

PROACTIVE CEO PROTECTION

The Importance of
Protective Intelligence
Investigations





Chief Executive Officers (CEO) who create highly successful companies are often the company's public face. The future of the company they created may be tethered to the continued good fortune of the CEO and his public image, which can be both a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing when the CEO personifies ingenuity, hard work, solid ethics and other traits of the "American Dream". It can be a curse when they are tainted by scandal or befallen by tragedy. When tragedy strikes such CEOs, the company they created often suffers too. They may lose their strategic direction, customers may lose confidence in them and their market capitalization may plummet accordingly.

No tragedy will captivate public attention and likely magnify damage to the company more than a violent attack resulting in the death or incapacitation of the CEO.

To prevent violent attacks on CEOs, many companies depend on executive protection programs, established internally or contracted externally, to protect CEOs with a close protection team and a residential security team to safeguard their home and office.

While these two components are important, many executive protection programs fail to recognize the importance of also having a protective intelligence investigative capability. Having such capabilities allows them to provide the CEO with an even higher level of safety and protection by proactively identifying, assessing and responding to potential threats against him by defusing and disrupting threatening behavior before it leads to violent actions being carried out. Many such threats develop slowly, over months and years, and require the singularity of focus of a Protective Intelligence Investigator (PII) to ensure they are tracked and monitored. To be effective, PIIs must be closely aligned with and have access to those personnel who support the CEO - both within the company and within the CEO's private life - to ensure they are made aware of all suspicious and potentially threatening behavior and incidents affecting the CEO and his family.

The following case study underscores the importance of having a protective intelligence investigative capability as part of a comprehensive executive protection program.



Unusual Fan Letters to a CEO

A well-known CEO and Chairman of the Board of a major U.S. technology company with a relatively low public profile began receiving unsolicited letters from a woman living in rural West Virginia. The letters were addressed to the CEO and sent to the company's corporate headquarters.

The letters were written informally and appeared very innocuous - as though the author had known the CEO for a long-time. She regularly complimented the CEO for his personal success and that of the company he created. She clearly followed news on the company's progress, new product launches and overall successes as her letters made many references to them. The letters also contained a lot of personal information about her and the adult son who lived with her and gave the general appearance that she was updating the CEO on various aspects of her life.

According to the CEO's directives for processing personal mail sent to his office, his administrative assistants opened the woman's letters and confirmed with the CEO that he did not know her. Following the standard security protocols of the CEO's Executive Protection team, the administrative assistants forwarded each letter they received from her to the team's PII to monitor, evaluate and assess any potential threat the letter writer posed to the CEO.

The PII conducted an initial investigation into the letter writer's background to determine if it contained any information which indicated that she could pose a potential threat to the CEO. Background record checks included criminal and

civil litigation checks, internet and open source records reviews, social media activity, and real estate and automobile ownership and registration records. Records checks validated the name and address the letter writer used in her letters to the CEO. The PII shared information he had developed on the letter writer with members of the CEO Protection Team to make them aware of her interest in the CEO.

During the first two years of this case, the woman sent letters to the CEO infrequently, approximately every two months. The content of her letters remained very benign during this period and contained no alarming information, though her letters seemed to ramble and not follow a logical structure and flow which was the first warning sign that caught the attention of the PII.

Storm Clouds on the Horizon

During the third year, her letters gradually increased in frequency to monthly, biweekly and then approximately weekly. Also during year three, the content of her letters also began to change. They grew longer and more rambling. She began to reveal indications that she was romantically interested in the CEO which became more and more pronounced over time. Some of her letters included personally made birthday cards and Valentine's Day cards. Some also included photos of her, first clothed, then partially nude and finally fully nude. Near the end of the third year, her letters began to show that she believed the CEO was communicating with her and that he was romantically interested in her as well.



The letter writer's growing expression of romantic interest in the CEO and her belief that the CEO was communicating with her and was expressing his romantic feelings for her represented a major escalation in the potential threat she could pose to the CEO. They also pointed to the likelihood that she was mentally unbalanced.

Ratcheting Up the Investigation

In response to the escalation of the letter writer's interest in the CEO, the PII contacted the West Virginia State Police's intelligence unit to make them aware of the letter writer's infatuation with the CEO and to determine if they had any record of her in their data bases. The state police had developed an extensive file on the letter writer and described her as mentally unstable, divorced, very poor, and having no discernible income. They reported that she had a well-documented history of fixating on well-known public figures including CEOs and entertainers, expressing a romantic interest in them and believing that they were in love with her.

Armed with the new information, the PII briefed the CEO on the investigation into the letter writer's background, information shared by the West Virginia State Police and the escalation of her fixation on him. The PII showed the CEO several of her most recent letters and photographs of the woman. The CEO took the matter in stride and expressed confidence in the CEO Protection Team's ability to protect him.

The PII contacted the West Virginia state trooper who patrolled the area of the letter

writer's trailer home and contracted with him to perform off-duty morning and evening drive-bys of her residence to verify that her vehicle was parked at her home. The trooper also made up reasons to periodically visit the woman and speak with her in order to gauge her mental state. The state trooper's role was to serve as a potential early warning indicator should her vehicle be absent from her residence for two successive drive-bys.

The PII briefed state and local police and sheriff's departments' intelligence units in the municipalities surrounding the technology company corporate headquarters on the investigative results into the letter writer's background and the contents of the West Virginia State Police's intelligence file on her.

The PII engaged a retired senior member of the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit to develop a behavioral analysis and threat profile on the letter writer. All of her letters, cards and photographs were provided to the behavioral profiler along with the results of the investigation conducted to date and information provided by the West Virginia State Police. The behavioral profiler prepared a lengthy report which indicated that the letter writer was likely mentally unstable, however, given the totality of the circumstances, she posed a low-level threat to the CEO. Key factors that led him to his assessment included: the letter writer's lack of acting on any of her previous fixations on other CEOs and entertainers; none of the letters to the CEO contained any signs of anger, hostility or aggression; the letter writer resided approximately 1,350 miles away from the company's corporate headquarters; and she appeared to be extremely poor and likely lacked



the financial resources to travel across the country to the company headquarters.

The report also contained several cautionary warnings and highlighted potential behavioral indicators, which, if observed, could represent a further degradation of the letter writer's emotional stability and thus heighten the potential threat she could pose to the CEO. Two of the warning signs included any significant change in the letter writer's pattern of communication, e.g., increase or significant decrease in frequency; second, if she took any actions based on her fixation on the CEO, such as showing up at a venue where the CEO was expected to be or tried to meet him.

The PII met again with the CEO to update him on the investigation and the threat level posed by the letter writer. After reviewing the behavioral analysis report and status of the investigation, the CEO asked if there were any additional security precautions that the CEO Protection Team would be implementing. The PII went over plans to increase counter-surveillance coverage of the CEO, augment the protection team with additional personnel, notify local law enforcement of developments in the investigation, ensure the uniformed guards protecting the CEO's residence and the corporate headquarters campus were fully briefed about the letter writer and provided with information to identify her and the vehicle she drove, and finally, to alert the staff at the CEO's residence of the potential threat posed by the letter writer. The CEO agreed with all of the recommendations.

The Quiet Before the Storm

The PII continued to monitor the investigation and observed that the woman had stopped writing letters to the CEO, which was one of the indicators of an increased threat identified by the behavioral profiler. The State Trooper who was monitoring the letter writer's presence at her home continued to report that she had not left her residence.

For several months no letters were sent to the CEO. The PII received a telephone call from a sales representative who had been traveling out of the country for several weeks. He reported that upon his return he had found eight voice mail messages on his extension from the previous week. The caller was the letter writer who left the messages for the CEO, apparently believing she was leaving them on the CEO's voice mailbox. Her voice mail messages became increasing intense and insistent that she wanted to meet with the CEO so they could finally be together and pursue their romantic relationship.

In the final voicemail message, the woman informed the CEO that she was driving across the country to the CEO's office so they could be together. The PII contacted the state trooper who confirmed that the woman's car was not present at her trailer.

The letter writer's decision to take action on her inappropriate interest in the CEO by driving across the country to meet with him was a second indicator highlighted by the behavioral profiler which elevated the threat level she posed to the CEO.

The PII contacted state police departments in each state the letter writer would drive through



while driving across the country to alert them to the potential threat and to ask them to stop her from reaching her destination.

During the state police agencies' manhunt for the letter writer, the PII notified each of the protection teams for the CEO, his wife and his children, and the uniformed guards protecting the estate and the corporate campus that the letter writer was on her way. He also notified local law enforcement of the letter writer's intentions to travel to corporate headquarters to meet the CEO.

Each time the letter writer stopped along her route to eat, refuel or use the bathroom, she called and left a voice mail on the sales representative's extension telling the CEO where she was and how much she looked forward to being with him. Her voice mail messages provided very accurate information on her progress and whereabouts. After each voice mail message, the PII passed information regarding her location to the appropriate state police agency to aid them in their manhunt. Although they were armed with this information and details about her easily identifiable vehicle, state police agencies in all five of the states she drove through failed to locate her.

Arrival of the Storm – Batten Down the Hatches

In her final voice mail message, she announced that she had arrived in the city where the company's corporate headquarters was located, provided the name and room number of the motel where she was staying, and reported that

she would visit the CEO's office at 9:00 am the following morning.

The PII reviewed the CEO's calendar for the next few days to determine if he should recommend that the CEO remain at his estate until the threat was resolved to better ensure his safety. Unfortunately, the CEO had multiple meetings scheduled with CEOs from key customers over the next few days and canceling his meetings could create difficulties with those customer relationships. The PII conferred with the managers for each of the protection teams and the Vice President for Global Security and recommended against advising the CEO to cancel his meetings. All members of the security teams agreed that they could protect the CEO and his family members and believed there was no need for him to alter his schedule. The PII then met with the CEO to update him on the woman's arrival in town, the additional security precautions being implemented to ensure his safety and recommended that he not alter his schedule. The CEO agreed and expressed his full confidence in his security teams to keep him and his family safe.

In an effort to disrupt the letter writer's plan to visit the CEO's office the following morning, the PII and a off-duty member of the state police's intelligence unit, who moonlighted as uniformed security at the CEO's residence, went to the letter writer's hotel to interview her. The PII posed as a senior member of Human Resources who was asked by the CEO to meet with her and explain to her that he was not in love with her, that he was very happily married and to request that she return to her home in West Virginia.



The interview took place in her motel room and lasted several hours. The PII asked her many questions regarding why she thought he was in love with her and wanted her to meet him. She was convinced that the CEO was sending her subliminal messages from TV commercials, interviews and other appearances on television telling her he loved her and wanted her to travel to the company's headquarters to be with him. The interview took many unpredictable twists and turns, however, the PII was ultimately able to convince her that the CEO was not in love with her and to return to her home. She was very embarrassed and emotional throughout the interview, but eventually agreed to return to West Virginia the following morning. Members of the CEO Protection Team conducted surveillance on her motel room throughout the night and discreetly surveilled her as she departed for West Virginia the following morning.

The PII continued to keep tabs on the letter writer through the West Virginia state trooper

for many months and later learned that she had dropped her interest in the CEO and had begun fixating on a well-known late-night talk show host.

This protective intelligence investigation was resolved successfully and without violence. However, it could just as easily have turned into a violent situation depending on the degree of the letter writer's mental illness and her reaction to learning that the CEO was not in love with her.

Having a PII embedded in the executive protection program who was integrated with the people who supported the CEO in both sides of his life, professional and personal, ensured that all relevant information regarding this threat was received, investigated, analyzed and assessed. Then, based on the assessments, the appropriate protective security measures to protect the CEO and his family were implemented at the proper time as the threat posed by the letter writer increased in severity over the three years it transpired.

Banyan Risk Group can help your company more thoroughly protect its CEO by providing protective intelligence investigative capabilities to augment your executive protection team or to train and advise your team in how to develop a protective intelligence investigative capability.

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