and/or extremist programs was that of community support, community efforts, and communication platform. Participant 5 stated with regard to his agency’s goals/missions, “more community support, community policing efforts, better communication with the public and to reach out to more and more people to prevent lone wolf attacks.” Participant 14 stated that her agency’s goal was to make the public aware and to report, “See something, say something.” Participant 16 said, “Get the message out of the various services we can assist with.” Almost every participant reported their agency having a positive program in working with the public.

Another common theme associated with this question was the importance of positive relationships with other government agencies and/or leaders. Participant 5 stated that “good working relationships with city government leaders and federal partners,
including task forces, and other federal agencies is a must, and success is all about information sharing.” This opinion was shared by many other participants.

More transparency and having the public see what the police do was another major theme with the question. Participant 8 stated, “Transparency is the key in fostering positive community relationship.” “We need to train our citizens or through an academic institution to see how we conduct our business,” was another opinion given by Participant 8. Participant 4 added that “Awareness and educating the people in our community is key to preventing the extremism dangers.” As it pertained to transparency, Participant 7 stressed the many hours of community outreach programs his agency performed in order for them to see what his agency did, including holding events in elementary schools, community centers, and retirement homes.

From this question, the following codes and themes were developed:

- Very Positive; excellent community support/community efforts/working relationships with government leaders/agencies (VP)
- More Transparency – train citizens, make them aware (MT)

Question 9: If you could start a new program within your department, what would it be?

The prevailing theme associated with this question was that of a community base program. As Participant 3 stated, a “bottom-up approach” was needed to encompass and build upon strengths of the agency, to address community concerns (i.e., gang and/or drug issues). Participant 9 stated that the “whole department needs to perform community policing efforts,” not just one division (patrol).

Another large theme discovered during the analysis phase of this question was
that of training. Participant 12 stated that more officers in her department needed more “domestic extremist training in the area of the sovereign citizen movement and White supremacy groups and/or ideology.” Participant 16 stated that his officers “need more tactical training on active shooters.”

Another common theme associated with this question was that of having more officers on task forces in the Hampton Roads area for better intelligence sharing and enforcement opportunities. A few participants stressed the need for more participation on a task force in order to pass valuable information to each agency and bring it back to their senior leadership. Participant 10 stated that he wanted to see a “regional surge team where officers from each department are represented and enforce different parts of the Hampton Roads area where crime has increased, as this team will travel around the area as needed.”

From this question, the following codes and themes were developed:

- Community-Based Programs – more of a “bottom up” community approach/good for the community/needs (CBP)
- Training – educate on officer safety issues pertaining to these extremist threats (TO)
- More officers on task forces (JTF)

Question 10: What is your opinion on the best way to combat this type of extremism?

Overall, the prevailing theme with this question was training. As Participant 5 stated, “We need more training in the area of extremism.” Participant 8 stated that “we need to understand them and their motivation behind their missions; we need to
understand the enemy.” Participant 9 stated, “We need training across the board (training on all domestic extremist groups and/or individuals linked to this ideology).” This training theme also extends to officer safety policing tactics, as Participant 11 stated that his agency needs to learn better officer safety techniques when dealing with extremists.

Another strong theme generated from this question was that of every agency and community leader being up-to-date in mitigating this threat. As Participant 7 stated, “All as one, work together (community leaders and government leaders), an all-hands approach” in mitigating these threats, in addition to “strong communication with each agency.” Good actionable intelligence was another strong theme generated from this question. Participant 13 stated that “strong intelligence led policing,” and was the key in mitigating extremism. Participant 3 added that “good actionable intelligence is needed in order to combat this extremism.” Participant 9 stated that a “robust intel group is needed” as well, in order to share pertinent intelligence in mitigating this threat.

Utilizing a strong community policing initiative was another common theme on the best way to combat this extremism. Participant 2 stated, “Knowledge of people in the community and vulnerable areas” were the best ways to combat extremism. This went along with knowing the “pulse of your community” the officers were serving and utilizing the proper law enforcement and community resources in dealing effectively with this threat. Participant 5 stressed the importance of the community policing model and said, “It’s a great tool.” Employing a strong community policing model can also assist with receiving valuable tips from the community and utilizing this information firsthand to mitigate any threats. Participant 6 made an interesting point that often times extremism was tough to stop since law enforcement did not know that the individual had this
mentality. The researcher believed by employing a strong community policing model, that valuable information from the community would become available.

From this question, the following codes and themes were developed:

- **Training** – better officer safety techniques/awareness (ET)
- **Community policing initiatives** – public awareness and reporting mechanism (CP)
- **Good actionable intel and sharing initiatives** to include intelligence led policing initiatives (GAI)

**Question 11:** Have you heard of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Community Awareness Brief or the Justice’s led community awareness program aimed at preventing extremism?

The main premise behind this question was to ascertain the participants’ knowledge about the U.S. Department of Justice’s Community Awareness Brief presented by the FBI. This was asked to see if these members of the Hampton Roads agencies received this extremism training and had a more extensive background on this subject. Of the 17 participants, 9 responders answered “no,” they had not heard of this brief/program, whereas 8 responders answered “yes,” they had heard of this program. This indicated that the topic needed to be taught more at all levels of law enforcement.

From this question, yes (Y) and no (N) codes and themes were developed.

**Question 12:** How would you say is your agency’s relationship with the public?

Most of the participants interviewed for the current research study answered that their respective agencies had a very positive relationship with the public. In fact, most of the responses stated that they had a very good, good, or excellent relationship with their community. Participant 17 made an interesting comment that his agency had a very
positive relationship with the public: “We show them online what we are doing in terms of community events, become transparent and show how we help the public in dire needs.” This was the transparency part of the other question. Even Participant 5 stated that his agency had a good relationship even though it could always be better. He stated, “There are still pockets of people who distrust the police.” However, he pointed out that his agency was very focused on building upon the community policing model and engaging with the community more in all phases (i.e., meetings, working with civic leaders, and building relationships in general). Participant 6 pointed out, “Staying engaged with the community is the key to success and address concerns.” On the other hand, Participant 1 stated that since her agency was short-staffed, this presented a challenge in serving the community, especially with lapses in investigations.

From this question, the following codes and themes were developed:

- Very good – 6 responses (VG)
- Good – 3 responses (G)
- Excellent stay engaged – 2 responses (EE)

Question 13: How would you improve your relationship with the public, i.e., more community involvement with joint programs (ride-along programs, fundraisers, class instruction, and describing police actions)?

The prevailing theme associated with this question was the community approach and bottom-up method in stabilizing a community and fostering harmonious relationships. Nearly all of the participants mentioned some sort of a community relationship, community program, theme. Additionally, effective communication and staying engaged with your community were mentioned as vital ways in improving
relationships with the public. Most agency members reported that they were already performing these important community programs/events, such as ride-along programs, citizen academies, fundraisers, sporting events, and public outreach initiatives. Participant 5 stressed the importance of citizen/law enforcement relationships and understanding several times during his interview. Participant 1 made an interesting point by stating, “Be proactive [law enforcement agencies]. Don’t be afraid to try new things in the community if needed.”

- More public/community involvement/relationships – 2 responses (MCI)
- More public/community programs – 8 responses (citizen’s academies for youths, senior citizens, high schools, middle schools, picnics, homeless programs, joint sports coaching programs) (MCP)

Coding

After the 17 interviews in Hampton Roads, VA, were completed, they were transcribed, and the content of the interviews was reviewed and evaluated for consistency. As part of the qualitative process of the current research, codes were developed from those interviews and were specific to each question based on repetition and often used key words from the interviews. Information provided from the interviews was coded using predetermined master themes. A master code list, or codebook, was developed, with initially 35 individual codes.

Development of Themes

A second round of coding was conducted, and this resulted in the condensation and development of 24 themes, which included:

1. Racist Views (RV) described those feelings/attitudes that are considered racist in
2. Antigovernment (AG) described the violent domestic extremist group in the research, including the sovereign citizen movement and those individuals who aligned with this ideology.

3. Violent Acts (VA) described those individuals and/or groups that resorted to violent acts to express their views and/or carry out their overall mission and goals.

4. Fanaticism (Ideological) (FI) described those views/opinions that were considered radical/extremist as compared to views shared by the general public.

5. Yes; Few; sovereign citizens/Moorish Nation (YFS), described those participants who described as having a few sovereign citizen movement individuals and/or groups in their area of responsibility.

6. Yes; White Supremacists – biggest group (YWS), described those participants who described the White supremacists extremist group as the largest group in their area of responsibility.

7. Yes; Unknown/hard to put number on identified individuals/groups (YU), described those participants who acknowledged having domestic extremist individuals/groups in their area of responsibility, but unsure of exactly how many currently operate.

8. Low (L) illustrated a low threat.

9. High (H) illustrated a high threat.

10. Maintain Vigilance (MV) illustrated an agency maintaining situational awareness.

11. Training (ET) illustrated further training in the area of domestic extremist violence awareness and/or educating officer safety issues.
12. Intelligence/Information Sharing (IS) described the action in which law enforcement agencies share intelligence with each other as it pertained to criminal investigations and possible threats to the homeland.

13. Joint Task Forces (JTF) described as a multi law enforcement agency comprised of local, state, and federal law enforcement members working on a certain criminality (i.e., terrorism, drugs, cybercrime).

14. Community Based Programs (CBP) described those community programs aimed at increasing communication and harmony between the public and law enforcement, including a bottom-up approach/community needs.

15. Intelligence Units (IU) described those law enforcement agencies that currently possessed a dedicated intelligence unit, usually comprised of sworn law enforcement and civilian analysts.

16. Community Policing (CP) was defined as those law enforcement agencies that emphasized a joint community/law enforcement initiative to increase community awareness (i.e., school resource officers, community resource officers, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), religious and special events officers).

17. Not Needed (NN) illustrated those agencies that did not have a program combating this type of extremism due to a lack of extremist activity. Many of the shootings/violence were situational/gang shootings (not extremists). The agency already had a strong community stabilization program with great community rapport.

18. Currently Does (CD) illustrated an agency currently employing a program.

19. Very Positive (VP) described those agencies with an excellent community support/efforts relationship with government leaders, agencies, and the public at large.
20. More Transparency (MT) described those actions and accountability measures by a law enforcement agency that should be made available for public view and consumption.

21. Good Actionable Intel (GAI) described intelligence-led policing initiatives and sharing initiatives with other agencies.

22. Excellent Stay Engaged (ESE) described those agencies that stayed active with their community’s needs and/or were current with any threat measures.

23. More Public/Community Programs (MPC) described those initiatives/actions performed by law enforcement that produced positive results through a community policing model and/or public outreach initiative.

24. More Public/Community Involvement/relationships (MPI) described those initiatives/course of business actions aimed at improving relations with the community at large.

For the purpose of endorsing the validity of the research, the coding process themes were given to the researcher’s dissertation chair, also a veteran law enforcement management practitioner, in order to accurately code these key concepts gathered during the interviews. Representing external validity, by validating the coding, ultimately will establish legitimacy of the coding portion of the research and correlate with the pertinent data collected.

**Qualitative Validation Techniques**

For the member check, all interviewees were given a brief on the project, especially the part being studied in the Hampton Roads area. After the consent form was signed by the participants, each answer was read back to the participant, who was given
the opportunity to change/add onto their responses. At the end of the interview, the participant was asked if he or she wished to make any changes or to add/delete any information discussed during the interview. One agency declined to participate in the research after the researcher briefed the representative on the research topic. Many interviewees offered compliments on this field of research, especially at it pertained to the Hampton Roads area. One respondent stated that this research topic was long overdue, and all law enforcement agencies and communities needed to understand this threat stream.

Summary

Chapter Four contained the pertinent Hampton Roads, VA, area-centric domestic extremist and law enforcement and community mitigation data, identifying potential domestic extremism threats and remedies to counteract these threats. The results from the 17 interviews from 14 law enforcement and intelligence agencies were analyzed and compared to the specific theories mentioned in Chapter 2 as part of the current exploratory study, utilizing case studies and a grounded theory concept. The interviews were coded, and pertinent research themes were developed. Chapter Five contains a summary of the dissertation, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter 1 of the current exploratory research study set the grim tone of the increased violence against our law enforcement members in America at the hands of domestic extremists. Chapter 1 was used to underscore the history behind this phenomenon and how, from a law enforcement, academic community, and a national perspective, people need to work together to find ways to mitigate this violent trend. National statistics mentioned as part of the research, and the introduction of a Hampton Roads, VA law enforcement area research was outlined in order to gauge the overall threat against various levels of law enforcement in such a law enforcement and military rich environment. The deadly trends seen around the U.S. currently were the main impetus in studying this topic in the Hampton Roads, VA, area to suggest some mitigation solutions to those agencies participating in this research. A community policing, joint law enforcement and community involvement model plan was seen as the most central idea for curtailing this troublesome social problem and protecting male and female law enforcement officers. To provide a sound threat stream foundation based on Chapter 1, Chapter 2 involved the literature review on this subject, along with showing gaps in the research and the challenge in curtailing this officer safety issue.

Also in Chapter 2, not only were domestic extremist violence secondary data introduced and shown how these domestic extremist issues have become more prevalent in the U.S. as compared to international-led extremist violence, the chapter also presented some prevention strategies on this topic. Key various domestic extremist groups and individuals were identified, their ideologies briefly explained, and their propensity for violence was highlighted through case studies. Key mitigating theories and strategies
were discussed, with an emphasis on a joint community and law enforcement approach along with a national security standpoint to curb the rise in violence against law enforcement members.

Chapter 3 was used to explore why a robust qualitative plan was the best course of action for the current exploratory research study. Collecting firsthand opinions and perspectives from law enforcement members in the Hampton Roads area and sharing their views on this important issue was invaluable, along with comparing them to the crucial secondary data collected on this topic.

After establishing critical coding and the development of key themes, the researcher carefully analyzed and evaluated the data collected from the 17 Hampton Roads law enforcement and intelligence staff interviews. The interviews provided fruitful opinions on the overall domestic extremist threat stream in the Hampton Roads area, ways to improve and/or continue great community relations, and ways to improve their own agency’s course of business, either with better training, communication, and/or having a large task force compiled of all the Hampton Roads law enforcement agencies with a concentration on making quality of life arrests and getting guns off the streets.

Discussion of Findings for Qualitative Portion

During data collection, the following questions were asked of 17 Hampton Roads law enforcement participants. Twelve initial codes and/or themes were developed as a response to the following questions and overall opinions.

1. What is your definition of a domestic extremist?

2. Do you believe you have domestic extremists in your area of responsibility? If so, how many individuals/groups do you think you have?
3. How has your agency perceived the domestic extremist threat in your area of responsibility? How about agencies around the country?

4. Does your agency currently have a program aimed at combating this type of extremism or any type of law enforcement program similar to this?

5. How about a community-based program aimed at preventing domestic extremism or any other criminality issues seen in your jurisdiction?

6. If not, did your agency have a program combating this type of extremism?

7. If your agency does not currently have a program combating this type of extremism, why not?

8. If your agency does have some sort of a community awareness and/or extremist prevention program, how would you describe its overall missions, goals, process, and any other positives and/or negatives?

9. If you could start a new program within your department, what would it be?

10. What is your opinion on the best way to combat this type of extremism?

11. Have you heard of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Community Awareness Brief or the Justice’s-led community awareness program aimed at preventing extremism?

12. How would you say is your agency’s relationship with the public?

13. How would you improve your relationship with the public (i.e., more community involvement with joint programs, such as ride-along programs, fundraisers, class instruction, and describing police actions)?

The questions were instrumental in collecting valuable information and opinions from the Hampton Roads law enforcement members as it pertained to the domestic extremist threat in their respective areas of responsibility. This key information resulted
in the development of the following themes:

1. Racist Views (RV)
2. Antigovernment (AG)
3. Violent Acts (VA)
4. Fanaticism (Ideological) (FI)
5. Yes; Few; sovereign citizens/Moorish Nation (YFS)
6. Yes; White supremacists – biggest group (YWS)
7. Yes; Unknown/hard to put number on identified individuals/groups (YU)
8. Low (L)
9. High (H)
10. Maintain Vigilance (MV)
11. Training (ET)
12. Intelligence/Information Sharing (IS)
13. Joint Task Forces (JTF)
14. Community Based Programs (CBP)
15. Intelligence Units (IU)
16. Community Policing (CP)
17. Not Needed (NN)
18. Currently Does (CD)
19. Very Positive (VP)
20. More Transparency (MT)
21. Good Actionable Intel (GAI)
22. Excellent Stay Engaged (ESE)
23. More Public/Community Programs (MPC)

24. More Public/Community Involvement/relationships (MPI)

These themes provided an excellent foundation for the development of the overall research’s findings and themes and provided the opportunity for future training of law enforcement in the Hampton Roads, VA area. These interviews gave the participant a better perspective of his or her agency’s challenges, as the researcher was told numerous times, “Good question. I really never thought of that.” Moreover, additional research on this topic is needed, especially due to the fluidity of such violence around America. Also, as one police agent said, “We have a tough time keeping our officers here, as they tend to transfer after they get fully certified here in the state of Virginia.” Having continuous training with this agency could ensure a top-notch education with officer safety concerns, especially because these threats and overall violence do not appear to be dissipating.

Implications for Practice

One of the major goals of the current study was to make members of law enforcement agencies more aware of these domestic extremist groups and individuals and their overall desire for violence against the police. A few participants told the researcher that they are aware of these individuals in their jurisdiction, but they were not sure exactly where they resided, met and/or conducted their hateful/illegal operations. It was the researcher’s goal to motivate members of these agencies to investigate exactly where these individuals and groups reside and conduct their business so the next officer who shows up for a call does not get ambushed. If one officer’s life can be saved from this study based on greater awareness and vigilance, then the current study was well worth the time and research dedicated.
One of the major themes mentioned during the interviews was the need for more training in this field. All participants had heard of the sovereign citizen movement and the White supremacist ideology, especially because they were only a couple hours away from the infamous Charlottesville, VA, incident. If properly implemented and with a large agency taking the lead with the training, perhaps the Joint Terrorism Task Force, more and more officers would understand this threat more accurately and be aware of the gravity of this violence.

**Recommendations for Changes in Current Law Enforcement Procedures**

Throughout the interview process and data collection, four significant themes kept occurring.

- More training on this issue
- Better intelligence sharing
- More officers on task forces
- Better communication with the public to prevent lone wolf attacks and within the department

**More training.** When interviewing the participants in the current research, one of the prevailing themes was for consistent training on this topic. The researcher was astonished to hear only mention of the sovereign citizen movement and street gangs, such as the Bloods. After the interview, and during some open discussion about the overall project, many of the participants stated, “I didn’t think of the militia groups and/or antigovernment individuals.” Most of the participants thought of the extremist threat coming from street gang criminal enterprises and from the drug and gun trafficking criminal organizations. One participant mentioned, “Consistent training in this field is
needed within the department, in order to be more aware of their surroundings.” Another participant stated that a “change is needed in how officers think (more awareness) for this topic; a change is needed in the law enforcement culture.” Furthermore, this type of training needs to be mandated by the state, which that participant also stated. If this training has to come from an outside source such as the Southern Poverty Law Center and/or the Anti-Defamation League, then those organizations should be contacted and put on a Hampton Roads area training list.

The researcher mentioned these outside agencies and even himself as possible training platforms to a few participants who brought up the training challenge. Interestingly enough, all of these trainings, especially on domestic extremists, were what Carter et al. (2014) described were needed in modern law enforcement officers, as discussed in Chapter 2. Many of his law enforcement participants stated, “The importance of training in overall day-to-day preparedness and understanding the many threats presented to law enforcement.” It was understood that some law enforcement agencies did not have the staff to cover training and/or the budget to allow officers to attend such training. However, if just one life could be saved, it seemed worth it.

**Better intelligence sharing.** The topic became highly important after 9/11 and yet it continues to be a stumbling block according to some participants. The response came from within the department and from outside agencies such as the state and federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Officer safety intelligence sharing must be better in order to save the lives of the men and women who work the streets protecting our communities. One agency member advised that better intelligence sharing must take place within their own department. The patrol and investigations sections had to talk
more often and effectively. In any event, intelligence needed to improve, and the following two categories would certainly assist with this endeavor.

**More officers on task forces.** A few participants mentioned that by having more officers on task forces (i.e., terrorism, drugs, cyber, and safe streets) would allow their members of agency to know more about what was going on in other jurisdictions in the Hampton Roads area. The recommendation cannot be stressed enough in terms of intelligence sharing and information an officer can pass up and down the chain within the department, especially road patrol officers who usually deal with these extremists unexpectedly. One participant said, “They know they have extremists in their jurisdiction, and they travel quite a bit.” Having an officer on a Joint Terrorism Task Force working multiple jurisdictions and possessing that area knowledge would be extremely beneficial to all members of the task force. Every jurisdiction/member brings a specialty to the table and this information can be brought back to their respective agencies. One example of this would be having knowledge of a White supremacy group organized in one jurisdiction and actively recruiting and/or committing crimes in another. The officer who worked where the group mostly stayed would be important for being able to identify the key players, including their criminal history and whether they are known to carry weapons.

**Better communication with the public/maintain strong community policing model.** Having better communication with the public was a response that came from multiple interviews, especially when attempting to understand a community’s needs. The researcher was a little surprised to hear this, but it was quite pleasing to understand the officers were striving for good relations with their communities. One participant stated
that more police agencies should have a bottom-up approach in mitigating harmful threats and getting community leaders more active in the joint approach in securing their own communities. Better communication with the community in general was also a very popular theme mentioned in the current study. Participants said that having better communication with the public meant gathering more useful information from the public they served to help curtail possible future criminality and mitigate officer safety threats.

Based on this, the recommendation is to increase the community policing initiative and/or start stressing it more in the larger police departments, and more importantly, to engage community leaders to tackle bottom-up issues and challenges. By soliciting the public’s assistance, collecting more useful information on various threats and needed police resources, will go a long way toward ensuring a harmonious communication system.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The current study topic is an unfortunately fluid law enforcement officer safety issue, thus the first recommendation for future research is to conduct another Hampton Roads research study in another year or two, especially after members of the law enforcement agencies interviewed had attended domestic extremist training. Another reason why this area-centric research should be performed is the fact that many agencies were contacted for an interview request and never responded. One, for some unknown reason, retracted its answers. Since the researcher felt privileged to research the Hampton Roads area based on the strong military presence, including the largest U.S. Navy base in the world, with a vast amount of law enforcement areas within a 50-mile radius, contacting the other agencies that didn’t participate in the original study would be good to
gain their perspectives. Another plus for this area is the overall population diversity.

Researching a diverse sample gave the researcher several vital perspectives on different extremist group activities and possible criminality. A future research project would enhance these diverse opinions.

The second recommendation for future research would be to conduct this same type of research in other states and/or different parts of Virginia and analyze the data to see if there were similar results in response to domestic extremist threats, law enforcement tactics (i.e., community policing, community/law enforcement programs). Researching other parts of Virginia might pinpoint other extremists’ activities, such as militia extremists, who were hardly mentioned, if at all, during the Hampton Roads research project. Are there new groups to report? Have White supremacy groups spread all across Virginia? Are there more lone wolf ambushes against law enforcement?

The third recommendation would be to return to the Hampton Roads area and speak with the same participants after a few years and see if any of their opinions had changed based on experience, and, hopefully, more training. Since many of the participants had many years on the job, perhaps they may have retired since the last interview. Who took their place, and did that colleague feel the same way? It was gratifying to hear from the participants that this topic was considered worthwhile and worth the participants’ time. Hopefully, the next time such research is performed, there will not have been the loss of an officer’s life, and the law enforcement community will be better informed and trained on this vital issue.

The final recommendation would be to return to the Hampton Roads area to speak with community leaders on their relationship with their respective police agencies. All of
the interviews in the current study were conducted with law enforcement personnel giving responses. What about the community leaders’ opinions? How do they feel the relationship is with the local police department, and what are some ways in which the relationship could be better? Do they feel that the extremist issue is being addressed? How about other criminal threats to the overall safety and security of the community?

**Conclusion**

The main impetus behind this research topic was to inform and make aware, if it was not already known, to the law enforcement and academic communities of the never-ending social threat facing members of law enforcement and how the law enforcement and academic communities can mitigate these threats. It seemed like daily during the writing of the dissertation, America lost a law enforcement officer to a sinister ambush, unexpected gunfire from a car being pulled over, or to disturbed individuals who wanted to kill police officers for their own ideology and/or make a name for themselves. To achieve the main mission of the current study, it was necessary to provide secondary data to expose this national threat, in addition to supplying relevant case studies about the groups and individuals responsible for this violence.

A systematic and robust literature review was performed, exposing the increase in violence against law enforcement while also collecting secondary data, charts, and tables concerning this serious officer safety issue. Vital case studies were mentioned to pinpoint who were these domestic extremist individuals and groups responsible for the law enforcement murders. One constant theme during this research project was the fact that these targeted police killings continued to climb each year.

However, the most dominant factor in this research, and the one for which the
researcher attempted to suggest ways to mitigate these threats, came mostly from literature review studies, theoretic concepts, and law enforcement officer interviews—the lone wolf. As one participant said, “One of the things that keeps me up at night is the lone wolf threat. We know nothing about them and what their next move is.” Ironically, that came from the first interview, and that bone-chilling thought resonated in the researcher ever since. In reality, law enforcement members do not know when the next shooting will take place and against whom. This is a great concern. However, a common theme throughout the interviews was that either a good relationship with the public was already in place through hard community outreach efforts, or a bottom-up community approach was already established in certain Hampton Roads communities to address the growing criminality in those areas and to mitigate those threats. Working with community leaders is a good place to start diffusing any unnecessary biases and to create understanding with community members.

Another common theme highlighted in this research was the need for strong communication between law enforcement and with the communities they serve. As many participants said, “This is a great start, but it can get better.” These concepts were mentioned by Mann (2015) and confirmed what the participants reported and the themes and concepts from Schanzer et al.’s (2016) research, as well as research by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (2014). All of the key research concepts discussed in Chapter 2 emphasized the necessity of a healthy relationship between the community at large and with authority figures. The important information collected from the Hampton Roads law enforcement and intelligence personnel interviews only confirmed these concepts.
The information collected from the law enforcement interviews was invaluable understanding key perspectives from state and national agencies. What was even more impressive was the experience level of the participants, their years of service, and their overall knowledge of the Hampton Roads area, especially where pockets of extremist activity had taken place. However, each jurisdiction was different. Members of each agency interviewed stated how the law enforcement community needed to work together more than usual, because many of these threats were transient and tough to keep track of at times, especially relating to perpetrators’ criminal backgrounds. Finally, it was very encouraging to hear about the strong, robust community policing, outreach, participation and awareness initiatives being employed in Hampton Roads law enforcement communities to curtail these violent attacks while improving community relationships. These programs need to continue in order to prevent any further targeted acts of violence and, most importantly, to potentially save officers’ lives.

Epilogue

As the research was conducted over several months, in addition to law enforcement and intelligence members being interviewed about this threatening topic, and all the vast academic and law enforcement associations websites, portals, and journals that were studied to secure vital secondary data, it became increasingly clear that the threat against members of law enforcement was not going away. Instead, such violence has surged over 10 years, and 2018 was so far one of the most violent years on record for law enforcement murders. As of March 14, 2018, 30 law enforcement officers around the country had been killed in the line of duty, of which 17 were killed by gunfire (Officer Down Memorial Page, 2018a). Not surprisingly, firearms were the weapon
choice of the perpetrators executing these officers.

Roughly 135 cops died in 2016, making it the deadliest year for police officers in at least 5 years, and while there were few deaths in 2017, the numbers weren’t much better: A total of 129 officers died last year. And 46 of those deaths were caused by gunfire in the whole scope of things. (Farber, 2018)

While the loss of an officer’s life is a tragedy, most of the senseless deaths in 2018 have been those officers responding to a domestic disturbance, only to be executed while on the scene. One Colorado deputy was killed by an antigovernment loner who hated law enforcement. The deputy went to the house, responding to a disturbance call. In reality, it really does not matter how the officers died, just that their deaths are unnecessary. All phases of the law enforcement and the academic community must work together to find ways to mitigate these threats.

When New York City Police Commissioner James O’Neill tweeted his condolences to the Westerville, Ohio, police family who lost officers, Eric Joering and Anthony Morelli, to an ambush, the commissioner accurately described today’s volatile attitude toward law enforcement members:

"@Westerville PD confirms 2 officers ambushed & killed today after responding to a 911 hang-up; fired upon when they arrived at the address. Everyone should be as upset about this as America's law enforcement officers are. No cop, anywhere, 'signed up' to be murdered," he wrote (Cerullo & Schladebeck, 2018).

In the short time between January and March 2018, the following law enforcement officers gave the ultimate sacrifice; they were either targeted or ambushed by deranged individuals:
• January 8, 2018, Deputy Sheriff Daniel A. McCartney of the Pierce County Sheriff’s Office, Washington State, investigated a burglary and was shot and killed while chasing the suspect on foot. Deputy McCartney served 3 years with the Pierce County Sheriff’s Office.

• January 17, 2018, Detective Michael Doty of the York County Sheriff’s Office, South Carolina, was killed while chasing a subject into the woods who had just attacked his wife. The subject ambushed Detective Doty in the woods, and he succumbed to his injuries a day later. Three deputies and a K-9 officer were also injured (Farber, 2018). Detective Doty served 11 years with the York County Sheriff’s Office.

• January 18, 2018, Deputy U.S. Marshal Christopher David Hill was shot and killed while attempting to execute a warrant on a female making terrorist threats. Once inside the home, a male ambushed Hill and two other officers, who thankfully survived. Deputy U.S. Marshal Hill served 11 years with the U.S. Marshals Service.

• January 24, 2018, Deputy Heath Gumm of the Adams County Sheriff’s Office in Colorado was shot and killed while responding to a disturbance call (Farber, 2018). The suspect was well known for hating law enforcement. Deputy Gumm was a 5-year veteran of the Adams County Sheriff’s Office.

• January 28, 2018, Police Officer Glenn Doss, Jr., was shot in the head and chest while responding to a domestic call on January 24 (Farber, 2018). The suspect opened fire on the officers while they were still inside their patrol car. Officer Doss was a 2-year veteran of the Detroit Police Department.

• February 5, 2018, Deputy Sheriff Micah Flick of the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office in Colorado was shot and killed as he and other officers attempted to take a
suspect into custody. Officer Flick was a 11-year veteran of the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office.

- February 7, 2018, Officer David Sherrard of the Richardson Police Department in Texas was killed while responding to a disturbance call. Officer Sherrard was a 13-year veteran of the Richardson Police Department

- February 9, 2018, Officer Chase Maddox of the Locust Grove Police Department, Georgia, was killed while serving a traffic warrant. Officer Maddox was a 5-year veteran of the Locust Grove Police Department (Farber, 2018).

- February 10, 2018, Officer Eric Joering of the Westerville Police Department in Ohio was ambushed while responding to a domestic situation. Officer Joering had been with the Westerville Police Department for 16 years (Cerullo & Schladebeck, 2018).

- February 10, 2018, Officer Anthony Morelli of the Westerville Police Department in Ohio was ambushed while responding to a domestic situation. Officer Morelli was a 29-year veteran of the department (Cerullo & Schladebeck, 2018).

- February 21, 2018, Police Officer Justin Billa of the Mobile Police Department in Alabama was shot and killed by a barricaded subject. Police Officer Billa was a 2-year veteran of the department.

- February 21, 2018, Corporal Mujahid A. Ramazziddin of the Prince George’s Police Department in Maryland was killed while assisting a neighbor involved in a domestic dispute. Corporal Ramazziddin, a 14-year veteran of the department, was also a medal of valor recipient.

- March 2, 2018, Deputy Jacob Pickett of the Boone County Sheriff’s Office in Indiana was killed while pursuing a wanted fugitive. Deputy Pickett was a 3-year veteran
of the Sheriff’s Office and a 2-year veteran of the Tipton County Sheriff’s Department. (Meeks & Flora, 2018).

- March 6, 2018. Police Officer Christopher Ryan Morton, Clinton Police Department in Missouri, was shot and killed when he and two other officers responded to an unknown situation as the result of a 911 call at approximately 9:20 p.m. Officer Morton was a 3-year veteran of the Clinton Police Department. (Officer Down Memorial Page, 2018b)

- March 9, 2018. Police Officer Greggory Casillas of the Pomona Police Department, California, was shot and killed as he attempted to arrest a man following a vehicle pursuit. Officer Casillas had served with the Pomona Police Department for 6 months and was still in the field-training phase of his service. (Officer Down Memorial Page, 2018c)

- March 12, 2019. Reserve Officer Christopher Lawton of the Zachary Police Department, Louisiana, was killed after being intentionally struck by a vehicle as he attempted to serve a narcotics-related felony warrant (Officer Down Memorial Page, 2018e). Officer Lawton served part-time, unpaid, and was also a Zachary Fire Department full-time firefighter.

- March 13, 2018. Police Officer Scotty Hamilton of the Pikeville Police Department, Kentucky, was shot and killed while responding to a call and assisting in a murder investigation. Officer Hamilton was a 12-year veteran of the Pikeville Police Department (Officer Down Memorial Page, 2018d)
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Appendix

Research Project Brochure Given to Participants
“To thoroughly investigate and gather valuable information in order to gauge the “domestic extremist” threat in the Hampton Roads area and to share this relevant data among the law enforcement partners in order to keep our fellow officers safe from this form of violence”
Who am I researching?
Domestic Extremism – Sovereign Citizens, White Supremacy, Anti-government, Militia extremism, Black Separatist/identity extremists, and/or "lone wolf" extremism with domestic group ties

“What asked me if I could hurt, beat or kill the cop what would I do. I told him I would kill him.” (WS Shane Smith)

Key Research Question
RQ1: What are some practical solutions from a community policing/intelligence perspective? What do law enforcement members perceive as the greatest threat today from a domestic extremist and an international extremist perspective?

What I need from you
Point of contact for a short (approx. 30-minute interview) discussing how your agency is mitigating these domestic extremist threats. All identities, including agency will be kept confidential.

My background
- 20-year veteran of the New York State Police SIU/Albany, NY JTF DT SQ (currently on military leave)
- 11-year veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard (reserves & AD), rank of Lieutenant Commander, assigned to 5P District’s Intelligence Branch, Portsmouth, VA
- 2013 graduate of the National Intelligence University’s Master’s Program in Strategic Intelligence, Washington, DC

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