

From Kenosha to Buffalo, There Were Indicators

“Every human behavior can be explained by what precedes it, but that does not excuse it.”-Gavin De Becker

As we grapple with recent news events involving mass killings, it’s easy to get lost in the fog of why the killers did what they did rather than could it have been prevented. Whether it is a parade in Kenosha, Wisconsin or a grocery store in Buffalo, NY, violence involving the killing of innocent victims drives emotional responses.

As in violent acts like these, when race plays a role, race becomes the driver of the narrative, and we lose focus on the indicators that were right in front of us and the inability of law enforcement or community leaders to take any action.

These two recent incidents illustrate the problems facing law enforcement and communities when it comes to prevention. Certainly, the hate and motives of the perpetrators are evident, however, like all mass killings, the indicators were there.

In the case of Payton Gendron, according to reports, “high school authorities in Broome County, New York, called the police in June 2021, claiming that Gendron had “threatened violence in comments made to fellow students”.

In addition, “A school official reported that this very troubled young man had made statements indicating that he wanted to do a shooting, either at a graduation ceremony, or sometime after,” The state police investigated and Gendron was referred for counseling and a mental health assessment.

In the case of Darrel Brooks in Kenosha, the ex-con charged with the killing of five white people at a Wisconsin Christmas parade shared social media posts calling for violence against white people — and suggesting “Hitler was right” for killing Jews.

**Steve Hooper is a Professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, College of Business, Security, and Intelligence, retired FBI Special Agent, and Founder of Tripwire Security Solutions, LLC consulting and training.**