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Cincinnati Field Office

FBI ♦ 2012 Ronald Reagan Drive ♦ Cincinnati OH 45236 ♦ www.fbi.gov ♦ @FBIcincinnati

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Contact: Todd Lindgren
(513) 979-8347

Investigative Report on the August 04, 2019 Attack in Dayton, Ohio

The Cincinnati Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Dayton Police Department today released the following investigative report regarding the August 04, 2019 attack in Dayton, Ohio.

- The substantive investigation has concluded. The investigation involved over 125 interviews in multiple states, the review of over 950 surveillance videos amounting to approximately 400 hours of footage, and a comprehensive analysis of electronic devices, social media content, and other evidence.
- The evidence from the extensive investigation indicated the perpetrator, Connor Betts, was solely responsible for the injuries and deaths that were a result of his actions. He acted alone and was not directed by any organization or aligned to any specific ideological group.
- The investigation indicated the perpetrator likely violated federal law by lying about his drug use in early 2019 when he purchased the firearm used in the attack. The additional firearm parts, body armor, and 100-round magazine used in the attack were acquired on open market internet sites with the assistance of a known associate.
- The associate, Ethan Kollie, was arrested for illegally possessing certain firearms (including temporarily possessing the one involved in the Dayton attack) and lying on federal firearms transaction record ATF Form 4473. Kollie pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 32 months in prison in February 2020 ([U.S. Attorney's Office press release](#)).

FBI Assessment of Attacker's Motivation

As part of the investigative team's effort to determine the shooter's motivation for the attack, the Cincinnati Field Office and Dayton Police Department requested assistance from the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU), based in Quantico, Virginia. BAU has completed its analysis of the information and evidence gathered throughout the investigation and shared its key findings with the Cincinnati Field Office and Dayton Police Department. Following is the summary of BAU's key findings.

- The FBI's BAU assessed the attacker's enduring fascination with mass violence and his inability to cope with a convergence of personal factors, to include a decade-long struggle with multiple mental health stressors and the successive loss of significant stabilizing anchors experienced prior to August 04, 2019, likely were the primary contributors to the timing and finality of his decision to commit a mass shooting in Dayton, Ohio.
- While the investigation uncovered the attacker had a history of mental illness, as well as suicidal and violent fantasies, there were no specific warnings he intended to commit a crime. There was also no indication that the attacker discussed his intentions to conduct a violent attack with friends or family.
- The investigation revealed the attacker fantasized about mass shootings, serial killings, and murder-suicide for at least a decade without sharing specific details with friends or family. This underscores the importance of bystanders' attentiveness to more subtle changes an individual may exhibit that could be indicative of their decision to commit violence, such as a change in personal circumstances, an increase in perceived stressors, or language indicating they may be contemplating suicide.
- Information obtained from interviews with the attacker's friends and peers suggested "bystander fatigue" was potentially a major factor in why the attacker was not reported to authorities prior to committing violence. The term bystander fatigue is used by the FBI's BAU to describe the passivity, inaction, or inattention to concerning behaviors observed by individuals who have a close, interpersonal relationship to a person of concern due to their prolonged exposure to the person's erratic or otherwise troubling behavior over time.

The FBI and Dayton Police Department commend all of the partners involved for their efforts in the response and investigation of this horrific attack. The rapid reaction by Dayton police officers and their decisive actions at the shooting scene undoubtedly saved additional lives from being lost. Both agencies continue to work with the victims who were impacted and have updated them on the status of the investigation.

"Finding answers for the victims and their families has been a driving motivator each day," stated FBI Cincinnati Special Agent in Charge J. William Rivers. "From the start, this has been a thorough and deliberate investigation. Due to technical challenges accessing lawfully acquired evidence that was encrypted, this investigation has taken significantly longer than expected. However, we are confident that it has uncovered the key facts and that we have done everything in our ability to provide answers to all those impacted by this horrible attack."

With the substantive conclusion of the investigation, the Cincinnati Field Office of the FBI does not anticipate releasing any further updates.

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