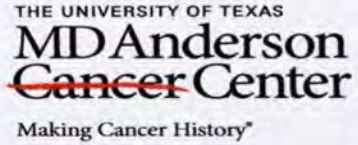




IN PURSUIT OF A BLACK SWAN

The Assassination of
Dr. Mark Hausknecht

As told by HPD Homicide Detectives Sgt. Steve Murdock and Sgt. Mike Miller / Forensic Threat Profile by Chief Vicki King



- Employees 21,000 people, including more than 1,700 faculty members
- Supported by more than 900 on-site volunteers and 2,224 off-site survivor volunteers
- Treats more than 6,600 physicians, nurses, and other healthcare providers
- Serves more than 26,000 patients a year in our Emergency Center
- Treats more than 135,000 patients a year
- Hosts countless patient families and visitors
- Largest footprint in world's largest Medical Center



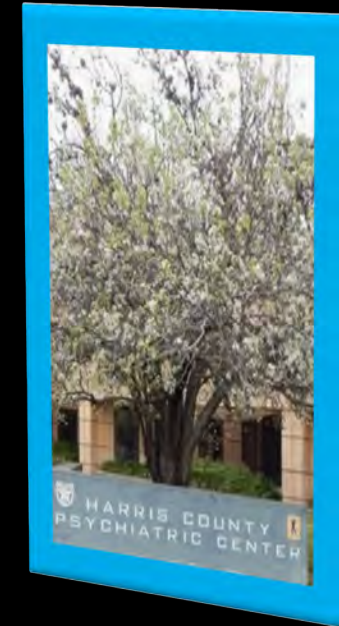
- Employees 5,800 people, including more than 1,700 faculty members
- Teaches more than 4,600 students
- Consists of more than 60 buildings and lease facilities
- Treats 1,487,696 out-patient visits
- 2nd largest Behavioral Health Center in State of Texas

Conflict of Interest Declaration: No known conflict of interest.



Retired Chief Vicki King, M. S.

Threat / Risk / Workplace Safety Specialist



PRIMARY LEARNING OBJECTIVES



Analyze

Analyze the pathway to violence, distinguishing proximate from root causes.

1



Evaluate

Explain how the case illustrates targeted versus affective violence and the risks of undetected fixation.

2



Assess

Assess potential intervention points and threat mitigation strategies.

3



Apply

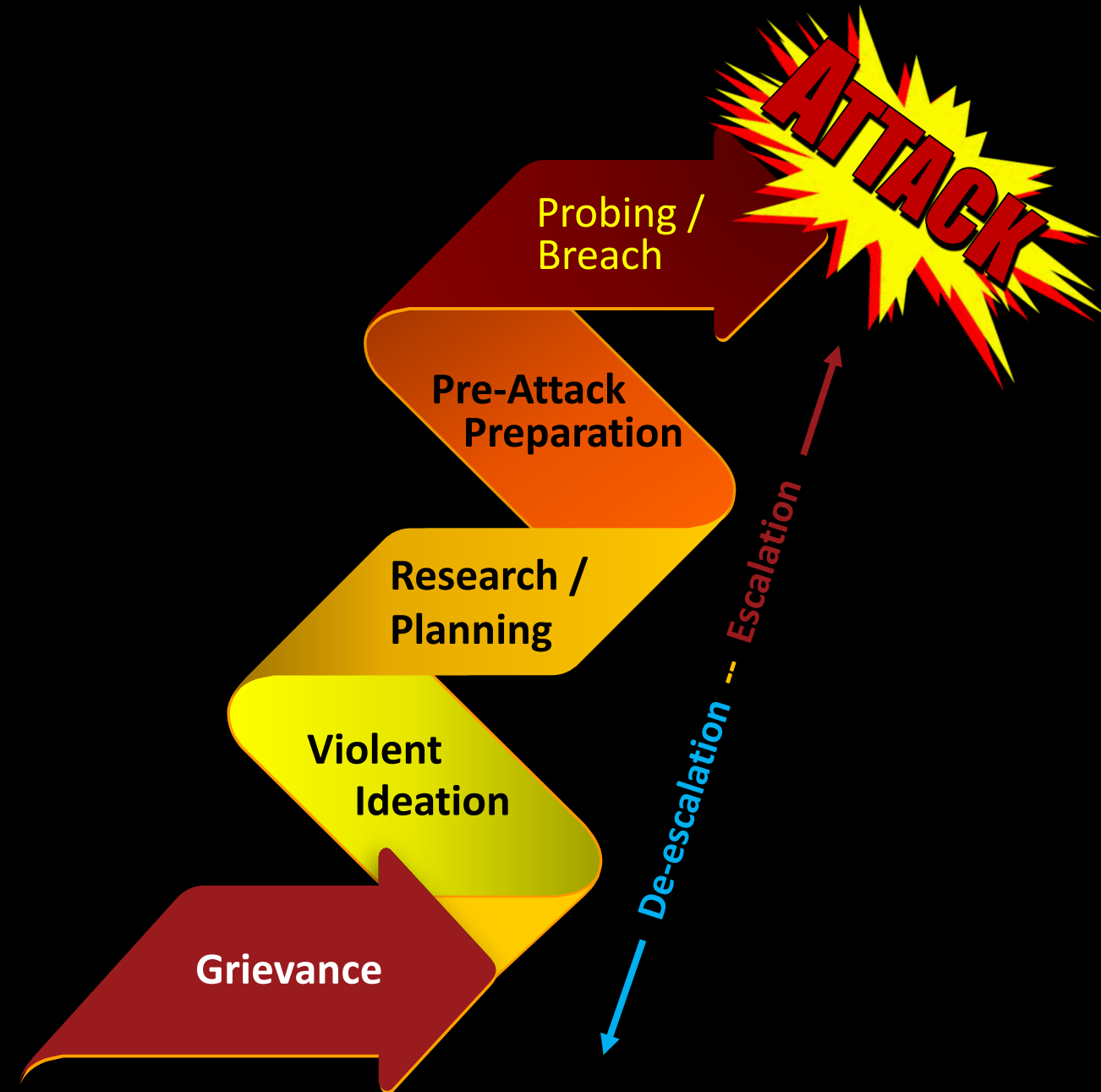
Apply insights from this rare, high-impact Black Swan-like event to strengthen modern threat assessment practices.

4

PATHWAY TO VIOLENCE

Grievances may not be rational, factual, or reasonable.

- Grievances fuel a sense of mission, destiny, loss, or desire for revenge.
- Grievances, as experience and case studies demonstrate, are deeply personal, emotion-driven beliefs wherein the *reasonable person* standard does not apply.
- Grievances may range from the petty to the ridiculous, but they may become life and death issues for the subject and their targets.
- Grievances are not diminished by time.
- Grievances provide the justification and morale foundation for seeking retribution for wrongs (real or imagined) committed against the subject.



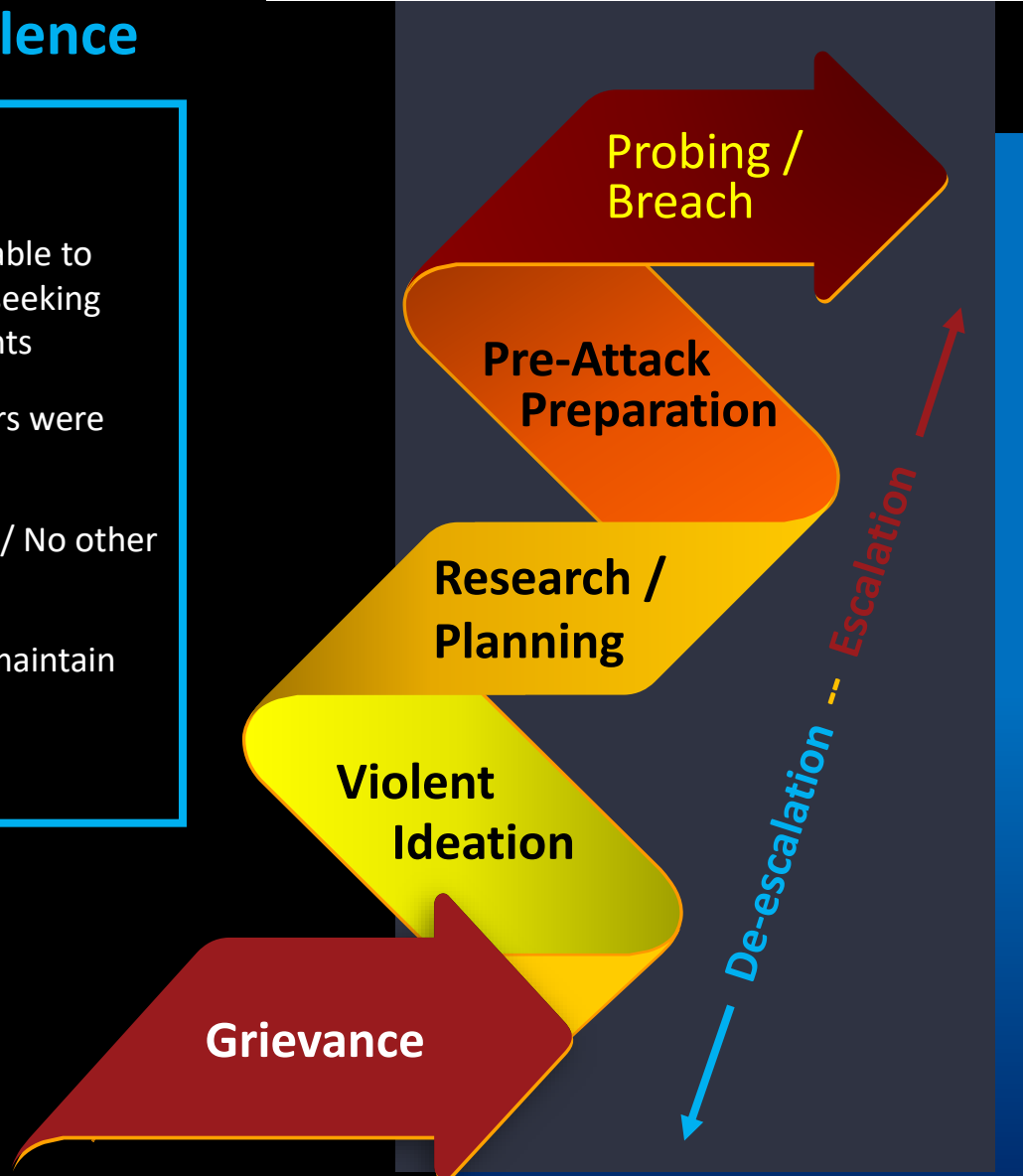
Source: Calhoun, F.S. and S.W. Weston, (2021). *Rethinking the Path to Intended Violence*. International Handbook of Threat Assessment, Second Edition. Oxford University Press, Marquis, Canada.

Threat Assessment Lens

Pathway to Violence

Personality Traits

- **Narcissism:** Entitlement / Unable to conform to rules / Vengeful, seeking retribution for perceived slights
- **Paranoia:** Believed that others were trying to gain an advantage
- **Depression:** Suicidal ideation / No other path forward / Forced to act
- **Isolation:** Unable to form or maintain intimate “pair bonds”



Behavior Patterns

- **Fixation:** extreme preoccupation with a specific person, incident, idea or personal cause.
- **Identification:** Thoughts of the necessity and utility of violence by a subject that are made evident through behaviors like researching previous attackers and collecting, practicing, and fantasizing about weapons.
- **Leakage:** An accidental or gradual escape of information telegraphing intentions
 - **Behavioral:** Actions suggestive of pre-attack planning
 - **Communication:** Writings, postings, texts, suggesting impending actions

AFFECTIVE

Intense Autonomic Arousal

- Subjective Experience of Emotion
- Reactive and Immediate Violence
- Internal or External Perceived Threat
- Goal is Threat Reduction
- Possible Displacement of Target
- Time-Limited Behavioral Sequence
- Preceded by Public Posturing
- Primarily Emotional / Defensive
- Heightened and Diffuse Awareness



TARGETED

Minimal or Absent Autonomic Arousal

- No Conscience Emotion
- Planned or Purposeful Violence
- No Imminent Threat
- Variable Goals
- No Displacement of Target
- No Time-Limited Sequence
- Preceded by Private Ritual
- Primarily Cognitive / Attack
- Heightened and Focused Awareness

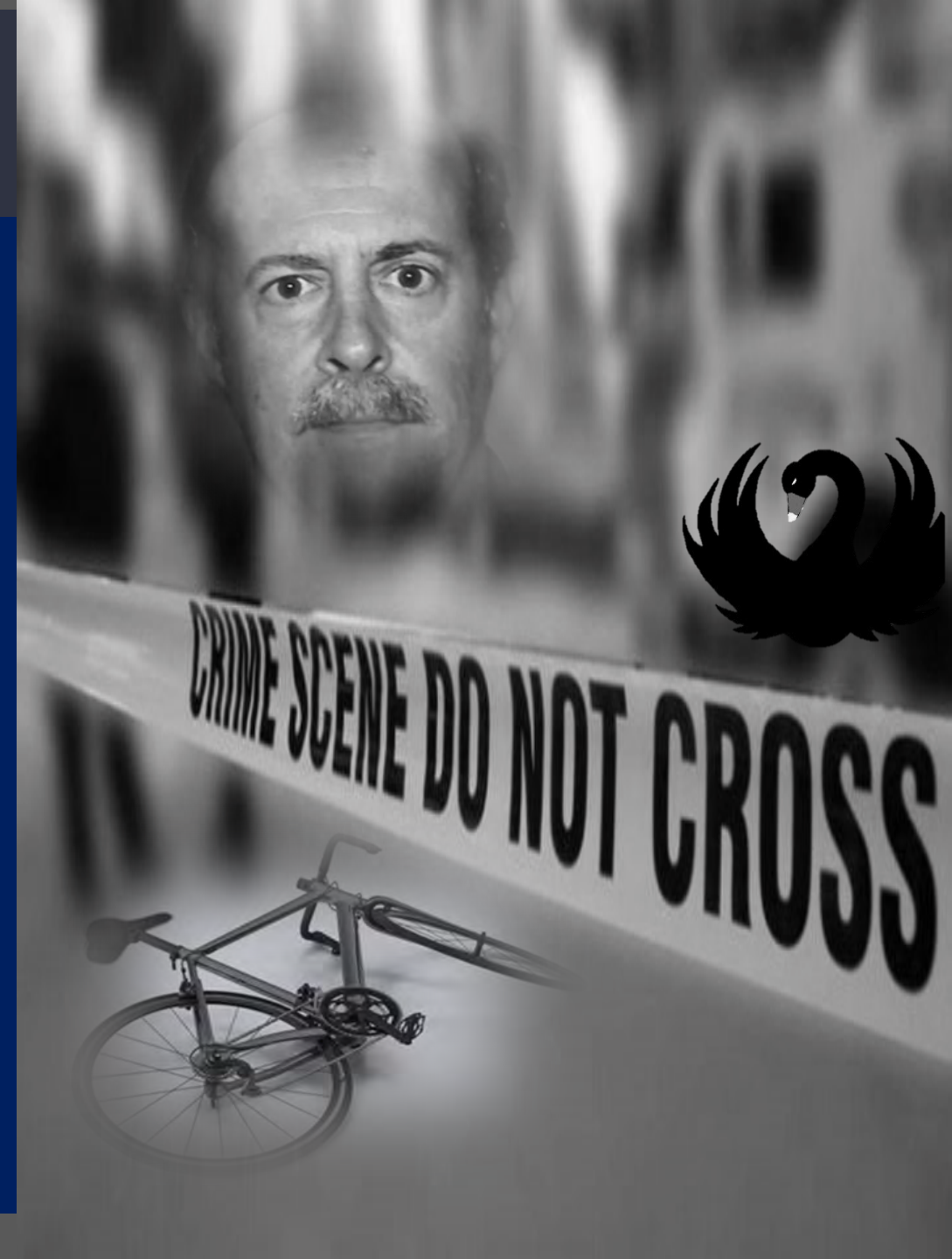


BLACK SWAN

Nassib Taleb's *The Black Swan* framed the concept as:

- An **outlier**, outside the realm of expectations because nothing in the past can convincingly point to its possibility;
- It carries extreme impact; and
- Despite its outlier status, human nature makes us concoct explanations for its occurrence after the fact, making it explainable and predictable.

Taleb, Nassim N (2007). *The Black Swan: The impact of the highly improbable*. Random House, Inc., NY.





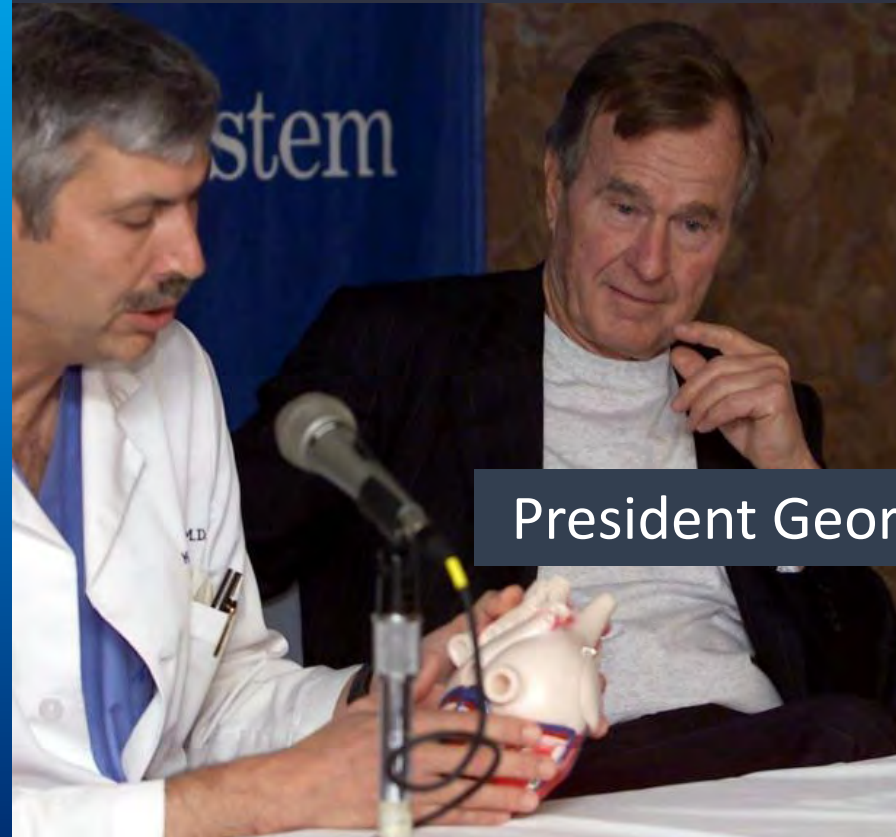
Dr. Mark Hausknecht

- Renowned Cardiologist at Methodist Hospital
 - Undergraduate from Cornell University
 - Medical Degree from Baylor College of Medicine
 - Residency and Fellowship at John Hopkins in Baltimore
- Family Man
 - Married for 38 years to Dr. Georgia “Gigi” Hsieh
 - Two adult sons, Matthew and Paul
 - Practicing Buddhist
 - Described as a voracious reader, pilot, chef, DIY repairman, beekeeper, recycler, urban gardener, cyclist and lover of music and the arts

“One's mind determines one's destiny”



Dr. Mark Hausknecht



President George H. W. Bush



TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER HOUSTON

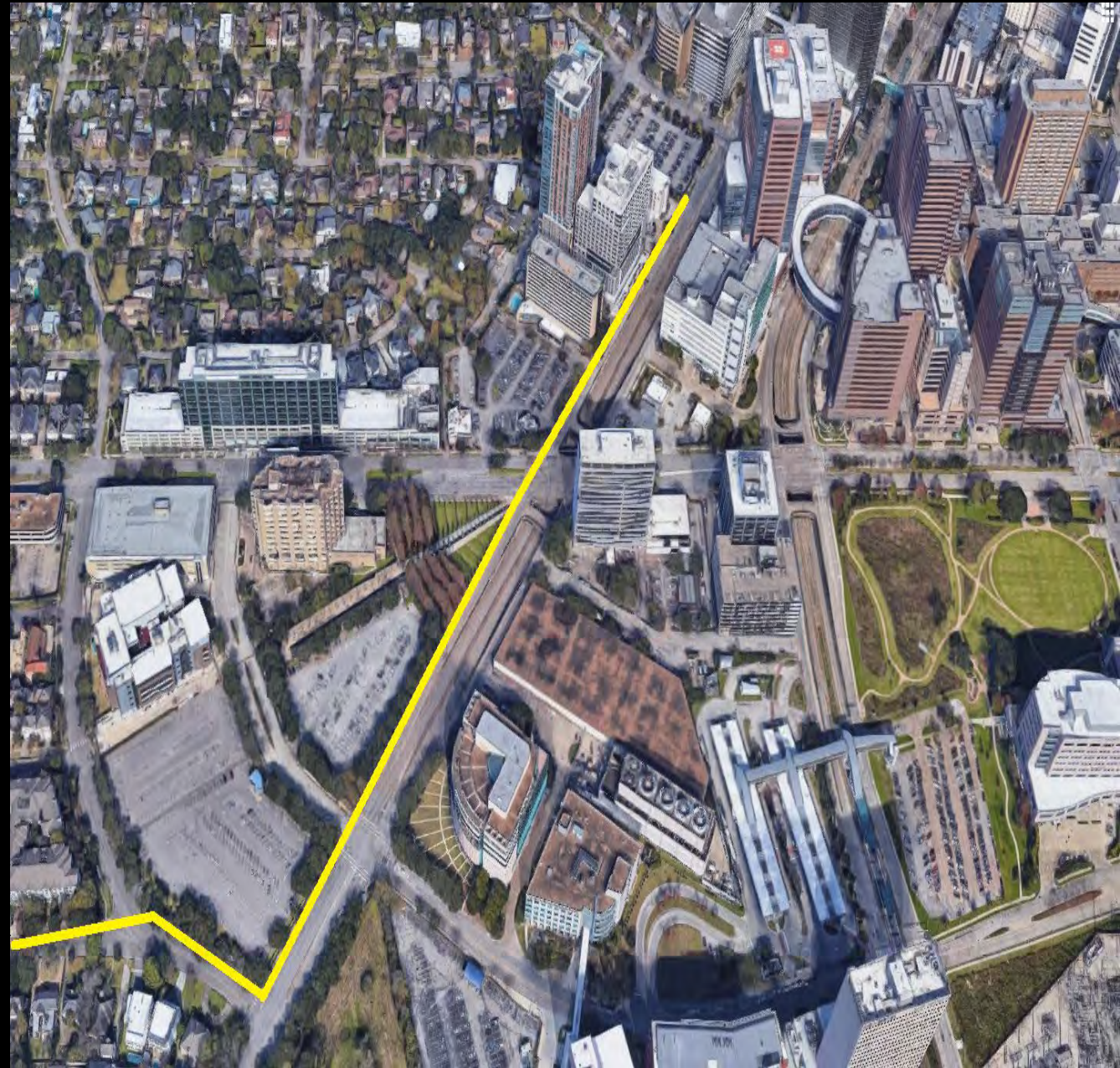
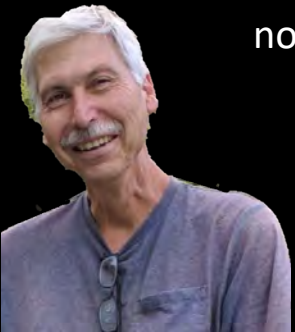
Friday, July 20, 2018

8:47 am

ROUTE OF DR. HAUSKNECT

Most days, he traveled the same route to work on his bicycle.

His routine was known to many and not difficult to predict.



ROUTE OF DR. HAUSKNECT

On Friday, July 20, 2018, another cyclist trailed his route, emerging from an ivy covered gate.



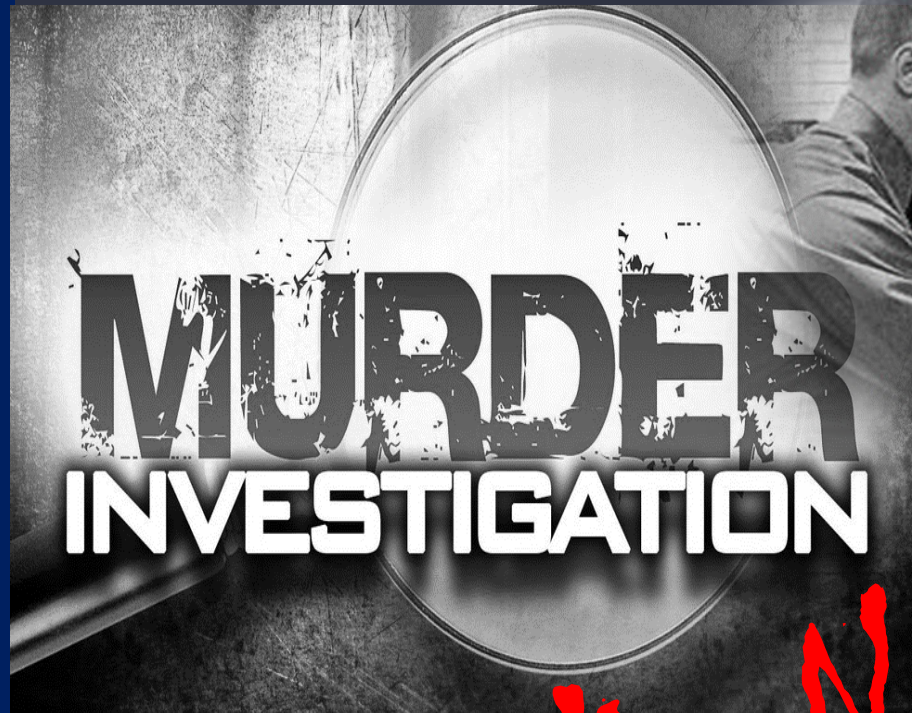
THE ASSIGNATION OF DR. MARK HAUSKNECHT





DETECTIVE MIKE MILLER
HOMICIDE

- High Profile
- Intensive Media Coverage



Notified of the Murder

Media Noise

SLOW THINGS DOWN

- Begin at the beginning
- Follow the evidence
 - Theories form based upon experience and interpretation of evidence, but you must maintain objectivity
 - Be open to information, evidence, and witness information that discredits your working theory
 - **DO NOT GET TUNNEL VISION**



HARVESTING THE EVIDENCE



Preliminary Information

- Dr. Hausknecht's widow, Gigi, was called to the E. R.
- She drove past the scene and recognized her husband's bicycle, concluding he had been in an auto / bicycle accident.
- Homicide investigators initially interpreted this act as potential sinister move to ensure the job was done.
- Oftentimes the spouse is responsible for this type of crime. It's that simple.

EYEWITNESSES

- Family from San Antonio, Texas who were at the Medical Center for their son's treatment.
- The witnesses watched the killer shoot the doctor. The killer rode directly past them and turn on Southgate Street.
- The witnesses told investigators this did not seem like bike rage or random opportunistic violence. This was a targeted attack.



COMPOSITE

Eyewitness Account



Public Information

Who Murdered Dr. Mark Hausknecht?



Dr. Mark Hausknecht



Unidentified Suspect

The Houston Police Department needs the public's help in solving the murder of Dr. Mark Hausknecht, HPD incident #922463-18. On Friday, July 20, 2018, Dr. Hausknecht was bicycling to work in the Houston Medical Center at 8:45 a.m. when he was shot and killed by another passing bicyclist at 6600 Main Street. The suspect was wearing a tan baseball cap, sunglasses, a gray warmup jacket, and khaki shorts. The suspect was last seen bicycling away from the scene on Southgate Boulevard on a light colored mountain bike.

Anyone with information on this case is encouraged to contact the Houston Police Department Homicide Division at 713-308-3600 or Crime Stoppers at 713-222-TIPS.



Crime Stoppers of Houston



ALL TIPSTERS REMAIN ANONYMOUS

WWW.CRIME-STOPPERS.ORG
DIAL *TIPS: FREE WIRELESS CALL

(713) 222-TIPS

HOUSTON'S CRIME TIPS HOTLINE

HARVESTING VIDEO

Neighborhood Canvass



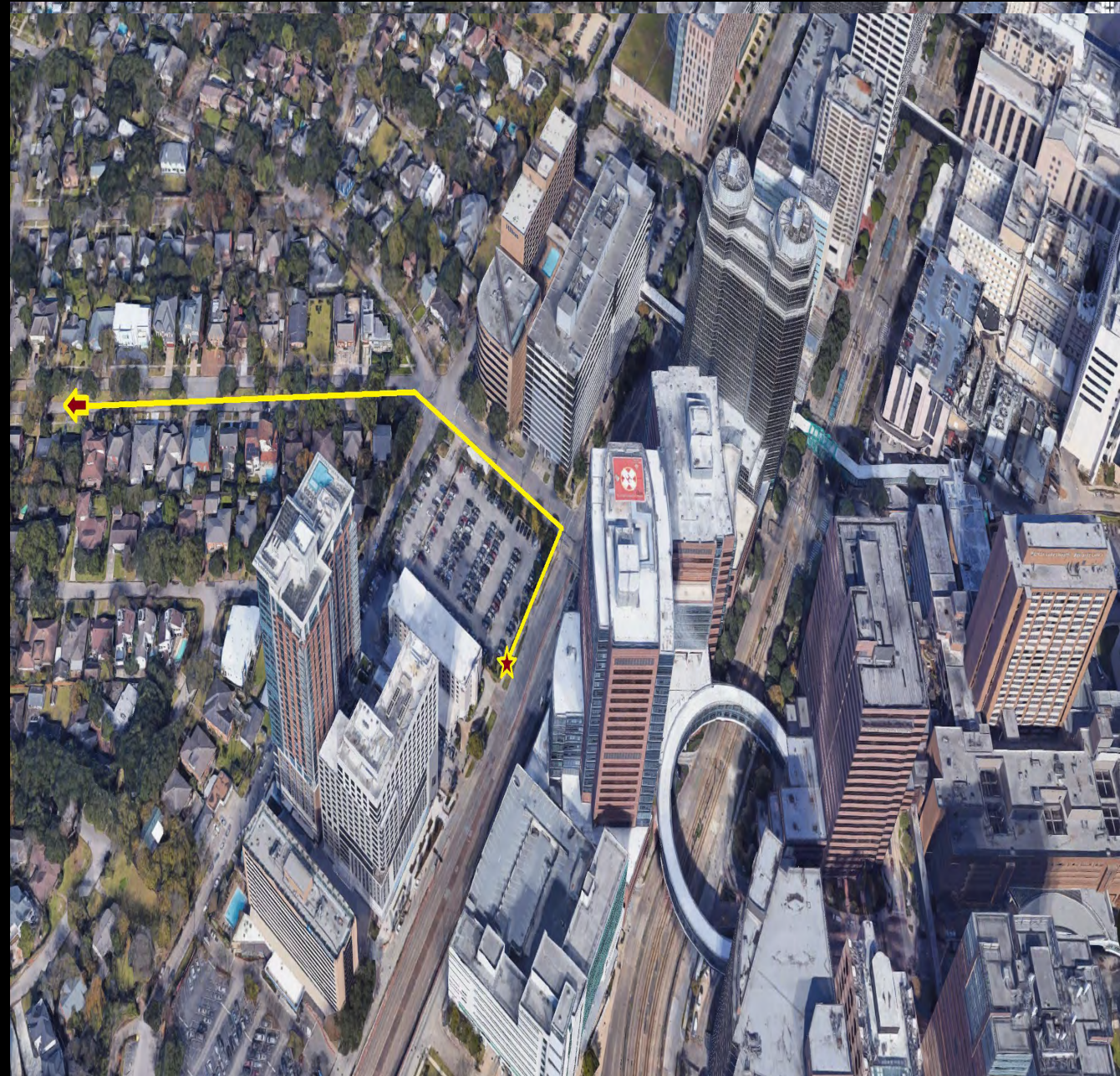
Residential Video Image



ESCAPE ROUTE OF KILLER



03/11/2014 02:04



PUBLIC INFORMATION

Media Release #1



Media Release #2



Constant Noise



The Tip

Tuesday, July 31, 2018

“I don’t want my name out there so you can call me Mrs. Jacobs. I live in the neighborhood with a person I believe is the person you guys are looking for in the killing of the doctor in the Medical Center.”

The Tip

Tuesday, July 31, 2018

Mrs. Jacobs...

- “It’s not just me but there are four of us who believe this person could be the same person as the person in the pictures.”
- The guy’s name is “Joey.” She believed that his mother died at Methodist after a heart cath surgery.
- Joey is a “gun nut” who rides his bike everywhere he goes.



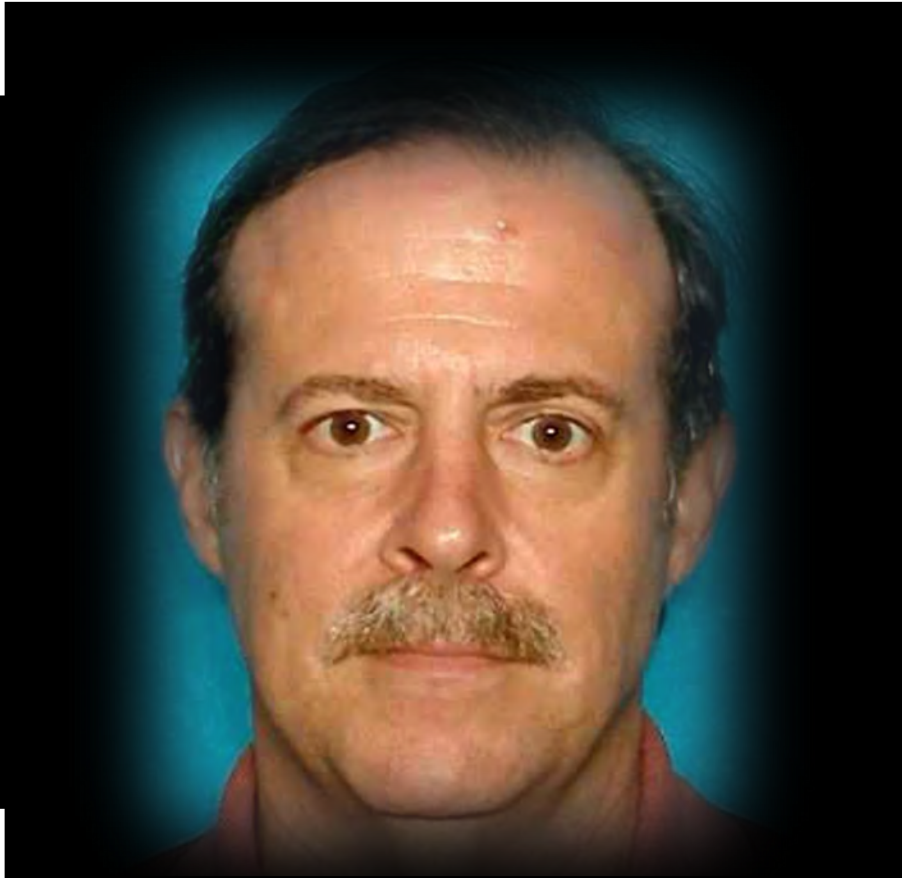
The Tip

Tuesday, July 31, 2018

Wait! That's not all...

- “There’s another family from Ohio who knows this guy Joey. And *he’s given his house to them—sold all of his belongings—and told the Ohio family he was going to commit suicide.*”





Joseph "Joey" James Pappas, III

I just suicided some miles from the house. Need to go to 5003 Stillbrooke Dr. 77035 to secure the premises. Enter through driveway gate. (unlocked but have to lift up a bit, it is sagging) House Entry door code instructions taped to door. Alarm will sound upon opening. To inside right I is alarm key pad. Immediately enter code 1950 to disarm and turn off siren. Instructions on arming etc in letter you have (copy in front West bedroom). Also in letter

The Welfare Check



A Treasure Trove of Evidence
Discovered in
Plain View



Black Crown Victoria

No Back Seat



Note to Report Bike Stolen



CPK 4554A - Any changes?
Prest - 86?

(HPO) on line theft report.

Theft date Between 7/19/18 to 7/25/18

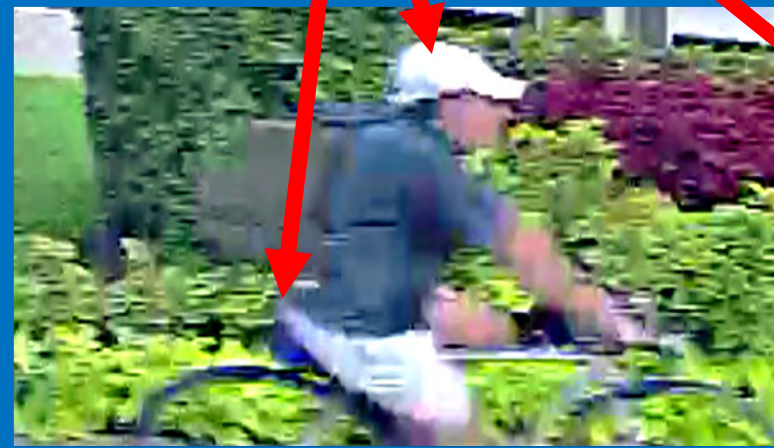
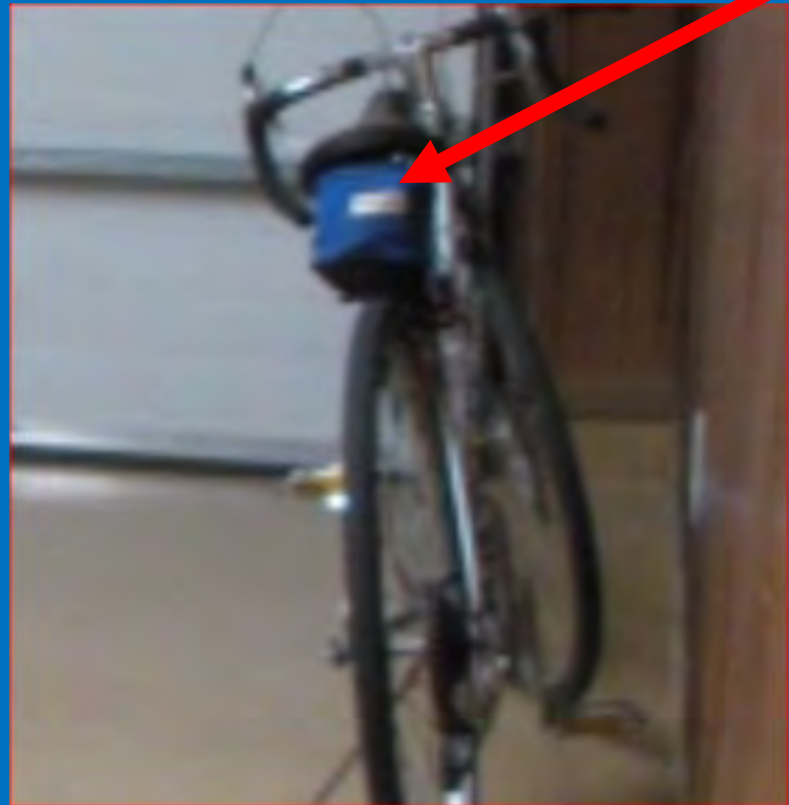
Discovered gone noon 7/25

Today, discovered 10 speed bicycle and riding gear missing. Stolen either from the back seat of my car when I was parked shopping or (witnessed/paid) (stolen in area). Schwinn 10 speed bicycle, backpack (containing more riding gear, rain gear, change of clothing, baseball cap) riding shoes, gloves etc).

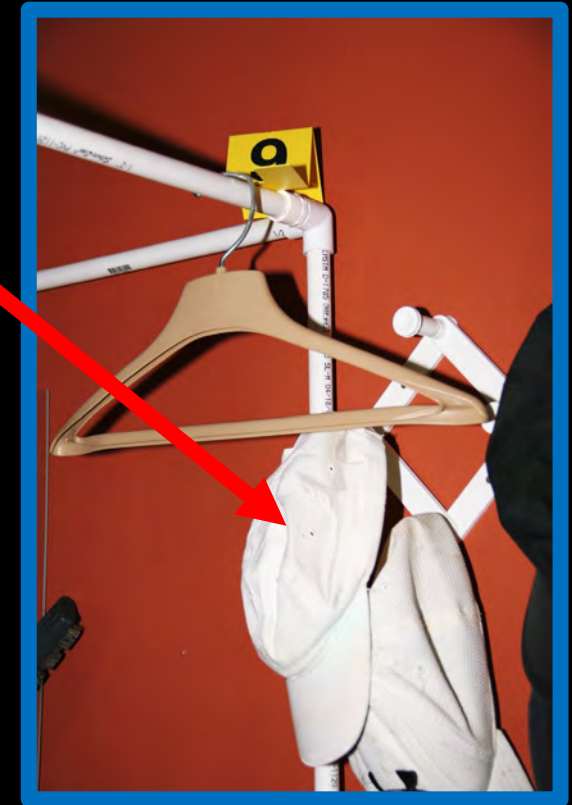
HPO
Thief

STOLEN BIKE

Bike in Garage

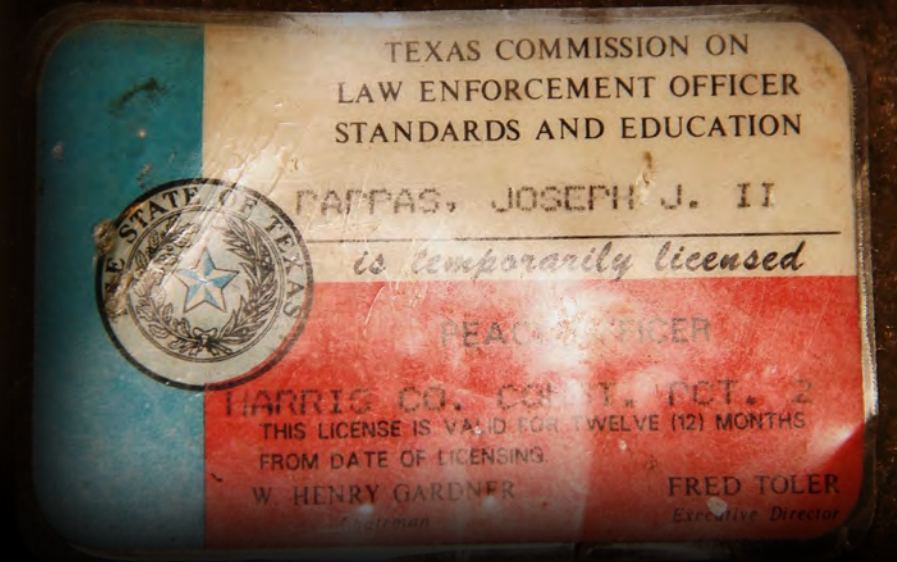


Hat in Utility Room

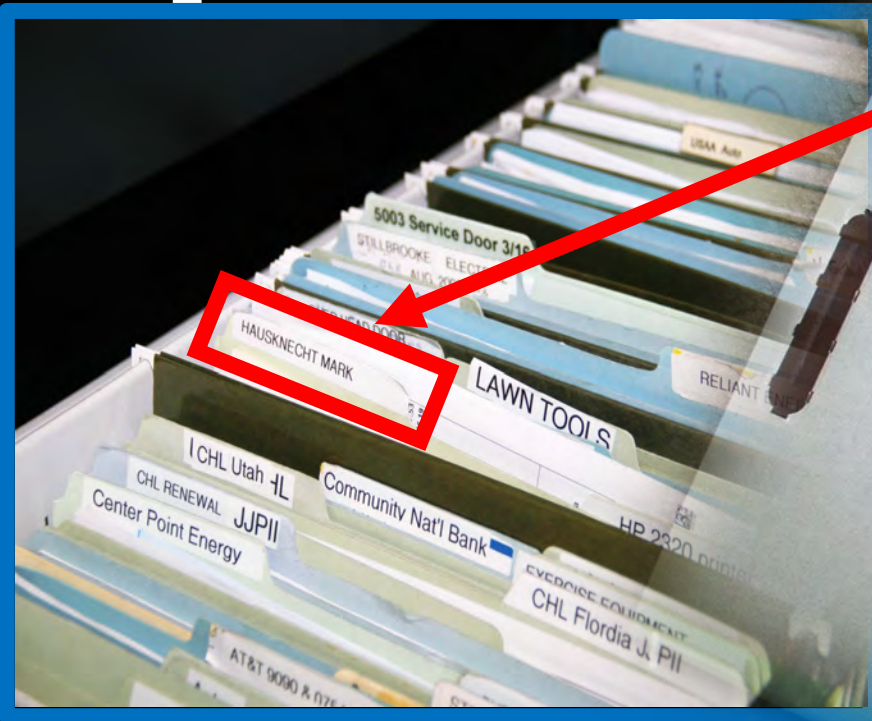




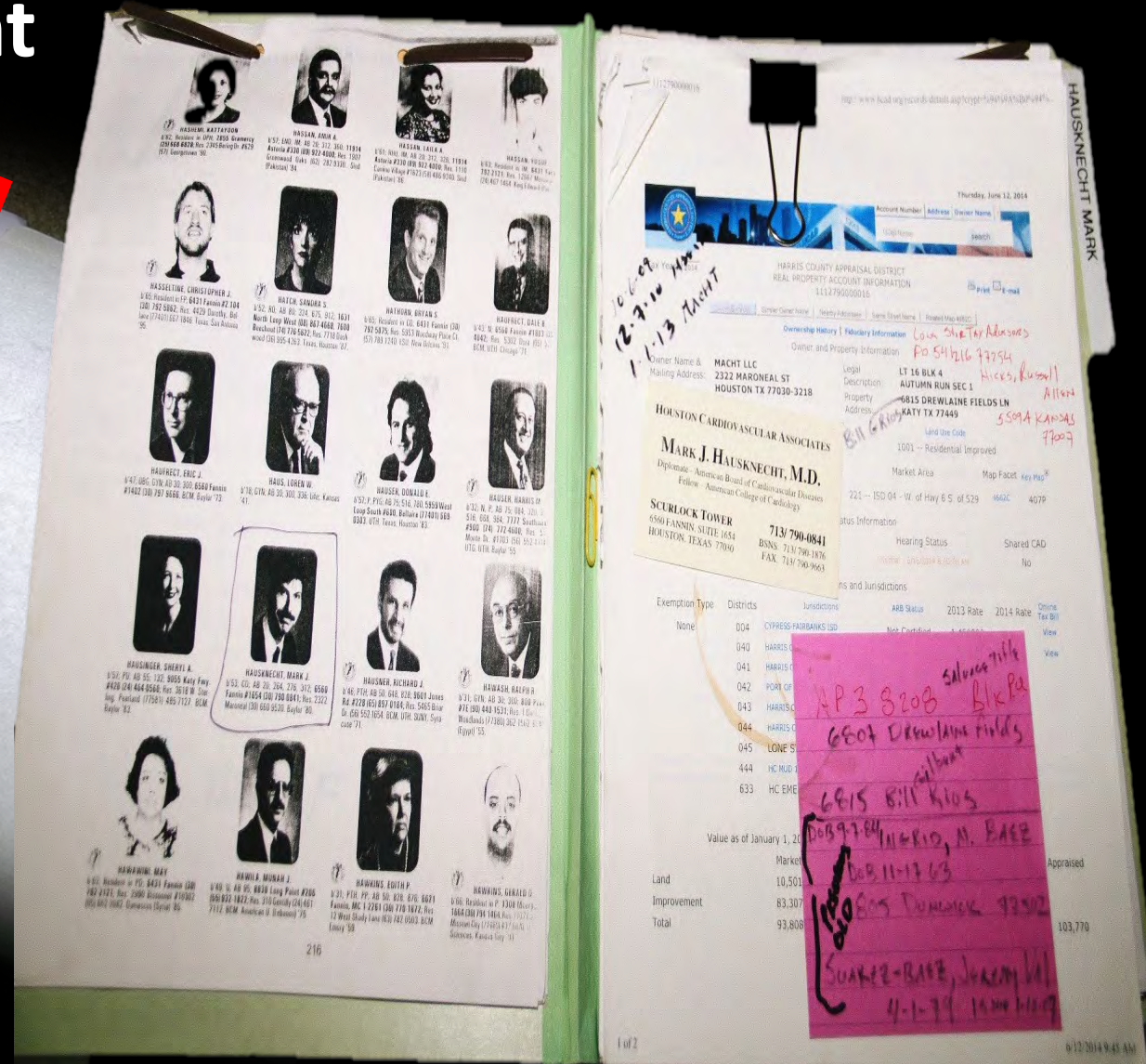
The Search Warrant



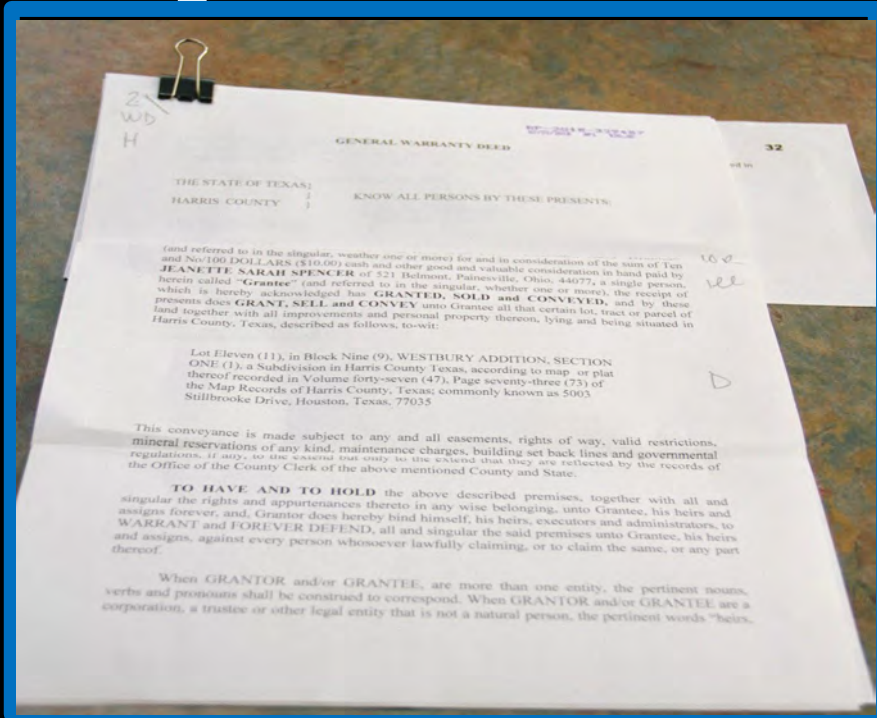
The Search Warrant



The Target



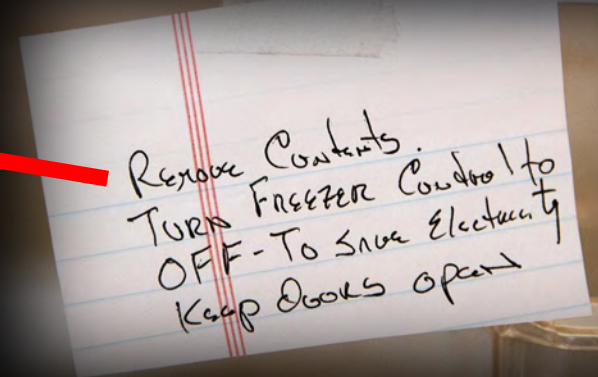
The Search Warrant



The Will



The House was Prepped



JOEY'S SISTER

- Learned that she lived in fear of her brother
- First person to connect her mother's death to Dr. Hausknecht

GRIEVANCE

MOTIVE
For
MURDER



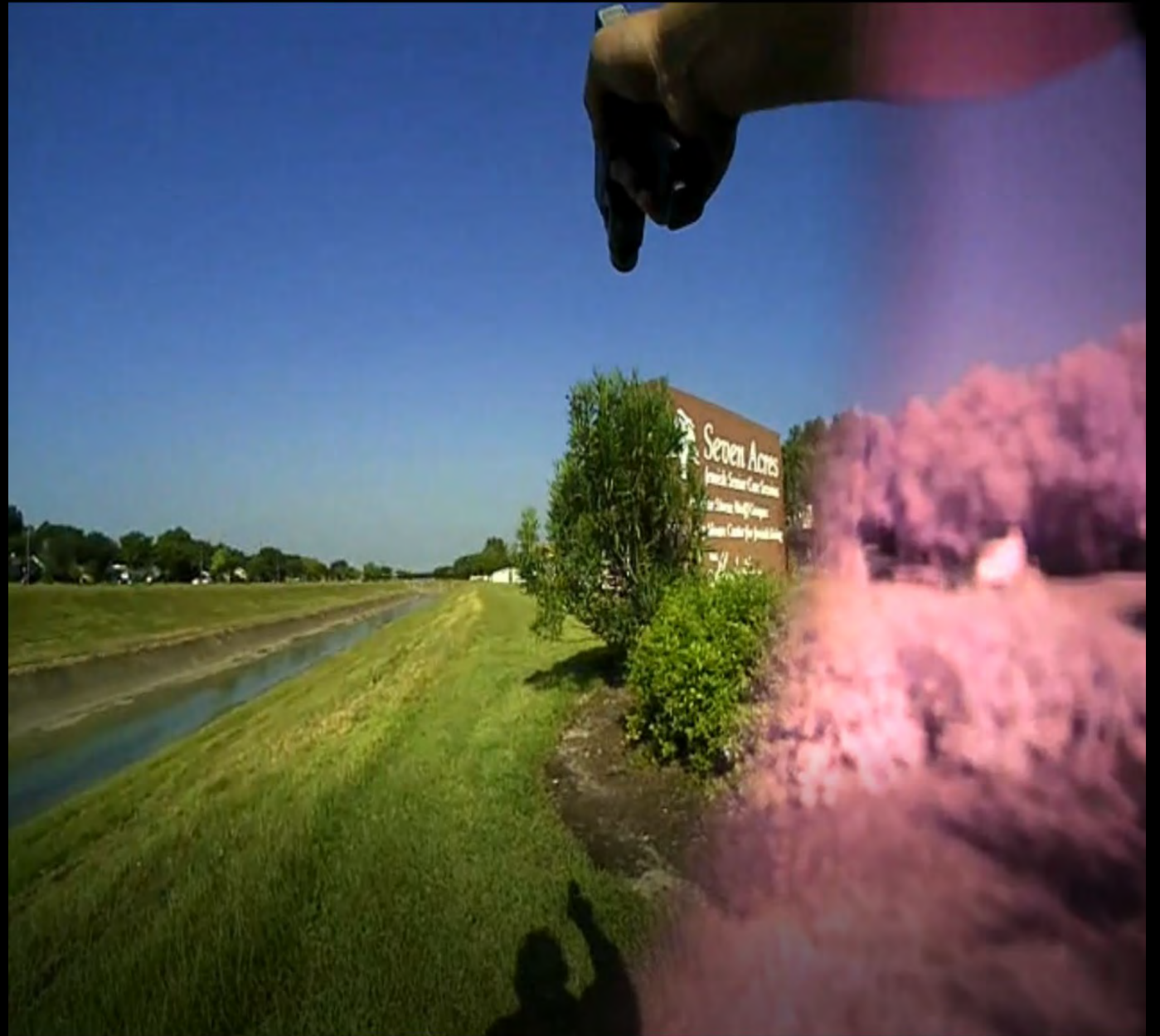
The Hunt

Friday, August 3, 2018

- Media coverage was timed to keep the case fresh.
- Houston Parks Board employee, Carroll Clements Jr. spotted a person he believed was spray painting graffiti.
- As Clements investigated, the person walked away dropping his wallet.
- Clements retrieved the wallet and identified its owner as Joseph Pappas.
- Clements notified HPD.
- Patrol Officers M. Medina, W. R. Davis and O. E. Tristan responded.

The Hunt

Friday, August 3, 2018





The Conclusion

Friday, August 3, 2018

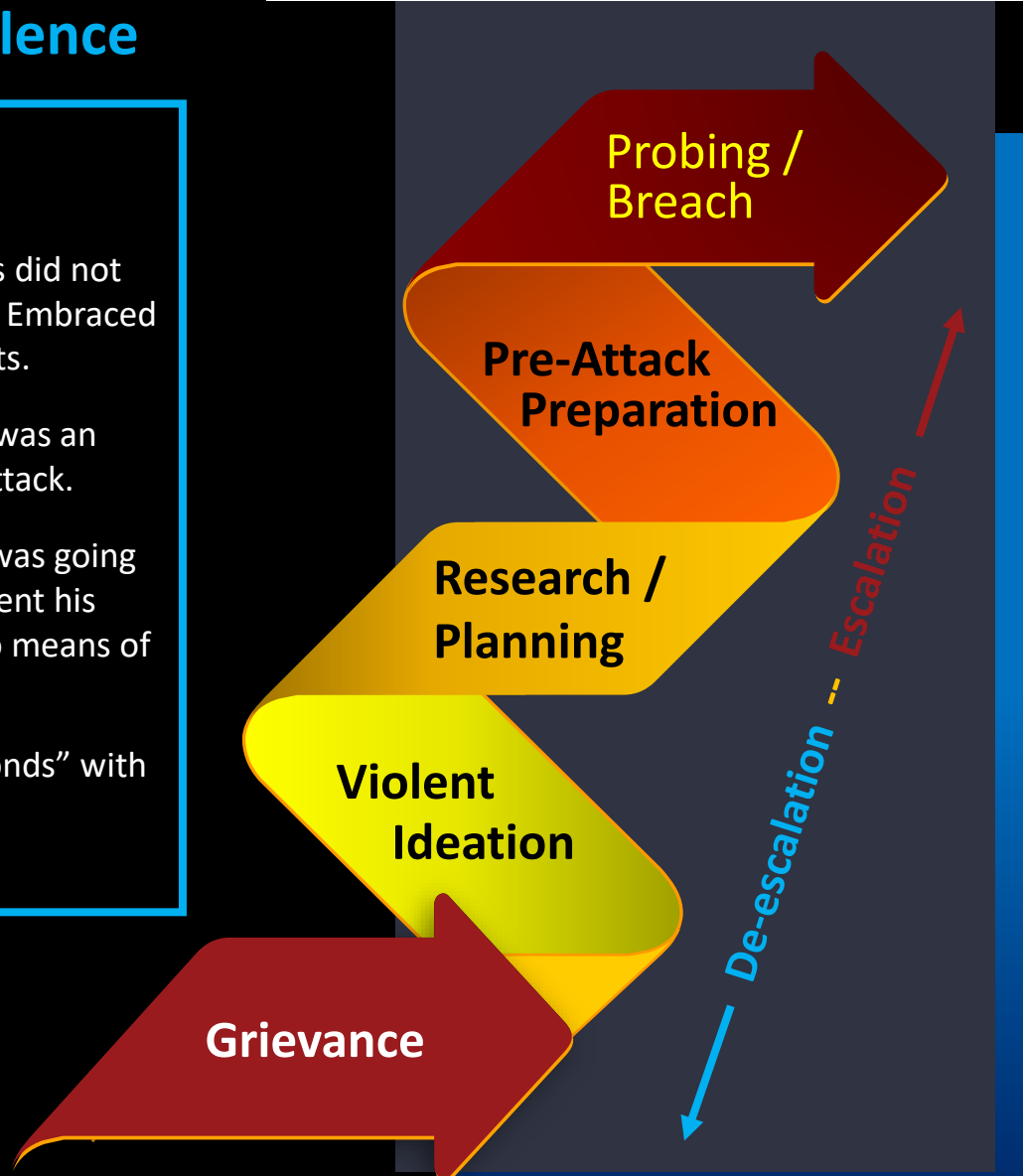


Threat Assessment Lens

Pathway to Violence

Personality Traits

- **Narcissism:** Believed that rules did not apply to him. He was special. Embraced retribution for perceived slights.
- **Paranoia:** Believed any slight was an intentional attack worthy of attack.
- **Depression:** Believed that he was going to die from cardiac issues / Spent his parents entire fortune with no means of earning a living / Time to act
- **Isolation:** No intimate “pair bonds” with friends or partners



Behavior Patterns

- **Fixation:** Everyone who knew him, even neighbors, told of his extreme preoccupation with Dr. Hausknecht. Attributed all of his life’s failures to the loss of his mother.
- **Identification:** Researched his targets and habits. Practiced his attack and fantasized about the pain he would inflict.
- **Leakage:** Pre-attack escape of information telegraphing intentions.
 - **Behavioral:** Divested himself of all possessions, including prized weapons.
 - **Communication:** Told acquaintances that he was going to right a lot of wrongs.

Source: Meloy, J. R., & Hoffmann, J. (Eds.). (2021). International handbook of threat assessment (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/med-psych/9780190940164.001.0001>.

Targeted Violence

Proximate Cause:

- **Grievance:** Death of killer's mother in 1999
- **Triggering Life Event:** Exhausted family fortune / Unable to hold a job / Coronary heart disease

Opportunities for Threat Mitigation:

- **Identify:** Behaviors of Concern
- **Gather Information:** Use every available resource to assemble a complete history of the individual
- **Assess the Threat:** Trained professionals using validated structured judgement tools
- **Apply Mitigation Strategies:** Construct a soft landing, redirect the focus of the grievance or neutralize the threat / Establish "**Safety Beacons**" when possible



Exploring Myth of the Black Swan

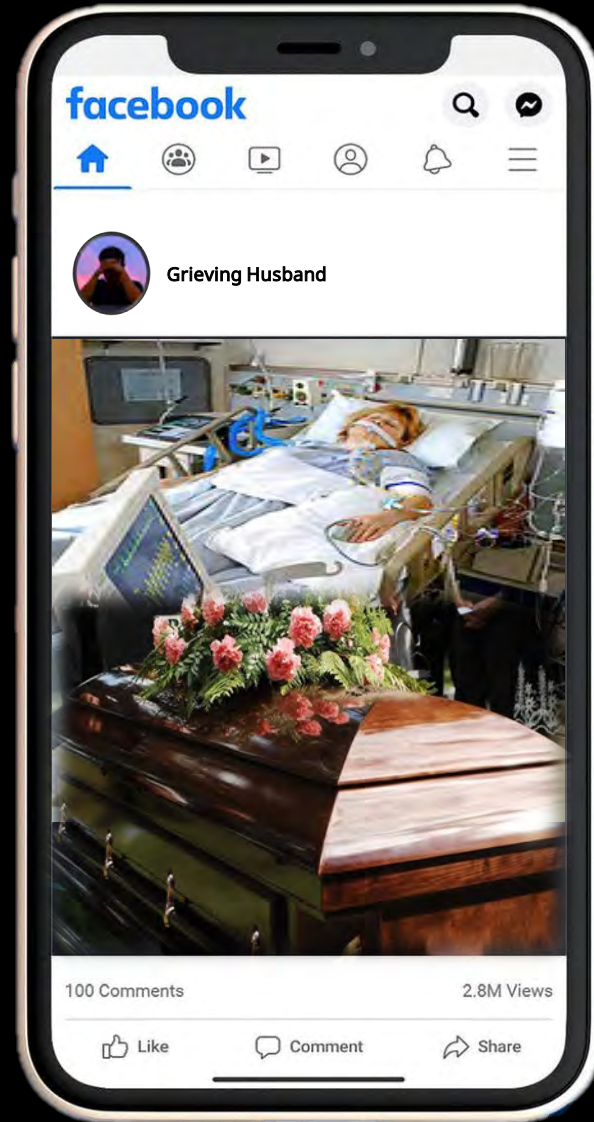


Legacy of Learning:

Dr. Mark Hausknecht believed that "one's mind determines one's destiny."

When dealing with a mind consumed by an obsessive grievance, effective threat management searches for a **soft landing**.

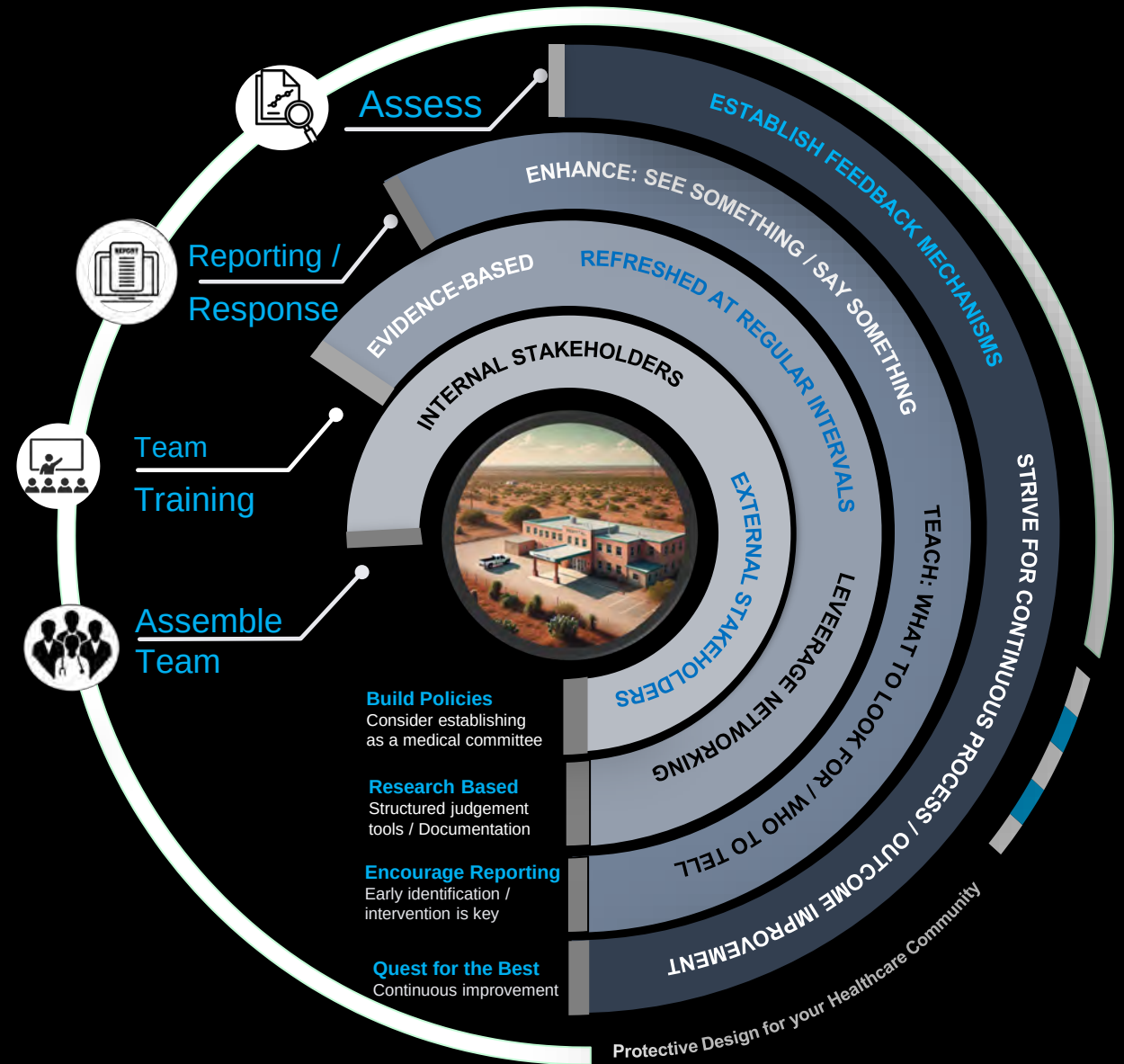
A Different Approach



Implementation Roadmap

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”

— Mother Teresa





IN PURSUIT OF A BLACK SWAN

The Assassination of
Dr. Mark Hausknecht

QUESTIONS?