

WHAT IS MUU

MUU DESCRIPTION

- In recent years, UK counterterrorism officials have created a category to explain extremist ideologies that are **mixed, unstable, or unclear**, also referred to as **MUU**.
- MUU is a **catch-all phrase** and similar to the US phrase, **Salad Bar Extremism**. It comprises extremists who combine multiple ideologies (**mixed**), shift between ideologies (**unstable**), or lack a coherent ideology (**unclear**).
- Thematic similarities between ideologies, easy access to extremist content online, and the increased popularity of the lone actor model are key factors in this type of violent extremism.
- One criticism of MUU is that grouping extremists in a catch-all category can overlook the nuances in motivations. For this reason, social scientists established CoVE.



CoVE

CoVE DESCRIPTION

- The term **composite violent extremism** or **CoVE** was coined to address critiques with “catch-all” labels such as MUU and Salad Bar Extremism. CoVE can be **ambiguous, mixed, fused, or convergent** (see page 2 for examples).

- The four CoVE **subcategories** intend to better organize and understand extremists with MUU ideologies.

AMB **Ambiguous:** An individual who fosters multiple prejudices, ideas, or grievances without adhering to a specific ideology (e.g., Bend, Oregon, grocery store shooter).

MIX **Mixed:** A person influenced by multiple but distinct ideologies at equal levels (e.g., Allen, Texas, outlet mall shooter).

FUS **Fused:** A person who adheres to one ideology integrated with elements of other ideologies (e.g., El Paso, Texas, Walmart shooter).

CON **Convergent:** Extremists with different ideologies collaborating through shared grievances.

- When motivations and ideologies are clear and present, Strategic Analysis Research (SRA) analysts will use CoVE terminology. If such information remains unclear or unknown, analysts can utilize MUU.
- Given little is currently known about Thomas Crooks, the suspect in the attempted former President Trump assassination, SRA would assess Crooks as MUU rather than a specific subcategory of CoVE.
 - SRA can re-evaluate its assessment of the suspect if and when pertinent information is published.

CASE STUDY

TIMELINE OF IDENTIFYING A MUU EXTREMIST

6

6 May 2023

MASS SHOOTING

Eight people are shot and killed outside an outlet mall in Allen, Texas. The gunman used an AR-15-style rifle and indiscriminately shot toward shoppers. Victims ranged from ages five through 61. Law enforcement neutralized the shooter, who was a Hispanic male in his early 30s.

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[Exact date unknown] May 2023

NAZI SYMBOLS

News media reported that the shooter had Nazi symbols tattooed on his body aligned with “neo-Nazi ideology.”

24

24 May 2023

HOMELAND SECURITY

In the wake of the Allen, Texas, outlet mall shooting, a bulletin released by DHS states, the shooter was “fixated on mass shootings and held views consistent with racially or ethnically motivated violent extremist and involuntary celibate (incel) violent extremist ideologies.”

Per the DHS bulletin:

“Lone offenders and small groups motivated by a range of ideological beliefs and personal grievances continue to pose a persistent and lethal threat to the Homeland.”

31

31 May 2023

MUU

In response to the additional details, researchers explained that traditionally terrorism focuses on a single ideology, as terrorism evolves, some violent extremists display a mix of disparate beliefs, interests, and grievances. SRA assesses the shooter to fall within the **Mixed** CoVE category of MUU extremists.

CURRENT SITUATION

EVOLUTION OF TERMS

- In 2019, the Federal Bureau of Investigation identified “**mixed ideology extremism**” as an emerging violent extremist threat.
- FBI Director Christopher Wray utilized the term “**salad bar**” to describe the rise of unclear extremism motives in the US.
- CoVE was established in 2022 to address critiques with “catch-all” labels such as MUU and Salad Bar Extremism.

CHALLENGES WITH TERMS

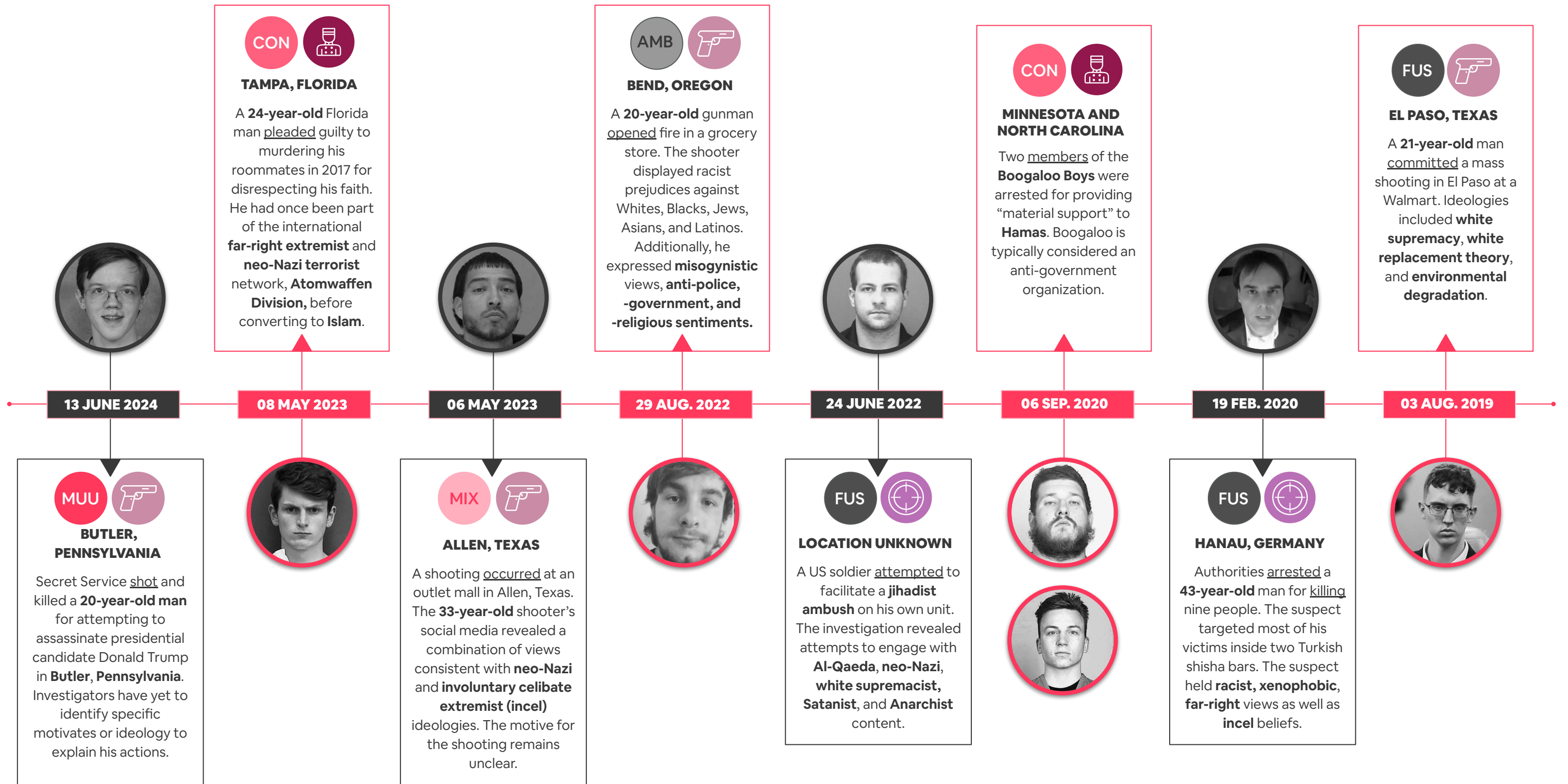
- An increasing number of extremist activities are being categorized by both academics and law enforcement as mixed, unclear, or unstable.
 - This presents law enforcement with challenges such as confidently identifying tactics, targets, and motives in attacks.

MUU/CoVE EXTREMISTS

- Though a lot remains unclear about MUU ideology, UK terrorism arrest statistics show MUU disproportionately affects individuals under 20.
- The US identified that lone wolf actors are a significant detection risk due to their capacity for independent radicalization via online platforms and fringe content, ability to mobilize discreetly, and access to firearms.
- Empirical research remains limited and individuals could plot actions out of a sense of duty, a desire for belonging, or even those obsessed with massacre or extreme/mass violence without targeting a specific group.

EXAMPLES OF EVENTS REVEALING EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY THAT IS MIXED, UNSTABLE, OR UNCLEAR

In the following examples, authorities determined the perpetrators to adhere to mixed, unstable, or unclear extremism ideologies. With the CoVE framework now available, SRA could assess each suspect's CoVE subcategory. The exception is the Butler, PE, attempted assassination since authorities are still gathering and releasing details about the case.



MUU Mixed, Unstable, or Unclear Ideology
CON Composite Violent Extremism: **Convergent**
MIX Composite Violent Extremism: **Mixed**
FUS Composite Violent Extremism: **Fusion**
AMB Composite Violent Extremism: **Ambiguous**
 Shooting Incident
 Arrested & Charged
 Attempted Attack