

Nils Böckler

The Lone Wolf of Frankfurt

A Case Study on the Radicalization of an Islamic Lone Operator



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Agenda

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1. Framing the Context – Why This Case is Worth to be Analyzed
2. The Concept of Radicalization
3. Method and Data
4. Case Description and Analysis
5. Escalating Behavior and Warning Signs
6. Pathway/Radicalization to Violence

Why This Case is Worth to be Analyzed

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The Lone Wolf of Frankfurt is a result of the changing face of islamic terrorism:

- Strategy of *Leaderless Resistance*: “Take action without waiting for instructions”.
- Extremist movements serve as ideological suppliers and focus on recruiting in sentiment pools (*eg. youths in crises who are searching for meaning and guidance*).
- Internet plays a central role for mobilisation and propaganda.
- Acts of violence are primarily committed by autonomous cells or lone operators since 9/11 (creativity and innovation).

Open Source Jihad

In this section:

Training with the AK 2

OSJ GUN SCHOOL

TRAINING WITH THE AK 2

ABU SALIH



Figure 1.0



Figure 1.1



Figure 1.2



In the first part of this series, we discussed some of the basic parts of the Kalashnikov. In this part, we will be showing you how to open the weapon. Knowing how to open the weapon is as vital as knowing how to shoot it since maintenance of the weapon is an absolute necessity. Not knowing how to open it would cause you problems in the future such as if the bullet doesn't fire and you don't know where the problem lies. With that said, let's look at how to open the weapon (follow the figures accordingly):

1. Take out the Magazine and drop the safety lever to the last level (single shot).
2. Cock the charge handle assembly twice using your hand. At the third time, charge it half way to see if there's a bullet inside.
3. Make the rifle stand at an angle or point it towards the ground and pull the trigger. This is to ensure that there is no bullet inside. The angle mentioned here is to protect those around you from being hit if there were to be a bullet inside.
4. Point the rifle down to the ground and push the lower receiver button with force to open the base. Sometimes, you might have to fiddle with the base left and right to pull it out.
5. Take out the spring by pushing it forward and then carefully pulling it out.
6. Carefully pull out the buffer from the spring.
7. Pull out the charge handle assembly.
8. To take out the bolt assembly, twist it 180-degrees and pull it forward. This is what hits the back of the bullet. If this were not to be inside, the gun would not fire. If you shake the bolt assembly, you should hear the firing.

WANTED

DEAD OR ALIVE FOR CRIMES AGAINST ISLAM



YES WE CAN

A BULLET A DAY KEEPS THE INFIDEL AWAY

Defend Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him



CARSTEN LUSTE



TERRY JONES



KURT WESTERGAARD



GIRT WILDERS



LARS VILKS



STÉPHANE CHARBONNIER



FLEMMING ROSE



MORRIS SWADIQ



SALMAN RUSHDIE

Why This Case is Worth to be Analyzed

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Out of eleven terror plots, the case of Frankfurt Airport is the only successfully committed terror act in Germany up to date.

- Self-recruitment as jihadist;
- No connections to radical networks;
- No communication between conspirators;
- Perpetrator never attracted attention before;

⇒ The case shows that it is more important than ever to identify individual warning signs coming along with processes of radicalization.

The Concept of Radicalization

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- Transformation of meaning perspectives according to extremist belief systems;
 - Structural change in thinking, emotion and social behavior;
 - Growing identification as an agent or soldier for a cause;
 - Violence as a result of a growing commitment to a cause (ideologization);
 - Ideology as legitimization for violence;
- ⇒ **Construction of a new definition of self/redefinition of identity**

(Wilner/Dubouloz 2011; Meloy/Yakeley 2014)

The Concept of Radicalization

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Personality traits
Social Motives
Aspirations
Personal
Resources
Implicit Theories
Self Concept



Significant Others:

Family
Peer-Group
Institutions
Demands and resources

Norms, Ideologies ,Frames

demanding/legitimizing/forbidding
violence

Radical social contexts

Sub- and youth-cultures
virtual communities
radical milieus

Change in self-concept, thinking, emotion, and behavior

Investigation & Court-File Analysis

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PATTERNS AND CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR, THINKING AND EMOTIONS

Personal traits and personal life

Social life and peers

Family life

School and occupational life

Secret life (concealed sphere)



Time & Sequences of Events	Subjective Perception	Observable Behavior	Social Networks Social Reactions
Crises, Turning Points & Triggers	Motives & Self- concept	Trends in Behavior: Escalating/Warning	Exacerbating & Mitigating Effects

(O'Toole 2013)

Crime Scene

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Frankfurt Airport, Terminal 2 (March, 2nd, 2011)



Course of Action at Frankfurt Airport

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02:51 pm – Military bus, outside terminal 2, Frankfurt Airport

- X observes two soldiers as they are storing their luggage in the bus. He is eager not to attract attention and simulates a call with his mobile.

03:10 pm – Interaction with victims and preparation

- 13 other comrades have arrived in the meantime and build up a row in front of the bus in order to store their luggage. X asks the soldier next to him for a cigarette and starts small talk to hear about their destination (which is Afghanistan).

Course of Action at Frankfurt Airport

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03:16 pm: Killing outside the bus

- With this information in mind, he takes his backpack and inserts a magazine in a firearm (Luger, 9mm). He pulls the hood over his head and waits until all the soldiers have entered the bus.
- As one last soldier comes out of the terminal and passes X, the perpetrator shortens the distance and shoots him from the back in the head (distance: 1.50 meters). He dies immediately.

Course of Action at Frankfurt Airport

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03:16 pm: X enters the bus

- Immediately he shoots the driver deadly in the face.
- Afterwards he moves towards the soldiers in the back of the bus and shouts “Allahu Akbar” /”God is great”
- While his comrades are hiding behind their seats one soldier is still standing in the central gangway. The perpetrator shoots him in the head, resulting in serious injury.
- Recognizing his impasse, one soldier decides to leave his cover and faces the perpetrator with waving hands. He gets a shot and also suffers severe injury.

Course of Action at Frankfurt Airport

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03:16 pm – Inside military bus

- X keeps on walking along the gangway and aims his firearm at the face of another soldier ducked down behind a seat. The perpetrator pulls the trigger but recognizes a jamming.
- The soldier jumps up and enters into conflict with the gunman, resulting in a close scuffle.
- X unsnaps himself and escapes out of the bus, climbs over a one meter barrier in direction of another terminal. Two soldiers are pursuing the perpetrator.

Course of Action at Frankfurt Airport

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03:16 pm – Escape

- Two police officers become aware of the pursuit and also follow X.
- Finally a passerby gets in the way of the perpetrator and slows him down. The officers are able to close up. With their guns drawn they call on him to freeze.
- With a knife in his hand X faces one of the officers, comes closer and threatens to stab him.

Course of Action at Frankfurt Airport

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03:18 pm – Arrest

- At the same time the second officer is able to reach the perpetrator's back and with a truncheon in her hand she advises X to put down the knife.
- The perpetrator can be arrested without any resistance.
- From this time on he is cooperative and admits the deed.

Circumstances leading up to shooting

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- The evening before his deed he browsed through some Islam related websites like he did many times before.
- He came across two videos: One which showed the dead faces of “islamic martyrs” and one which dealt with female muslims harmed by US Soldiers (rape scene taken from a hollywood movie).
- X was disturbed and in his own words not able to return to daily routine, he wasn't able to sleep. The next morning he still couldn't get the rape scene out of his head.
- He knew that he had “to do something”. As he was working at Frankfurt Airport he remembered that he had seen US-soldiers several times before there.

Circumstances leading up to shooting

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- Shortly before leaving the house for work, he decided to take a gun and two knives with him.
- For him it was a fateful question: If he would see soldiers at the airport, he would kill them because Allah wanted him to do so. If he wouldn't see any soldiers it would also be ok for him.
- With two knives and a gun he took a ride with the bus to Frankfurt Airport.
- He claimed it was neither a terroristic attack nor a planned deed. He was driven by emotions and the intention to rescue Muslim women from the harm of American soldiers.

A First Glance at the Results of Investigation

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- In the beginning of 2010 he revealed in chats with “brothers in faith” his radical rejection of infidels
- He wrote that dying the martyr’s death was worth striving for and was legitimized by the Quran if the actor shouts out “Allahu Akbar”.
- He sympathized with Jihadists and regarded the United States as the personified devil. He also thought about traveling to Iraq or Afghanistan to become Jihadist.

General Background

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- X is 21 years old (at the time of offense) (born 1990);
- Lives with his parents, he is the second of three children;
- Kosovan and Serbian citizenship (has lived in Germany since he was 2 years old);
- Convicted and sentenced for the murder of US-American Soldiers in two cases, attempted murder in 3 cases.
- According to psychiatric expert: No personality disorder or mental illness – criminally liable.
- Fragile self-worth, inhibited social assertiveness, fragmented identity, pessimistic sentiment.
- IQ slightly above average

- In **1995** Germany becomes the main place of residence for the family. X's father is working as a self-employed roofer, his mother is a housewife.
- Parents don't speak German fluently; older brother keeps contact to X's teachers.
- The family-life seems to be harmonious at first; X has a good relationship to his parents.
- **2007** things change: Father suffers a heart attack. The financial situation of the family deteriorates. Parents become increasingly unsatisfied.
- At the same time X starts getting poor grades at school and has to repeat 10th grade. His parents react in a disappointed and sulky way. X feels guilty (depressive mood).

Religious Socialization

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- His parents and his brothers are not very religious.
- His mother prays regularly but the Quran is not a noteworthy topic in his family.
- He has no social ties (peer group etc.) to a radical Islamic scene.
- He is described as introverted, not aggressive, trustworthy and humorous.

Peer-Group and Social Life

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- He has never had a girlfriend or sexual relationship.
- Problems to establish friendships and to speak with strangers.
- He is insecure in social contexts. In difficult situations he tends to withdraw.
- X keeps friendships and acquaintances. About 5 persons belong to his inner circle of friends. They play videogames regularly.
- **2011:** He cuts off contact to his friends about 3 months before his deed.

- His school achievements are rather poor.
- **2006/2007:** After repeating 10th grade his achievements become better and he receives a good middle school degree.
- After changing to high school his school performance becomes worse, he starts to skip school and stays at home playing computer.
- X repeats 11th grade and his marks become better.
- **Summer 2010:** In the second half of 12th grade, he quits school but keeps this decision secret from his parents.

Phase of Depressive Mood

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- **2006/2007** substantially depressive mood accompanied by suicidal thoughts (for 3 years).
- He never talks with family or friends about his problems.
- Cognitive fixation on the senselessness of life, extreme feelings of guilt towards his parents, feels needless, suicidal thoughts.
- He intensifies his interest in Islam and is eager to practice his religion.
- On the advise of his teacher, he tries to get in touch with a psychologist. After a first contact via telephone X never makes an appointment for a consultation.
- In **2010** there seems to be an improvement of symptomatology after he decides to quit school.

Occupational Life

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- **August 2010:** After trying to get an apprentice position, he starts a voluntary social year (Islamic nursing service) 180 € /40 hours a week.
- His depressive mood vanishes during this time. He feels needed, useful and active; he also turns to his faith again.
- **November 2010:** He starts to work for a temporary employment agency and is deployed at the postcenter at Frankfurt Airport.
- Change of the employment relationship at the Islamic Nursing Service from social service to minor employment 255 €/month. Fixed term contract directly with Post AG.
- Dismissal of employment at nursing service (reason: lack of patients). Fears to loose job at Post AG too.

Cognitive Opening Towards Islam

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- **2006/2007:** When X is 16 years old, he turns to Islam and starts to read the Quran in German language (depressive mood).
- The pressing question for the meaning of life leads him to daily prayer.
- He especially tries to meet behavioral prohibitions: he doesn't celebrate, he doesn't drink, he doesn't have any contact to women.
- The implementation of religion in his lifestyle gives him satisfaction: discipline, solid rules and a daily routine structured by prayers (5 times a day since **2010**).
- To clarify questions of faith he researches on the internet for religious advise.

Turning Towards Radical Islam

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- He deals with salafist and jihadist content;
- He is confronted with most of the material on Facebook and YouTube.
- He has an account at Global Islamic Mediafront Forum.
- As he feels more confident in religious questions, he starts to visit radical mosques.
- Later investigators found:
 - ⇒ 599 salafist and jihadist text documents on his Ipod;
 - ⇒ 229 audio files;
 - ⇒ 131 anashids;
 - ⇒ 51 sermons;

Turning Towards Radical Islam

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- Glorification of martyrdom and armed jihad (also in Western countries) in order to defend the Muslim community against enemies.
- Fatwas (religious advises) by Al Awlaki: not engaging in jihad is an act of disbelief.
- Anashids which propagandize turning to brothers in faith and turning away from infidels.

Warning Behavior

(Meloy et al. 2012)

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Fixation warning behavior (since 2006)

- Personal grievances: Guilt towards parents, negative self evaluation, poor grades, low self-efficacy, depressive mood;
- Moral outrage: Fixation on the suffering of Muslims and he regards US-Americans as personified devils;
- Fixation on “the forgotten duty“ – Loyalty towards brothers in faith, turning away from infidels (social withdrawal).

Identification warning behavior (since 2006)

- Identification with jihadist ideology (duty to jihad);
- Identification with mujahedeen (strength and self-efficacy);
- Identification with ummah (commitment to a cause).

Warning Behavior

(Meloy et al. 2012)

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Novel Aggression and Leakage (since June, 2010)

- Chat messages which legitimize violence;
- Intention to fight in Iraq or Afghanistan;
- Glorification and legitimization of martyrdom;
- Increasing intolerance against people who do not follow salafist rules.
- X states his disgust towards infidels and writes in chats and forums about killing kuffars with a knife or burning them (Egoshoooter).

Warning Behavior

(Meloy et al. 2012)

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Energy burst (since June, 2010)

- Intensification of religious practices.
- February 2011: He starts to upload tons of jihadist material on his Ipod (Clandestine Excitement);
- Starts to add Facebook friends with Islamic names and symbols on their profiles randomly.

Pathway to Violence/Radicalization

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Trigger : Personal Grievances (2006/2007)

- Fathers' disease, failure in school, loss of job, bad financial situation. Disappointment of parents;
- states of psycho-social tension, negative self-evaluation, narcissistic wounding;
- Need for stabilization of self-worth: Feeling needed and valuable.

Cognitive Opening: Turning towards religion (2006/2007)

- Searching for meaning, clearness, authority, and guidance;
- Research and exchange via Internet (social fears);
- Turning towards unambiguous radical contents (social withdrawal).

Pathway to Violence/Radicalization

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Process of Transformation: (2008-2011)

- Successive socialization towards extremism: he gets increasingly selfconfident in active engagement with new roles;
- Tensions and ambiguity decrease;
- He interprets his life in light of the ideology and adjusts his action according to it;
- Switch from personal to social identity/from personal grievances to moral outrage (Fixation);
- Identification with jihadists and striving for martyrdom (corresponding with suicidality);
- Increasing commitment to the cause (“the forgotten duty“):
Leaking and novel aggression.

“Settling the outstanding bill” and keeping functionality of identity

- Ongoing social stress (end of 2010: loss of job, guilt and lies towards parents);
- Negative perspective for the future, no alternatives for self-realization;
- Mujaheddin Identity becomes more important than ever for stabilization of self-worth;
- Trigger 2: Reactivation of moral outrage because of US-soldiers humiliating Muslims (Video);
- Opportunity and signals (weapon);
- Action is necessary to keep new definition of identity functional for self-worth stabilization.

Thank you.

nils.boeckler@uni-bielefeld.de