



# 8

## PERPETRATORS OF HATE CRIME

### Chapter summary

This chapter assesses the profile, motivations and activities of hate crime perpetrators. It debates evidence which suggests that those convicted of hate offences are typically male, from deprived backgrounds and with a history of criminal or violent behaviour, and argues that this portrait may only reveal some of the overall profile of a typical perpetrator of hate. It also examines whether hate acts are really 'stranger danger' crimes or whether the offender does, in many cases and at least to some extent, actually know their victim. The chapter also explores cultures of racism that develop in some communities and how these can be born out of frustration at perceptions that local minority ethnic groups are receiving preferential treatment.

The chapter then examines the success and influence of contemporary far-right groups. It suggests that while members of far-right political parties carry out only a small proportion of hate offences, these may be more severe and premeditated than 'everyday' hate crimes. The influence of some of the far right's ideas on immigration, multiculturalism and religion, and the potency of its symbolism, may also be more far-reaching than many would like to think.

### Introduction

In the wake of the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 much of the academic endeavour in the field of hate crime has focused upon the processes, forms and impact of victimisation, including how victims are treated by the police service and other statutory and voluntary agencies. This has been an important development as it has given victims of targeted hostility a voice and a profile that have not been evidenced previously. More broadly, these developments have coincided with a rise in the 'victims' agenda' within the criminal justice system, which has seen the range of support services for victims expand as interest in their experiences and expectations has grown.

Within the study of hate crime less attention has been paid, though, to the motivation and behaviour of perpetrators. While there have been various studies of far-right parties (mainly by political scientists) there has been comparatively little criminological examination of the causes and patterns of hate-related offending perpetrated by those who are not part of such groups. As we will see in this chapter, however, it is an 'uncomfortable truth' that it is 'ordinary' members of the public that are responsible for the vast majority of the types of 'everyday' targeted hostility that blight the lives of so many victims.

### Profiling offenders

The influential work of McDevitt and partners provides a good starting point in our brief exploration of hate offender profiles (see McDevitt et al., 2002, 2010). Their typology of perpetrators, developed from an examination of 169 hate crime cases investigated by the Boston Police Department, suggests that the most common offender is a teenager or young adult who, acting in a group, commits a hate crime in order to satiate their desire for excitement (these account for around two-thirds of the cases assessed). In most of these cases the perpetrator(s) left their neighbourhood to search for someone to victimise, and this target was selected on the basis of animosity towards their perceived 'difference' (McDevitt et al., 2010).

The second group of offenders in the typology are those labelled 'defensive', whose profile is similar to those in the 'thrills' cases but commit a hate offence because they feel their neighbourhood needs 'protecting' from incomers (these cases made up around a quarter of the total). 'Retaliatory' hate offenders make up the third aspect of the typology (less than one in ten of the overall cases), and these typically travel to the victim's territory in order to retaliate against a previous incident that they perceive the victim, or victim's social group, have committed.

The last category identified is those offenders (only around 1% of the sample) who feel that they are on a 'mission' when perpetrating a hate crime; the fully committed 'haters' who commonly have far-right leanings (McDevitt et al., 2010). Their allegiance to a bias ideology is much stronger than that of offenders in the other three categories. Notwithstanding this, it is those other three categories that contain the vast majority of offenders, and that such a large proportion of incidents is apparently perpetrated for 'thrills' points to the fact that much of what we think of as 'hate crime' is relatively mundane and 'routine' (Iganski, 2008). This is not to say that these are motiveless crimes perpetrated by bored youths simply seeking 'thrills', as they reveal the existence of negative attitudes and stereotypes about marginalised outgroups that play a part in the selection of

the target. However, these biases may be relatively marginal to the committing of the act, as Walters (2011: 324) suggests:

There exists a crucial intersection here between the socio-structural influences affecting an individual's perception of 'difference' and his or her desire for instant gratification (the thrill). Hence, in acquiring the thrill, offenders use their prejudices, the result of constructions of difference, stereotyping and the perceived threats posed by certain minority individuals, as a means of justifying their partly hate motivated actions.

The work of Byers, Crider and Biggers (1999) provides some background to Walters' assertion. They studied the motivations of (mainly) groups of young men who targeted members of the Amish community in Fulham County, USA, and concluded that these men were dominated by the desire for thrills, with the markedly different 'other', the Amish, being the 'quarry' in this quest. Common to this and a number of similar studies is the finding that hate crime offenders typically act in groups, making them different from 'other aggressive [non-hate] offences' (Craig, 2002: 87).<sup>1</sup> The sense of group identification is strong, and the creation of 'enemy outgroups' important. As Michener (2010: 41) remarks, if any member of the enemy outgroup attacks the ingroup, then 'All the members of that [out]group are suspected of being inclined to repeat the same pernicious behaviour. At the level of emotion, they are considered already to have done it'.

Group dynamics may affect the nature of the incident too, with larger gangs of perpetrators committing more severe hate offences (Dunbar, 1997). Craig also asserts that individuals within this context may feel 'pressured to behave in unusual ways when encountering or interacting with either victims or members of the victim's social group' (Craig, 2002: 87). There may also be a diffusion of responsibility within groups coupled with a lack of recognition of normal social constraints, meaning that 'the outcome of their behaviours is especially likely to be extreme' (p. 88). As is the case with McDevitt et al.'s (2010) so-called 'fellow travellers' (who actively or hesitantly participate in the group offence) and 'unwilling participants' (who do not actively participate in the perpetration yet do nothing to stop it either), those acting in groups may lose their normal sense of perspective and get carried away in the moment, while others, to a greater or lesser extent, will go along with the violence anyway.

### **Socio-economic factors**

Sibbitt's (1997) study of the perpetrators of racist violence on deprived south London housing estates found that cultures of racism, reinforced by successive generations of white residents, create environments that are hostile towards minority ethnic residents. Many of these white people feel bitterly let down by local authorities whom they blame for giving 'preferential treatment' to

the 'undeserving' (minority ethnic groups) at the expense of the 'deserving' (themselves). This resentment manifests itself in racist harassment that can become violent. Hardy (2014) uncovered similar sentiments in her study of young white working class people living in deprived and marginalised white areas of a multicultural city. Within that study the apparent 'lived reality' of multiculturalism helped to foment the types of values that could manifest themselves as hate crimes committed by those with little or no commitment to the multicultural 'ideal'. Hardy (2014: 152) found that their prejudiced views were formed, and then given legitimacy, by:

being surrounded by friends, family and a wider community who all believe and verbalize 'stereotypical', 'biased' views about minority ethnic and religious groups, which are then reinforced when seeing those individuals in positions of employment, living in better housing or being markedly more wealthy.

In parallel with the work of Ray, Smith and Wastell (2004) and Dunbar and Crevecoeur (2005), Sibbitt (1997) suggests that those who engage in hate crime often have a history of criminal behaviour and routinely invoke aggressive behaviour to resolve disputes. They are commonly part of families that have poor physical or mental health, coupled with a lack of formal education. Similarly, the perpetrators of racist offences that formed the basis of Gadd, Dixon and Jefferson's (2005) analysis (see also Gadd and Dixon, 2009; Roxell, 2011) typically have life stories characterised by deprivation, mental health problems, domestic violence, drug and alcohol issues, and patterns of criminal behaviour. Surprisingly, perhaps, Fisher and Salfati (2009) posit that much of the US research contradicts this evidence by revealing that perpetrators are commonly middle-class and with no criminal records.

For Perry (2001), hate offending is designed to maintain social hierarchies, which privilege white, heterosexual males and stigmatise those who do not conform to these hegemonic identities. If the position of the dominant group is threatened then this can lead to the enactment of hate crimes against those subordinate to them. The boundaries between 'in-' and 'outgroups' – 'essentialist, mutually exclusive categories of belonging' (Perry, 2001: 46 – see Chapter 1) – are thereby reinforced, with victims reminded of their 'lower' place within that hierarchy. In the cases of deprived neighbourhoods like those in the studies discussed here, it is the *relative* position of the dominant and subordinate groups that confers 'dominance, normativity, and privilege' on certain identities – of which whiteness is one – 'and subordination, marginality and disadvantage' on others, such as those of minority ethnic communities (Perry, 2001: 47). Walters develops Perry's ideas by arguing that among those who are experiencing actual or perceived strain, and who feel the need to 'defend' their own territories and sense of socio-economic security, will be those who possess low self-control and low tolerance thresholds who will 'be less able to control any feelings of animosity towards those who they deem as "different"' (Walters, 2011: 325).<sup>2</sup>

### The victim–perpetrator relationship

Nascent hate crime scholarship commonly viewed hate offences as those in which the individual identity of the victim is *irrelevant* to the perpetrator, who targets them solely because they are an identifiable member of a despised minority group (Maxwell and Maxwell, 1995; Perry, 2001). It is their prejudice towards that group that drives their harassment of the victim rather than any personal animosity that may exist between the two individuals. Hate crimes, so it was suggested, are thus classic ‘stranger danger’ crimes that are designed to send an intimidating message not just to the individual victim but to other members of that group.

However, more recent work in the field has suggested that the relationship between offender and victim may be more complex than initially thought. Roxell’s (2011) analysis of over 1,900 official offence reports for over 550 persons suspected of hate crimes in Sweden notes that in just over four out of ten cases the perpetrator is classified ‘related or superficially acquainted to the victim’ (Roxell, 2011: 207). The work of Moran (2007), Mason (2005a) and Jarman and Tennant (2003) also suggests that victim and assailant are often familiar with each other, at least to a degree. The location of hate incidents may have a bearing on this. Mason’s (2005b) examination of homophobic and racist harassment cases reported to the police reveals that 90% occurred at or near the victim’s home and 10% at work, which indicates that there is a strong likelihood of some pre-existing relationship between victim and perpetrator in both of these scenarios.

Ray, Smith and Wastell’s (2004: 351) study of racist offenders would seem to support this premise as they conclude that ‘virtually all offenders knew their victims, though not well’. This knowledge was usually gained as a result of commercial transactions with shopkeepers, taxi drivers, or those working in restaurants and takeaways, where many of the incidents took place. Mason argues that although both ‘sides’ involved in a hate incident are emotionally estranged from one another, their physical proximity means that it is ‘virtually impossible for them to be strangers in terms of the interpersonal relations of everyday life’ (Mason, 2005b: 587). Indeed, it may be the case that most perpetrators know just enough about their intended victim to realise that they offer a suitably ‘soft’ target.

Other research suggests that it may be possible to know how familiar the victim and perpetrator are with each other from the *type* of hate incident that has occurred, with strangers more likely to be involved in cases of physical assault. Sibbitt (1997), for example, found that common and indirect assaults were often carried out by groups of white youths or adult males against people they did not know, but for acts of ‘lower-level’ intimidation there was evidence of perpetrators routinely abusing those who lived near them and whom they must therefore have some knowledge of. Docking, Kielinger and Paterson’s (2003) analysis of

faith hate incidents also found that the extreme cases, such as GBH or murder, were more likely to have been committed by strangers than by someone the victim knew. For other, less extreme types of harassment the perpetrator was someone known to the victim, whether as neighbours, local schoolchildren or work colleagues.

Interestingly, Roxell (2011: 208) implies that the depth to which a perpetrator knows their victim may vary across different types of hate crime. In her analysis of three strands, the proportion of cases in which the perpetrator and victim knew each other was higher for 'xenophobic' hate crimes (44.3%) and homophobic (42.0%) than it was for Islamophobic (29.3%). The growing body of work on disablist hate crime (detailed in Chapter 6) suggests that victims of that type of offence may be very familiar with perpetrators, who are often their carer or 'friend'. Indeed, Quarmby (2011) notes that this is especially the case with extreme disablist hate crimes (such as murders) when the perpetrator is commonly someone that the victim knows and trusts very well. She therefore suggests that these types of disablist crimes differ markedly from their racist or homophobic equivalents where the victim and perpetrator *are* very often strangers.

However, Roxell suggests that much of the disparity with regard to some of the findings relating to the victim-perpetrator relationship may be down to definitional or methodological issues. This is evident in cases of repeat victimisation when the victim is often asked to describe the most *serious* incident they have experienced, which, as we have seen with racist or homophobic offences, will most probably be one in which neither party knows the other (Roxell, 2011). In addition, these debates often take place within the framework of more traditional understandings of the victim-perpetrator relationship, in which they occupy the same geographical space. Such accounts fail to acknowledge the relatively recent phenomenon of 'cyberbullying', which is now seen as a significant form of bias-related harassment (Henry, 2013). It occurs via social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, via text message or apps such as WhatsApp and Viber, where discussions are often unregulated and in which a perpetrator, under the guise of anonymity, can feel less constrained than they might in the 'real world' and thus more at liberty to abuse their target (Hinduja and Patchin, 2008). However, whether such anonymity means that the perpetrator and their target are necessarily strangers is a moot point, as it may be that such anonymity is embraced by the offender as a way of keeping their identity concealed from the victim through this online disguise.

Therefore, within the context of the hate debate perhaps the concept of the 'stranger' needs to be reconfigured into a more complicated figure that the victim can simultaneously *know* and yet be emotionally *distant* from: familiar and yet still remote. This may help us understand hate crimes as 'stranger danger' crimes even if they are, in fact, commonly perpetrated by people who are familiar with their target. As Stanko (2001: 323) suggests, it is how 'assailants turn

*those known* to them into *strangers'* that is of crucial importance here, rather than simply whether the two parties know, or know of, each other, whether in the 'real' world or the virtual one. After all, if someone is capable of committing an act of targeted hostility towards another then it indicates that they cannot feel much empathy for the victim, and thus must inherently be *apart* from them – in other words, a stranger, at least to a degree.

### The influence and impact of the far right

Before the chapter turns to an assessment of three significant far-right groupings in Britain (the British National Party (BNP), the English Defence League (EDL) and Combat 18), it is worth reflecting upon several pertinent definitional issues. Fascism, according to Copsey (2007: 64), is 'a revolutionary ultra-nationalist ideology, an attempt to create a new type of post-liberal national community – an alternative modernity – by a movement or regime that *aspires* to the total or "totalitarian" transformation of culture and society'. For Goodwin, extreme right parties are characterised by hostility towards liberal democratic processes, an uncompromising opposition to immigration and, in some instances, a link to neo-Nazism (Goodwin, 2011). He sees four types of such organisations: those that operate like conventional parties and attempt to gain power through the ballot box (the BNP, for instance); those that avoid such methods and position themselves as activist street movements (the EDL); those that are 'extra-parliamentary' and eschew attempting to gain popular support in favour of recruiting committed, elite cadres (Combat 18); and last, individual 'lone wolves' who act in isolation and who may act violently (2011: 5–6 – see case studies 8.2 and 10.1).

Judged by their name, 'hate crimes' would appear to be offences committed by these types of extremists, and indeed some of the most notorious perpetrators of violent hate-related acts, such as David Copeland in England and Anders Behring Breivik in Norway (see Case Study 10.2), conform to this idea. The overall picture, though, may be very different from this, as there is evidence, as we saw earlier, that extremists only perpetrate a low percentage of hate crimes (McDevitt et al., 2010). Similarly, Gadd et al. (2005: 9) found that perpetrators were not 'hardened race haters committed to attacking or harassing people from other ethnic groups'. However, they did note that organisations like the BNP appealed to those who felt that the main political parties had forgotten them by prioritising instead the needs of minority ethnic residents, migrants and asylum seekers (see Case Study 8.1 for an example of the way that the far right can play upon the fears of such 'forgotten' communities). This had created a strong sense of injustice amongst these white communities, and in this climate the BNP's vocal opposition to immigration and multiculturalism, together with its determination to stand up



for 'British culture', gained it a significant amount of support. It is difficult to discern whether in this racialised and tense situation the BNP's popularity directly led to an increase in racist harassment, but of those 15 perpetrators of such incidents in Gadd et al.'s study, two were BNP activists, two had far-right associations and another had sympathies with extremist groups (2005: 2).

### Case Study 8.1

#### Prejudice, the far-right and community tensions in a multicultural city

During 2012, a seemingly innocuous decision taken by the local authority in the multicultural East Midlands city of Leicester regarding the future use of one of its scout huts inadvertently created a situation that sparked community tensions, triggered the involvement of far-right activists and culminated in a religiously aggravated hate crime. Leicester City Council's initial decision to allow the As-Salaam Trust (a Muslim community group) sole use of the disused hut in the mainly white area of Thurnby Lodge sparked protests by local residents who felt that the facility should be available to all. In an attempt to reverse the policy, the Committee for the Forgotten Estates of Thurnby Lodge and Netherall was formed, a campaigning group that organised a series of demonstrations against the decision, and drew up a petition that contained 1,500 signatures (Porter and Jones, 2012).

However, soon allegations began to surface that these protests, which were being staged on an almost daily basis outside Thurnby Lodge Community Centre and often attended by hundreds of people, had been hijacked by far-right groups such as the English Defence League and the British National Party, keen to capitalise upon rising community tensions and inflame an already volatile situation.

On Christmas Eve 2012 a pig's head was left outside the Community Centre in an apparently deliberate attempt to insult, antagonise and intimidate the next users of the Centre, local Muslims, as the pig is an unclean animal for those of Islamic faith. Subsequently a local man was successfully prosecuted and given a suspended prison sentence at Leicester Magistrates' Court after admitting to a religiously aggravated public order offence. Recognising the impact of the incident, the presiding magistrate stated: 'It is easy to imagine the shock, distress and disgust [local Muslims] would have felt ... But the harm you caused goes further. Others in the local community and beyond would also have been affected when news of this incident spread, prompting profound alarm, fear and insecurity' (Healy, 2013). Although the Council eventually reached a compromise solution that satisfied both 'sides', by allowing the Forgotten Estates Committee to lease the scout hut while providing an alternative facility for As-Salaam, the case exposed just how fragile relations can be between different ethnic and religious communities, even in cities where multiculturalism has been embedded for decades.

There is some evidence that members of extremist groups commit a more predatory form of hate offending by going to greater lengths to seek out their targets

(Dunbar, 1997). Such offenders may commit more severe hate crimes that have a bigger impact upon victims than perpetrators who are not members of these groups (Dunbar and Crevecoeur, 2005). Therefore, although the numbers of such incidents are comparatively small, they are often more extreme and more harmful. Furthermore, the same research found that members of extremist groups who commit hate crimes had more extensive criminal and violent histories than other hate crime offenders and posed a greater risk of perpetrating ongoing aggressive acts, thereby reflecting 'the popular image of the violent hate crime offender as a highly dissocial and aggressive individual' (2005: 13).

### **Organised hatred: the British far right**

Although the far right has historically achieved very little success at the ballot box in Britain, during the early part of the twenty-first century the British National Party attained a degree of electoral reward that saw it hailed as the 'most successful extreme right political party in British history' (Goodwin, 2011: 171). In this period the BNP gained dozens of council seats and entry into the European Parliament, before its fortunes waned in the early 2010s. As a party, it is still relatively young, only forming in 1982 after the collapse of the neo-fascist National Front (NF) after the 1979 general election. Initially the BNP adopted many of the NF's fascist and racist policies, opposing all immigration and supporting the repatriation of minority ethnic people (Copsey, 2007). However, the BNP's electoral success in the 1990s was minimal, precipitating a change in its leadership in 1999. Its new figurehead, Nick Griffin, was a 'moderniser' determined to rid the party of its old fascist image. The 'new' BNP's stance therefore focused on being tough on law and order, opposing the European Union, preserving sterling and promoting British farming and countryside 'traditions'.

However, the beliefs of the 'old' BNP were never far from the surface. In 2001 the BNP appeared deliberately to inflame tension between local white and Asian communities in Oldham that culminated in several days of rioting in May of that year (see below), while in 2004 Griffin was caught on camera by a BBC undercover reporter describing Islam as a 'wicked, vicious faith' at a BNP meeting (Collins, 2012: 123). Despite these potentially damaging associations with extremism, during the first decade of the twenty-first century – and playing upon public concerns over immigration, Islamic extremism and disillusion with the three main parties – the BNP had some success in local elections, gaining around fifty council seats mainly in Stoke, Burnley, and Barking and Dagenham (Goodwin, 2011). Most notably, the party also gained two seats in the European Parliament in the 2009 elections, with Griffin himself winning one of them, after the party polled nearly a million votes nationally.

However, just as it looked as though it might be on the verge of a serious electoral breakthrough, the BNP's fortunes plummeted. Suffering from a period of vicious in-fighting and financial turmoil, the party saw its council seats all but disappear in local elections in the early 2010s and lost both of its MEPs in the European elections in 2014.<sup>3</sup> It was also eclipsed by the eurosceptic United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which provided 'a less disreputable home than the BNP for anti-immigration and anti-Muslim sentiment' (Gable, 2013: 6), and by a new, more energetic and more focused far-right grouping: the English Defence League.

Formed in Luton in 2009 the EDL was the brainchild of two cousins, Tommy Robinson<sup>4</sup> and Kevin Carroll. Both men had been infuriated by the abuse directed at a homecoming parade of Anglian troops in Luton in May of that year by a Muslim extremist group, Ahle Sunnah al Jamah, and formed the EDL directly as a consequence. Tapping into public concerns about Islamic extremism while harnessing broader Islamophobic sentiment, the EDL staged marches in a number of English towns and cities in the remainder of the year, often focusing upon places where community relations between different ethnic groups were troubled. Meanwhile the organisation distanced itself from racism and fascism, stating that it was simply opposed to what it called 'militant Islam'. Also, and unusually for such a grouping, the EDL was vocal in its opposition to homophobia, and encouraged the creation of gay divisions within its ranks (Goodwin, 2011).

Street-based activism was the EDL's main tactic for gaining support, as it did not stand in elections and offered no formal mechanism for joining. A year into its existence, this tactic appeared to be working. Numbers at its demonstrations grew rapidly and soon it was regularly attracting over a thousand people, drawn mainly from marginalised and disenfranchised white working-class communities (Garland and Treadwell, 2012). However, with close links to Casuals United (an umbrella organisation for a number of football hooligan 'firms'), the EDL's marches were seen by many as aggressive and intimidating, seemingly designed to provoke a violent reaction from local Muslim communities. A number of its demonstrations descended into chaos and disorder, with dozens of arrests in places such as Birmingham, Bolton and Leicester (Treadwell and Garland, 2011). While its leaders called for peaceful participation, it appeared as though the EDL's 'footsoldiers' were following a different agenda, turning up at rallies in order to engage in drink- and drug-fuelled fighting with Muslim youths, the police or anti-fascist activists (Treadwell, 2014).

However, after staging a 'homecoming' march in Luton in February 2011 that attracted over 4,000 supporters, the EDL's popularity began to wane as a lack of progress in achieving its (rather vague) aims, coupled with the very strict policing of its events (which reduced the opportunity for disorder), saw attendance on its marches fall. The horrific murder of soldier Lee Rigby in Woolwich by

Islamic extremists in May 2013 saw a brief resurgence in its popularity, with a march in Newcastle at the height of public outrage over the incident attracting over 7,000 people – easily the EDL's largest ever event (Garland, 2013). Again, though, the organisation failed to capitalise, with subsequent demonstrations only attended by hundreds rather than thousands. Later in 2013, apparently disillusioned with the violent nature of its core support and at the lack of prospects of further progress, the EDL's founders and leaders, Robinson and Carroll, left the organisation. Although members pledged to continue without them, after only five years in existence the EDL's 'moment' appeared to have gone.

Another contributory factor to the EDL leadership's decision to leave was its frustration at the presence at its marches of current and former members of Combat 18, a neo-Nazi grouping formed in the early 1990s by ex-members of the BNP who were frustrated at the party's desire to 'modernise' (Lowles, 2002). Taking the '1' in its name from the 'A' in Adolf (the first letter in the alphabet) and the '8' from the 'H' in Hitler (the eighth), Combat 18 (or C18) was open in its belief that the Aryan 'race' was being corrupted by immigration and multiculturalism. It also exuded a potent antisemitism exemplified by the conviction that the global economy was in the grip of a Jewish conspiratorial elite that could only be overthrown through revolution.

## Case Study 8.2

### Lone wolves

The last two decades have seen a rise in the number of far-right extremists acting on their own or with minimal help from others, who have plotted and/or engaged in violent acts designed to maim or kill their targets (Gable and Jackson, 2011). In 2011, for instance, the BBC estimated that there were 14 right-wing extremists in prison for terrorism offences, with the security services monitoring a further 70 (BBC, 2011). Simon (2013: 43-45) identifies five broad categories of these 'lone wolves': those who are inspired to act by political convictions; religion; single-issues (such as animal liberation); the desire for financial gain, or as a result of severe personality or psychological problems.<sup>5</sup>

In the United States and Europe most of the recent high-profile lone wolves can be grouped into the first and perhaps last of these categories (political and personality/psychological). In July 2011 in Norway, neo-Nazi Anders Behring Breivik embarked upon a killing spree that claimed the lives of 77 people (discussed in Case Study 10.1). Sixteen years earlier an American lone wolf detonated a bomb outside a government building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people. The device was planted by Timothy McVeigh, a war veteran furious at the actions and policies of the US government (Gerstenfeld, 2013).

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McVeigh had also drawn inspiration from the white supremacist novel *The Turner Diaries*, a book that also influenced David Copeland, whose nailbombing campaign in London in April 1999 resulted in the deaths of three people and the wounding of 129. Copeland deliberately targeted the capital's minority ethnic and gay communities and, under police interrogation, confessed to being racist, homophobic and a committed national socialist (McLagan and Lowles, 2000). More recently there has been a series of 'near misses' where police have caught a number of individuals before they had the chance to execute their plans. In 2009, for example, National Front member Neil Lewington was in the process of assembling a homemade arsenal of devices when his home was raided by police. He had been caught only by chance when police arrested him for causing a disturbance on a train in Suffolk, only to find the components for two firebombs in his holdall (Batty, 2009). A year later a former member of the BNP Terence Gavan was sentenced to eleven years for terrorism offences after police found a large number of guns and explosive devices at his house, while Ian Davison became the first person to be convicted for producing a prohibited substance under the 1996 Chemical Weapons Act (Feldman and Jackson, 2011: 56). However, in 2013 Pavlo Lapshyn initially avoided the attentions of the police as he undertook a short hate-fuelled campaign in the West Midlands. During this period Lapshyn murdered an elderly Muslim male and targeted three mosques with explosive devices, which detonated but failed to cause any casualties. When interviewed, Lapshyn informed police that he had 'a racial motivation and racial hatred' (Lumb and Casciani, 2013).

Made up of loosely affiliated cells united under the concept of 'leaderless resistance', C18 initially attracted a mixture of football hooligans, racist skinheads and disaffected Nazis, swelling its numbers in the mid-to-late 1990s to around 200 nationally but with many more occasionally becoming involved in its activities (Ryan, 2003: 17). Its fearsome reputation for violence was gained through attacks upon minority ethnic people, immigrants, left-wing radicals and anti-racist campaigners. The long-time presence of the Redwatch website, where personal details and pictures of anti-racist activists are publicised, coupled with the group's use of the Internet to sell white power music and organise meetings via Facebook, showed that it was adapting to utilising contemporary media (Feldman and Jackson, 2011).

During the 1990s in particular C18's links to football hooliganism were significant, and it has been alleged that these links played a pivotal role in the outbreak of racialised disorders in Oldham in May 2001. As noted above, in early 2001 the north-west town had been experiencing heightened tension between its local Asian and white communities. In an attempt to inflame this situation, Combat 18 attracted sympathisers from its national hooligan network to Oldham for the last match of the 2000/01 football season, ostensibly to engage in disorder in Westwood, an area with a large Asian population. Three weeks

later, they recongregated in the town and engaged in a violent confrontation with local Asians, precipitating widespread rioting (Lowles, 2002)

However, in the early part of the twenty-first century it appears as though C18 has lost some of its potency. A number of factors have contributed to this, including the negative publicity surrounding David Copeland's murderous campaign (see Case Study 8.2 above), the imprisonment of several of its figureheads and the suspicion that C18 may have been infiltrated by the security services. Into its place, though, have stepped other white power groups, such as the Racial Volunteer Force, British Freedom Fighters and Combined Ex-Forces, which seem to offer new paramilitary vehicles for intimidation and violence.

### Conclusion

This chapter set out to explore typologies of hate crime offenders, as well as their motivations and their relationships with their victims. It was noted that in the majority of instances hate crimes are enacted for the excitement and thrill involved. This is not to deny the bias element within those crimes, but to suggest that it is not perhaps the prime motivator behind them – and neither was the stronger emotion of 'hate'. The chapter then outlined the typical profile of hate offenders as young men, with criminal records, who acted in groups and who were used to routinely employing violence as a method of settling disputes. Their resentment of minority ethnic outgroups was fuelled by their suspicion that these communities were somehow stealing their jobs and other resources, and were also responsible for the deterioration of the local environment. For Walters (2011), though, these accounts fell short of explaining why it was that some people committed hate crimes while others did not, arguing that it is those whose low self-control combines with their intolerance of the 'other' and feelings of frustration and 'strain', that are more likely to become hate offenders.

It was also noted that there has been a widespread perception among perpetrators that the main political parties had neglected the needs of white British communities whilst prioritising those of minority ethnic populations, something that both the British National Party (at the ballot box) and the English Defence League (on the streets) have capitalised on. Importantly for the context of this book, a significant amount of research indicates that far-right extremists are only responsible for the perpetration of a small proportion of hate crimes, although when they do commit hate offences, perhaps in the form of 'lone wolf' activity, then these may be more extreme than those perpetrated by 'ordinary' members of the public.

Therefore, although it may well be the case that the far right is not responsible for significant amounts of hate crime, its symbolic importance, both in the

damage that it can cause via its more 'spectacular' acts of hate offending or in the way that its more 'routine' activities can instil fear and anxiety in minority communities, should not be underestimated. The way that the ideas of far-right groups like the EDL can be absorbed by many within deprived and 'forgotten' white working-class estates should also not be disregarded, as these give credence to the prejudiced opinions that are already forming in the minds of some.

To a degree, though, these findings present something of a smokescreen in our endeavours to understand who it is who actually commits hate crime: given that these empirical studies were conducted in economically deprived areas with communities who generally lack social capital, invariably then a 'typical perpetrator' is likely to possess these characteristics too. While this may give us a useful picture of hate crime in these areas it fails to reflect the broader picture of hate offending in other locations, such as more affluent places or isolated rural towns and villages. The work of Neal (2009) and our own earlier research (Chakraborti and Garland, 2004; Garland and Chakraborti, 2006) may be useful in providing another dimension to the debate. They suggest that hate offending is evident within more middle-class communities too, although this is commonly left unacknowledged by many in those communities and also by the police and other service providers.

### Guide to further reading

Walters' 'A General Theories of Hate Crime?' (2011) offers persuasive theories of the perpetration of hate crime. McDevitt et al.'s *Hate Crime Offenders* (2010) and Chapter 4 of Gerstenfeld's *Hate Crimes* (2013) provide an overview of US perspectives on hate crime perpetration. Those interested in far-right extremism should read Lowles, *White Riot* (2002), Collins, *Hate* (2012) or Trilling, *Bloody Nasty People* (2012).

### Links to online material

A useful starting point for those interested in the contemporary fortunes of the BNP is the *Guardian's* resource at [www.theguardian.com/politics/bnp](http://www.theguardian.com/politics/bnp), while the anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight* provides an extremely informative account of the far right's activities, both past and present, at [www.searchlightmagazine.com/](http://www.searchlightmagazine.com/), as does the campaigning organisation Hope Not Hate at [www.hopenothate.org.uk/](http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/). Those interested in examining the profiles of far-right extremists should read the bizarre and fascinating tale of neo-Nazi Nicky Crane at [www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-25142557](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-25142557).

