The Anti-Women Movement: Incels, Misogyny, and the Threat to the West Coast
Date: Apr. 11, 2019

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SUMMARY

Individuals identifying as "incels" can be linked to previous acts of violence, circa 1989 until the present. Moreover, the historical frequency of incel related incidents has arguably increased. Incels are men who are self described as being "involuntary celibates" who believe they have a privileged entitlement to sex from women, possibly based on tenets from the "Male Supremacy" ideology[1]. Kinetic misogynistic attacks have not been characterized by known physical indicators/ behaviour patterns. Most of the relevant recognisable indicators, are identified, post incident and occur in the form of communication taking place over social media (such as reddit). Furthermore, it is currently unknown if incels may have infiltrated legitimate men's groups, for the purpose of recruiting sympathers. This note concludes by making recommendations related to policy and law enforcement to address this potential threat. There are links between the Right-Wing Extremist movement and the incel movement based on the polycentric, reticulate and segmentary nature of violent transnational social movements (VTSMs). Though there are clear differences in membership, the incel movement can be seen as part of the larger Right-Wing Extremist movement, particularly as a result of the regressive views of society and the subjugation of women which are shared by both.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

It can be argued that incel (Involuntary Celibates) are a threat to Canada's National security due to the evidence that it is a growing transnational social movement that has produced multiple violent incidents already. These incidents have occurred both here and abroad. It can also be argued that, due to its predominantly online nature and characterization of incidents as "lone wolf" attacks, law enforcement have yet to treat this aspect of the right-wing extremist (RWE) movement as a real security threat. This briefing note seeks to expose the breadth of violence associated with Incel members and inspired actors.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Incels are a newly acknowledged phenomena which appears to have been misunderstood, under-reported and under-resourced. The first attack that can be seen as linked to the incel movement's ideology, as it has come to be known actually occured in Canada in 1989. Marc Lepine, deliberately

[1] Male supremacy as defined by the Southern Poverty Law Centre, is a hateful ideology advocating for the subjugation of women (n.d.).

removed men from the room, and proceeded to kill women (CityNews, 2006). This attacker's misogynistic actions arguably formed the foundation and reference point for future Incel and incel inspired attacks. His attacks have been embraced by the Incel community who, according to McKeon (2018), consider Lepine a kind of forerunner - an early hERo. (NOTE: hERo refers to Elliot Rodger, forum users may use "going ER" as a reference to taking action such as attacking *Chads* or *Stacys* *see footnote 2 for definitions). Contemporary attacks continue to be motivated by the misogynistic views held by these men as a rationale for violence. Furthermore, data suggests that the time intervals between each identified attack is decreasing (See Figure 1 below).

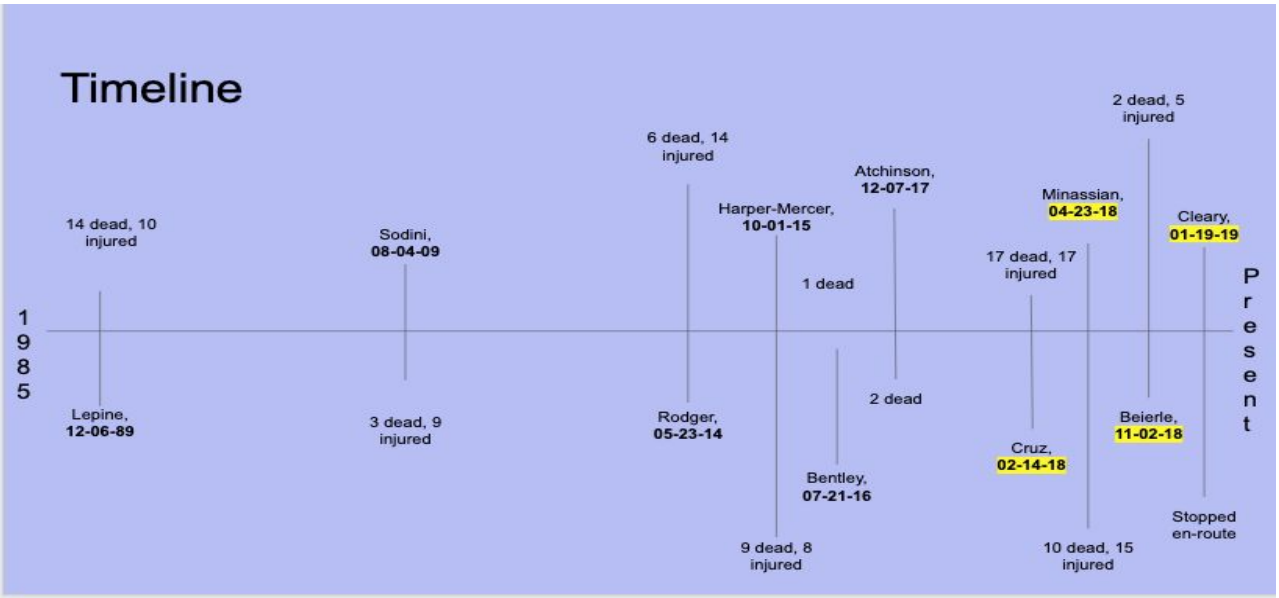


Figure 1. Incel timeline of attacks.

SUMMARY OF KEY EVENTS

To date, there have been ten reported or acknowledged attacks that have resulted in 64 deaths, and another 78 injured. These attacks have either been perpetrated by men who have been linked to the incel community through online activity or have associated closely with the values and misogyny of the incel movement.

Incel intent may be hidden within intimate partner violence statistics. Misogynistic attacks may be more likely to occur within first or second dates where rejection has occurred. Such distinctions may not have been recorded. There needs to be a greater awareness that misogyny can be a motivator of attacks, and that it can be couched in violence in the dating world, where it may be mischaracterized as domestic or intimate partner violence. Domestic violence is about power and control which can occur between both sexes in intimate partner relationships, misogyny however is specifically about the hatred of women. This distinction is key to understanding why misogyny may be a factor in intimate partner violence statistics where it has been conflated into dating violence or female homicide following rejection. Further, experts have linked the deaths of 57 Canadian women to misogyny and femicide (Dangerfield, 2018). More research might be needed into the intent and beliefs of these perpetrators to establish how big a problem such violence might be particularly its relationship to incel values including possible

involvement in incel communities. However, incel related incidents still remain underreported, this is partly due to factors including the “normalisation” of these incidents in society (Dangerfield, 2018).

Furthermore, the incel movement has been previously identified as a threat, however, not by law enforcement, in a 2019 CBC Fifth Estate documentary detailing the movement and their online activities. Particularly, Mike Arntfield, a former police detective and criminologist who holds a PhD in criminal justice, has noted that “online subcultures like incels need to be taken more seriously by authorities” (CBC, 2019).

BACKGROUND

The term “incels”, originating in 1997, was originally created by a female student named Alana. The website was called Alana’s Involuntary Celibacy Project and was set up to help people online. As Alana notes in the BBC (2018) interview "It definitely wasn't a bunch of guys blaming women for their problems. That's a pretty sad version of this phenomenon that's happening today. Things have changed in the last 20 years." The legitimacy of the term “incel” evolved to become synonymous with online groups of men who feel that they can't enter into sexual relationships. The term incel has also gone through name changes such “invcels” and back again to the more common term “incels” (Gimlet, 2018). The forum now attracts more misogynistic members (Gimlet, 2018).

Figure 2. (see below) shows individuals who have committed attacks that have been affiliated with or influential to the incel community.

Of the ten recorded attacks, there are three Canadian attackers that demonstrate the levels of violence that incels have committed. Arguably, Marc Lepine in December 1989 set the foundation and format for incel like attacks, including the characteristics of misogyny and hatred towards women as indicators. At the Montreal campus of l’École Polytechnique, Lepine sent all the men out of the class prior to the attack. In his suicide note, Lepine blamed feminists as the cause of his attack. 14 women were killed and another 10 women and 4 men were wounded. The attack was one of the first mass attacks directed at only women in North America. Twenty five years later, another mass attack was conducted based on similar misogynistic values. This attack was carried out by Elliot Rodger in May 2014 in California. Rodger killed 6 people and wounded 14 others, after this attack investigators found an online manifesto and various videos of Roger calling himself an incel and blaming women for rejecting his romantic advances (The Guardian, 2018).

The current Incel Movement often deifies Rodger as a saint or sacred figure within the incel community (See appendix A). In April 2018, Alek Minassian violently ran over pedestrians in Toronto, killing 10 people and injuring another 14. Of the 10 fatalities, 8 were women (CBC, 2018). Minassian’s social media posts leading up to the incident have him praising Elliot Rodger and claiming that the “incel rebellion” had begun and that the aim was to “overthrow all the Chads and Stacys”.[2]

[2]Chads are men who are sexually successful, charismatic, handsome and clever . Stacy’s are women who seen as promiscuous, stereotypically air-headed, unintelligent, and beautiful. These terms are often used in an effort to dehumanize those they are speaking about.
https://www.thespec.com/news-story/8605039-inside-the-life-of-alek-minassian-the-toronto-van-rampage-suspect-no-one-thought-capable-of-murder/

NAME	DATE (YY-MM-DD)	LOCATION	DEATHS	INJURED
Lepine, Marc; age 25	89-06-12	Montreal, Quebec	14 dead	10 injured
Sodini, George; age 48	09-04-08	"Outside" Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	3 dead	9 injured
Rodger, Elliot; age 22	14-23-05	Isla Vista, California	6 dead	14 injured
Harper-Mercer, Christopher; age 26	15-01-10	Roseburg, Oregon	9 dead	8 injured
Bentley, Sheldon; age 37	16-21-07	Edmonton, Alberta	1 dead	0 injured
Atchison, William; age 21	17-07-12	Aztec, New Mexico	2 dead	0 injured
Cruz, Nikolas; age 19	18-14-02	Parkland, Florida	17 dead	17 injured
Minassian, Alek; age 25	18-23-04	Toronto, Ontario	10 dead	15 injured
Beierle, Scott; age 40	18-02-11	Tallahassee, Florida	2 dead	5 injured
Cleary, Christopher; age 27	19-19-01	Utah	0 dead	0 injured

Figure 2. Chronological list of attackers.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The historical context of the incel movement, is recorded in the deaths and injuries (Figure 2), however the real threat is that their communications are primarily conducted on social media. This makes the monitoring and identification of their activity harder to monitor. Moreover, further hypothetical consideration is the incel groups may be also be moving their online activity to the TOR (Dark Web), which make them harder to detect, and monitor (Bihn-Wallace 2018). There are a variety of online

forums which may be linked to the incel movement. The most notable ones are Men Going Their Own Way **(**Mgtow.com), lookism.net, incels.co, as well as various subReddits (as of April 11 2019).

The role of social media and the Incel movement is clearly demonstrated by the arrest of Christopher Cleary in Provo Utah. The significance of this arrest the points out the following considerations 1) Mr. Cleary had a previous pattern of behavior for felony stalking and threatening women, 2) police information sharing, and 3) attention to the larger situational awareness of the Women's Marches in Provo. (Oligschlaeger, 2019).

These mass attacks that put women and bystanders at risk have been becoming more common in recent years. If the incel subculture is allowed to grow, there may be further incidents of violence. There may also be an opportunity for the incel community to recruit from legitimate mens right groups which can perpetuate the misogyny rhetoric and violence. Examples of the active interest participation in the Incel social media forums are noted below in Figure 3., Figure 4. and Figure 5.

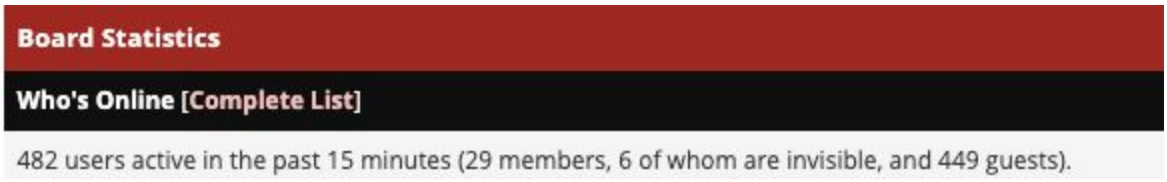


Figure 3. From Lookism.net. As of April 11, 2019. https://lookism.net/

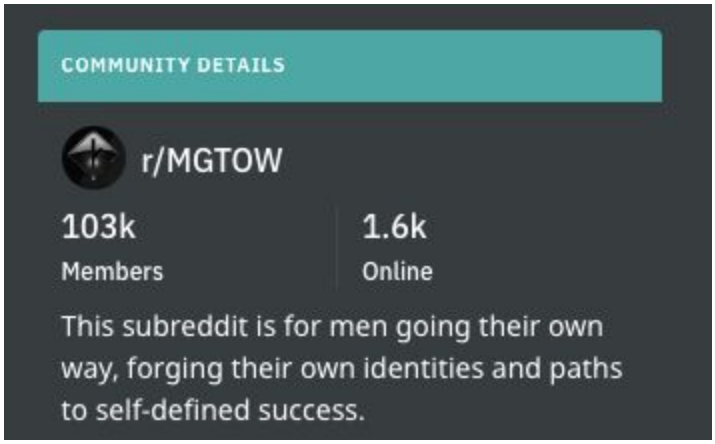


Figure 4. From the MGTOW subreddit. As of April 11, 2019. https://www.reddit.com/r/MGTOW/

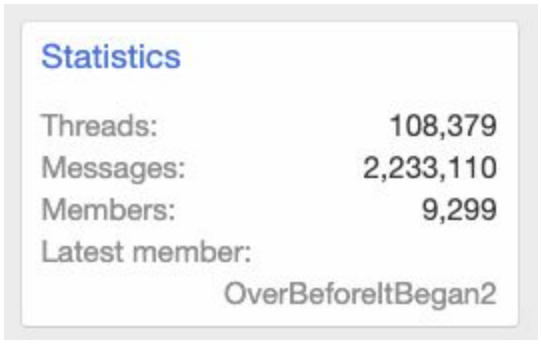


Figure 5. From Incels.co as of April 11, 2019. https://incels.co/

The final key consideration is whether or not Incels and incel identity might be considered a violent transnational social movement (VTSMs). VTSMs traits include polycentric, reticulate and segmentary patterns of behaviour and identity. Polycentricity refers to how these groups have more than one core or centre hub, furthering the network structure. More than one visionary thought leader, messenger or advocate can exist. Since the incel community functions primarily online and on various platforms there is no distinct leader, the community operates like a network rather than a hierarchy. The segmentary nature of the group refers to how members may have become involved for differing reasons, and that the values and specific goals of individual members may not be the same (Kelshall & Dittmar, 2018). Based on this definition, Incels might be defined as VTSM which has already transitioned to kinetic violence thus empowering others who share the same identity and beliefs to engage with the precedent of kinetic violence as a norm. For this reason any justice and public safety response must consider a multi-agency approach.

ALTERNATE AND WESTCOAST PERSPECTIVES

Thus far, there have not been any reported or recorded violent incidents linked to the incel movement that have occured in British Columbia. However, the reported incel linked incidents, can be arguably classified as high impact/ low probability events, therefore asking the question of "why this hasn't happened in Vancouver" may be ill informed. In probabilistic terms, it is unlikely that an incel incident can be expected to occur in a given or particular city or region. However, given the increased frequency of reported incidents, and the transnational or borderless embracing of this identity, it is arguably that the overall probability of a future incel related incident is increasing. Therefore, the question that could be asked instead, is "when might this happen?" and "what do we need to look for that may provide a possible warning?".

Arguably, there needs to be an awareness of individuals not directly affiliated with the incel movement, but who may be construed as messengers of the cause. Some potential messengers who may be providing incel movement with legitimizing rhetoric, but are not themselves incel, are Dr. Warren Farrell, and Jordan Peterson. Both of these potential sources of legitimization have been in Vancouver in the last 5 years (Peterson, 2018; Farrell, 2016). Both Dr. Peterson and Dr. Farrell have academic backgrounds, which may be a driving force in legitimating the values of male supremacy held by members of the incel movement who have arguably adopted Dr. Peterson and Dr. Farrell's message, and hold that Dr. Peterson and Dr. Farrell's views are supportive of some of the incel movements' beliefs (Barth, 2018; Southey, 2018). It is important to note, neither Dr. Farrell nor Dr. Peterson have self identified as incel nor is there any suggestion of their direct affiliation as such.

The legitimacy of Dr.'s Farrell and Peterson's views raises the issue of recognised academic perspectives being weaponized by members of incel groups or those who are on the periphery and vulnerable to radicalisation. The potential also exists for incel infiltration of other legitimate groups and recruiting of new members via the use of the work of these established professionals in their field. Recalling the origins of the term incel being linked to the legitimate search for partners initiated by Alana (BBC, 2018), incels have demonstrated an ability to adopt and co-opt branding and terminology. A similar possibility needs to be considered with legitimate men's groups who are actively promoting healthy relationships. It is reasonable to consider that these groups may be targeted, and shows the importance of the role and responsibilities of website or forum administrators in monitoring and then banning those who

promote misogyny or misogynistic violence. Such violence must also be carefully categorised as either hard or soft. As per Galtung (1990), soft violence, or non-kinetic violence, can be understood as violence which does not necessarily manifest physically but causes physiological damage within communities, and deteriorates the fabric of relationships between societies (Galtung, 1990).

Moreover, BC's legal system[3] has previously dealt with issues of male supremacy, arguably quite leniently. Although this is an isolated example of how BC's legal system has addressed cases of violent male domination.There is evidence of individuals supporting the incel movement that are active in Vancouver, BC (see Figure 6. below). Therefore, this evidence suggests that there may be the potential for future legal cases to occur in BC, where issues pertaining to male supremacy might be a factor. This pattern of leniency is also found in femicide in the Canadian context (Dawson, 2015).

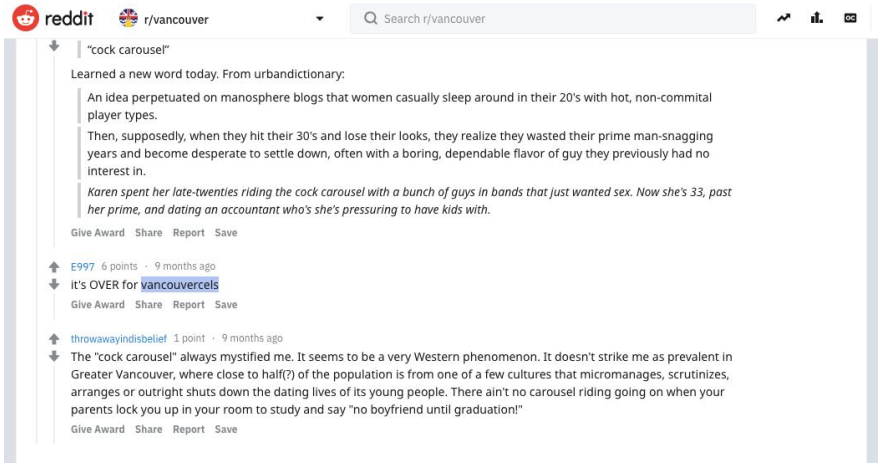


Figure 6. A post from r/vancouver on Reddit, referencing Vancouver Incels. April 11, 2019. https://www.reddit.com/r/vancouver/comments/8utnoi/does_vancouver_seem_to_have_a_noticeably_high/

WHAT IS NOT KNOWN

It is not fully known what (if any) reliable indicators may exist, that can be used to identify potential individuals that are part of the incel movement, who are on the verge of escalating to violence. There may be a potential role for predictive analytics and precursor analysis to assist in potentially forecasting the occurrence of future incel incidents. However, it is currently unclear as to the full extent that these techniques may be operationally implemented to perform this function. Two possible evaluation tools can be considered: Pyrik's adaptation of the "Path to Violence" and CASIS' Pinehurst model. Both models assess soft violence which leads to escalation, and both models can be used / deployed in both incel operational environments: cyber and physical.

[3] "A B.C. Supreme Court judge has sentenced Winston Blackmore to six months of house arrest and James Oler to three months of house arrest for practising polygamy". (CBC, 2018).

Moreover, it is unknown if legitimate men's groups may have been infiltrated by individuals supporting incel ideological positions. Potentially, for the purpose of promoting any specific and more extreme incel ideological positions and possibly gaining a broader base of support for the incel movement.

Furthermore, it is unknown how many instances of intimate partner violence, crimes of passion, date rapes and homicides of women, have been misreported or mischaracterized. Where there may be evidence of possible incel influence or misogynistic intent as playing a role in these incidents.

NEXT STEPS

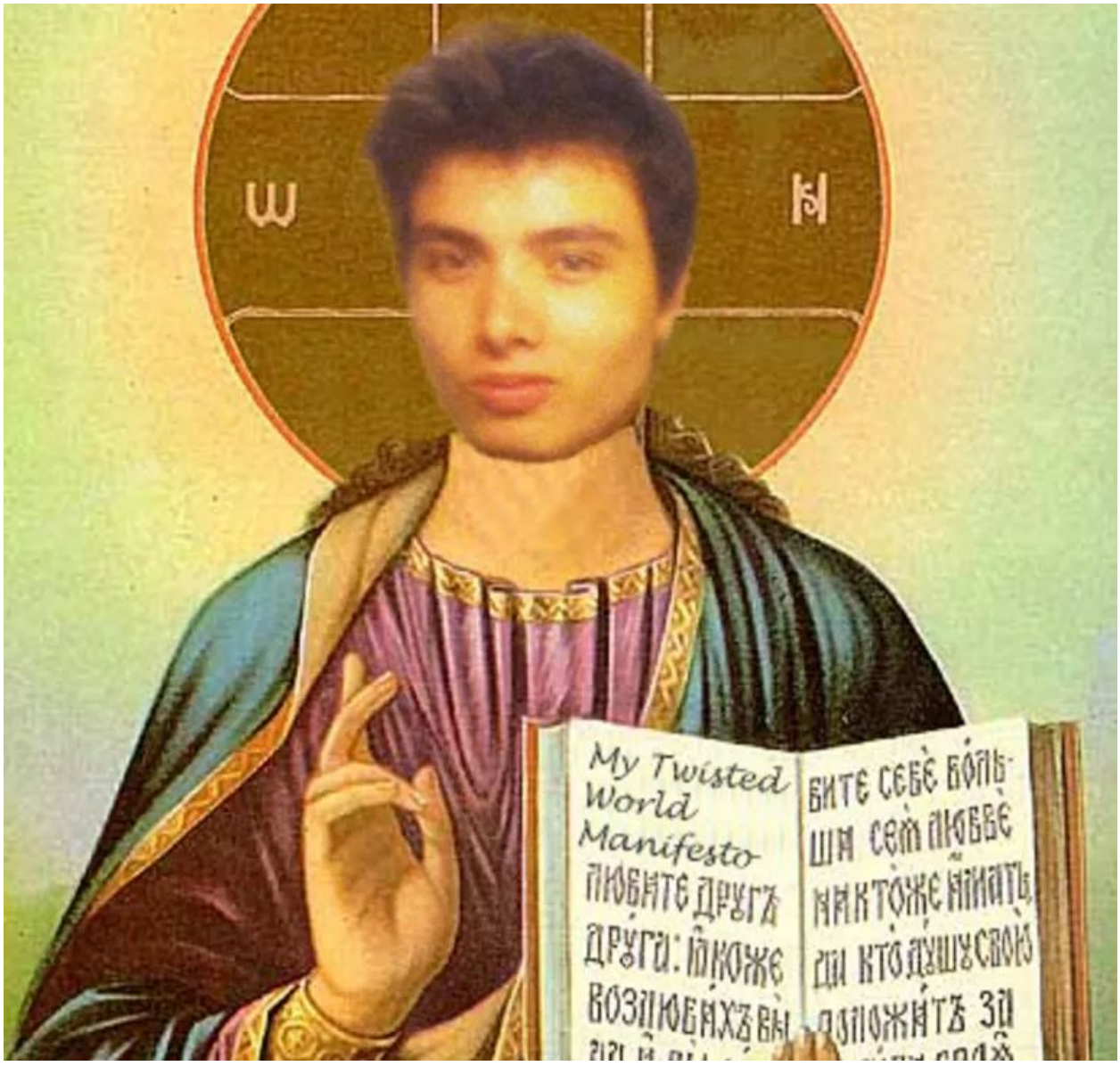
Recommendation 1: Develop an analysis and a social media campaign to alert and educate legitimate men's advocacy groups who have positive impacts on public policy, to prevent the infiltration of legitimate men's groups and prevent the potential radicalization of these groups to support the dangerous misogyny within incel positions.

Recommendation 2: Conduct Dark Web surveillance to better understand the scope of the incel presence, as well as to potentially monitor any communications made by incel groups active on the Dark Web, which may provide some possible warning signs of an upcoming attack.

Recommendation 3: Utilize the application of linguistic modeling, to analyze and identify the content of Vancouver linked subreddits, in order to detect possible incel activity.

Recommendation 4: Review previous incidents of intimate partner violence, crimes of passion, date rapes and homicides of women to look for indicators of incel influence, or misogynistic intent.

Appendix A.



Elliot Rodger, pictured as a religious figure. Retrieved from: We Hunted the Mammoth. (2017) http://www.wehuntedthemammoth.com/2017/05/23/reddit-incels-celebrate-misogynist-mass-murderer-elliot-rodger-on-saint-elliots-day/

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