

7/31/24 “We are prepared to protect the right of all subway riders to be free from N.Y.P.D. intrusion and harassment.” That’s how New York City’s Legal Aid Society and ACLU chapter reacted to the Mayor’s announcement that weapons-detecting scanners will be placed at every subway entrance. Concerns about accuracy and false positives have also been expressed. A pilot program using one device to be rotated among stations is set to begin. There are 472 subway stations, so full deployment seems far in the future. [NYPD document](#)

[A coordinated effort](#) by the California A.G., five Southern California cities and the Riverside sheriff’s office against smash-and-grab robberies has led to the conviction and imprisonment of eight leaders on charges of robbery and theft. During May-August 2023 they assembled crews using social media, then swarmed high-end stores in Los Angeles, Orange and Riverside Counties. Their targets included Nordstrom, Yves Saint Laurent and Louis Vuitton. Losses to the retailers exceeded 1.7 million.

7/25/24 Instagram may not seem the best place to boast about committing armed robberies. Nor the best place to post images of the cash and goods they took at gunpoint. But that’s what D’Angelo Spencer did as he and three associates committed a string of holdups at Los Angeles-area convenience stores late last year. All have been arrested and face Federal charges.

3/26/24 Violence besets New York City. [Officer Jonathan Diller was shot and killed](#) by the passenger of a car stopped by NYPD’s Critical Response Team. Return gunfire wounded the shooter. He had four prior arrests, including a recent gun charge. The car’s driver has eleven prior arrests. NYPD’s chief of detectives called it “a recidivist problem. Same bad people doing bad things to good people.” And in the city’s fraught subways, [a 24-year old man was arrested for murder](#) after pushing a rider into the path of an oncoming train. Hours earlier, [a dispute between passengers](#) about smoking had led to a stabbing.

3/7/24 New York City subways have suffered a 45 percent year-to-year increase in major crimes. That’s led Governor Kathy Hochul to send 1,000 State police officers and National Guard troops to “conduct bag checks” and otherwise help NYPD tamp things down on the beset system. Her move is welcomed by transit workers. But it’s drawing rebukes from civil liberties groups, who prefer she focus on “longstanding problems of homelessness, poverty or access to mental health care.”

10/6/23 New York City subway shooter Frank James, who opened fire with a 9mm. pistol in April 2022, wounding ten passengers, drew ten terms of life imprisonment on his guilty plea to ten counts of terrorism. A chronic YouTuber, aka “prophet of truth 88,”

James gave himself up one day after his horrendous crime. He had a long arrest record, but as none of his convictions was for a felony, he remained eligible to buy guns. And so he did.

7/7/23 Washington State man Taylor Taranto, 39, has been in D.C., living in his van and consorting with fellow January 6th. Capitol rioters. But they find him worrisome and “incoherent”. Last week he posted a video threatening to blow up his van at a Federal site. That caused the Feds to get misdemeanor warrants for his arrest in the Capitol affair. Taranto was grabbed after live-streaming from the vicinity of former President Obama’s house. Agents found two 9mm pistols, 400 rounds of ammunition and a machete in his vehicle. But a Federal judge warned that without more his prompt release is likely.

7/5/23 Attired in a ballistic vest and carrying an AR-15 rifle, a handgun, extra ammunition magazines and a police scanner, a 40-year old man randomly opened fire as he walked the streets of Philadelphia’s [poverty-stricken Kingsessing neighborhood](#), where he lived. He killed five persons, ages 15 to 59, and wounded two children. Kimbrady Carriker shot at police but soon surrendered. His only reported criminal record are gun and drug misdemeanor charges in 2003, for which he got probation. Carriker is said to have made “disturbing” social media posts prior to the shooting. A [video](#) shows him firing.

6/16/23 Jurors begin deliberating today, and there’s no doubt they will find Robert Bowers guilty. After all, his own lawyers concede that Bowers gunned down eleven worshipers at a Pittsburgh synagogue in October 2018. Still, he’s been charged with sixty-three counts, and it’s possible that a few which require a “conscious intent” to obstruct worship may not hold if jurors believe, as his attorneys insist, that Bowers was acting irrationally. What’s really up in the air is whether, during the second, penalty phase of deliberations, the jury will impose the death sentence.

3/2/23 In mid-February LAPD arrested Jaime Tran, 28 for the unprovoked shootings of two men wearing religious Jewish attire. Tran used a handgun and a rifle he said he purchased in Arizona. At the time he was facing felony charges after being caught with a loaded gun on an L.A.-area college campus. It turns out that Tran was also on the [FBI’s “Guardian” threat-tracking system](#) for sending text and voice-mail threats to former Jewish classmates in dental school. But Tran, who has reportedly been treated for mental problems, was never confronted about his violent inclinations nor investigated for terrorism.

2/9/23 In exchange for “90 consecutive life sentences”, Patrick Crusius, who gunned

down 23 persons and wounded 22 others at an El Paso Walmart in August 2019, pled guilty to hate crimes charges and using a firearm in a Federal crime of violence. Crusius, a 23-year old White nationalist, had targeted Hispanic immigrants, and nearly all who died had Hispanic surnames. Crusius, who “spent countless hours on the Internet” following White supremacy, used an assault rifle. (See 4/22/25 update)

1/4/23 Frank R. James, the 62-year-old “prophet of truth 88” who opened fire on a New York subway car last April, wounding ten, faces ten years to life after pleading guilty to Federal terrorism charges. A social media addict who posted long-winded, misogynistic monologues, James had an extensive criminal record but no felony convictions. Click [here](#) for a couple of his video posts.

9/21/22 With riders shying away from using mass transit because of increased crime and misbehavior - subway ridership is down a staggering forty percent from pre-COVID days - Governor Kathy Hochul has promised to install two video surveillance cameras in every subway car in New York City. But not everyone is convinced that will be enough to regain public confidence in a system beset by “random attacks, muggings and the focus of concerns about rising numbers of homeless people.”

6/9/22 Uvalde residents are troubled with two main questions. Why did police delay moving in? And why wasn't Ramos' threatening behavior - particularly, his posts on social media - reported to officials? This wasn't the first time that the town's schools had come under the gun. [In 2018 two Uvalde teens](#), ages 13 and 14, devised an elaborate plot to commit mass murder at a junior high school on the anniversary of the Columbine massacre. But their intentions became known and the teens were arrested.

According to [a 2018 Secret Service report](#), early intervention is key to preventing school violence. But [its 2019 study](#) of 41 episodes found that although most plotters had leaked their intentions verbally, in writing or otherwise, their warnings weren't heeded. Peers, says a [2021 Secret Service report](#), are best positioned to know, but may not take the messages seriously, or may be afraid or reluctant to snitch. It's up to parents, [says the Washington Post](#), to get their kids to drop the “code of silence” and open up.

6/6/22 Gun-oriented Internet forums redolent with extremist, anti-Government chatter and online sites that sell firearms kits and components offer moral and technical support for those with potentially lethal inclinations. Tactical training videos cover everything from staging an assault to the use of protective gear. While some of the more prominent platforms try to vet content, given the vast online space such efforts have little impact.

5/27/22 In two recent mass killings - one at a Buffalo market, the other in a Texas elementary school - the shooters used “Gen Z” apps, including Snapchat, Instagram, Discord, Yubo and Twitch to communicate and share their intentions. These platforms are designed from the ground up for privacy, and messages and images exchanged within their boundaries can prove impossible for outsiders to monitor.

5/19/22 In response to the Buffalo massacre, New York Governor Kathy Hochul [issued an executive order](#) directing that State Police seek an extreme risk protection order barring persons from gun possession “when there is probable cause to believe the respondent is likely to engage in conduct that would result in serious harm to himself, herself, or others.” [She also directed](#) that State Police form a counterterrorism team that would, among other things, analyze social media posts for potential threats.

5/18/22 [Buffalo Shooter Payton Gendron](#) was friendless and lonely in high school. Other students thought him “socially awkward and nerdy” and avoided him. He didn’t talk much, and when he did “it was about isolation, rejection and desperation.” Gendron learned his racist views online. He became consumed with computer games and was fascinated by guns. [He struggled to keep his parents unaware](#) that he had dropped out of college, had bought guns and was readying an attack. And a half-hour before it began, [he invited other Discord users into his chat room](#) to view his plans, and to watch.

5/17/22 [Buffalo shooter Payton Gendron](#) began posting his plans and intentions in November 2021 on [Discord](#), an online chat application. His screen name was Jimboboiiii. One message explained that he avoided losing his gun rights after being taken in for the mental health check by insisting that his “murder-suicide” comment was a joke. But it wasn’t - “I wrote that down because that’s what I was planning to do.” Gendron also wrote that he made an advance visit to Tops to check it out and had a “close call” with the guard, who became suspicious about his multiple entrances and exits to the store.

4/23/22 [On Friday afternoon, 4/22](#), Raymond Spencer, 23, set up a gun tripod on the fifth-floor balcony of an apartment building in a residential area of Washington, D.C. He opened fire on a nearby school, wounding four, including a child. Spencer, who identified himself as a fan of the AR-15 rifle on his Wikipedia bio, apparently posted a video of the assault online. Immediately after, he apologized for his actions, then taunted police on 4chan, a popular social media network. Spencer committed suicide.

[His Facebook post complained](#) of “many years of mental illness.” It also announced that “I have made the absolutely horrid choice in not only taking my life, but the lives of my aunt...my uncle...and my two sweet, beyond angelic cousins.” Shortly after posting these comments, Brandon Cole-Skogstad, 29, committed suicide with the same 9mm. pistol he had just used to kill Riana and Sean Barry and their two daughters, ages 9 and 12, in their Duluth, Minnesota home. Police in nearby Hermantown, where Cole-Skogstad

lived, had been alerted that he was in a mental health crisis but couldn't find him at home.