



A Review of Law Enforcement and Academic Reports on Ecoterrorism, and What We Can Learn From Them



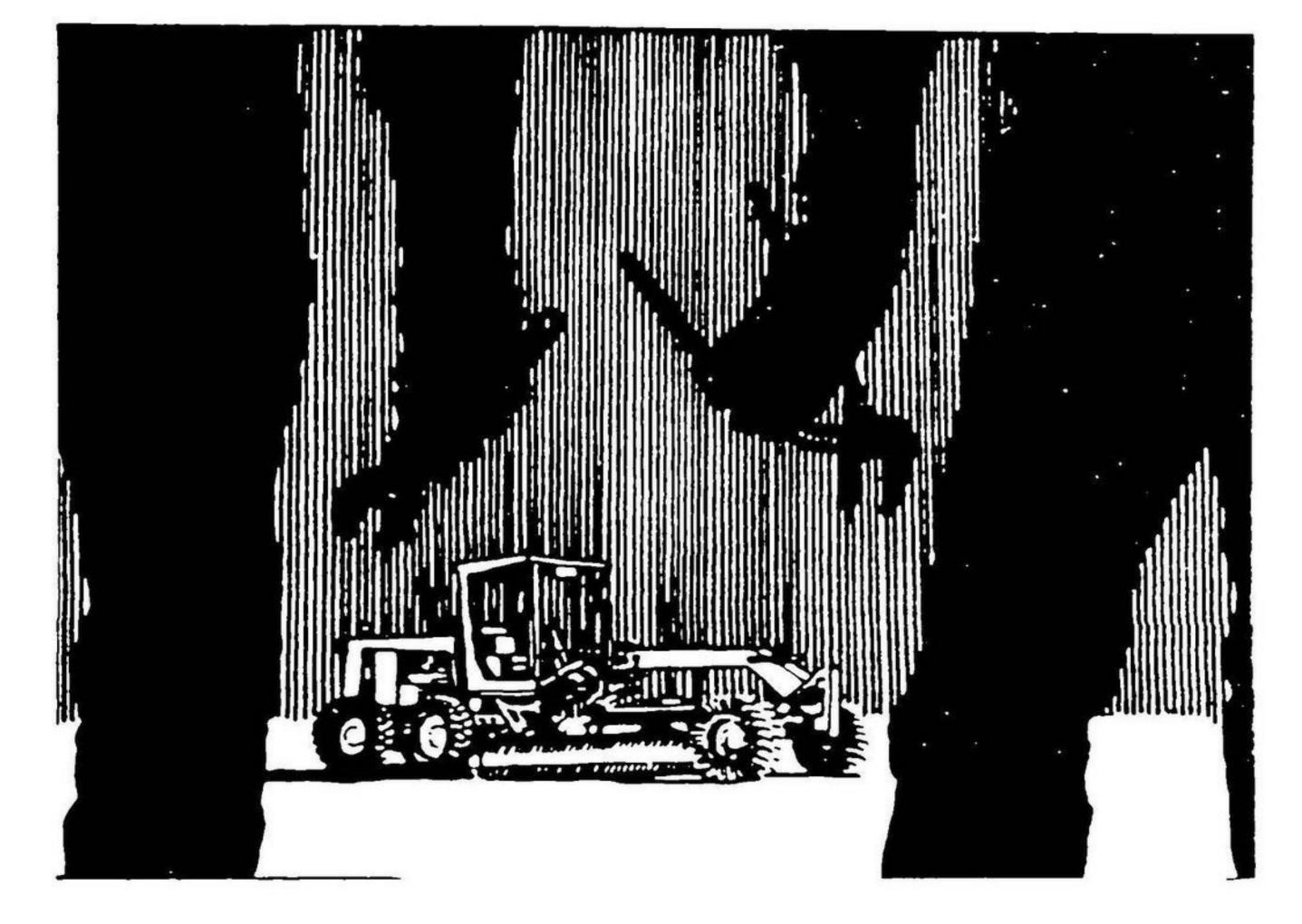


"Terrorists think globally but act locally"

-Brent Smith, (A Look at Terrorist Behavior: How They Prepare, Where They Strike)







Go out and do something for the EARTH . . . at night.



Motivation

Whether a serial arsonist or a sign waver at a rally, the label "ecoterrorist" has been broadly used to describe environmentalists or animal rights activists across a large spectrum of beliefs and political actions. With the use of this term comes increased scrutiny from federal law enforcement agencies as well as academic attention from criminologists. As the law enforcement agencies assemble their task forces and make convictions, academics form committees and write reports.

However, in making these reports, the organizations involved also show us what they know and how they know it. By reading them, we can learn more about the way they think about direct actions and what tools they use against us. With this in mind, future actions can be planned with adapted strategies to subvert law enforcement investigations.

Four key areas are identified where the predictions of anti-ecoterrorist literature can potentially be disrupted.

- 1. Preparatory actions
- 2. Target distance
- 3. Target selection
- 4. Suspect identification

While most of the reports mentioned in this zine focus on actions by the ALF and ELF, there is still plenty to learn for the motivated ecoterrorist of any affiliation. This zine offers a brief collection of quotes and graphics from anti-ecoterrorist literature, with a few recommendations made on potential tactics.

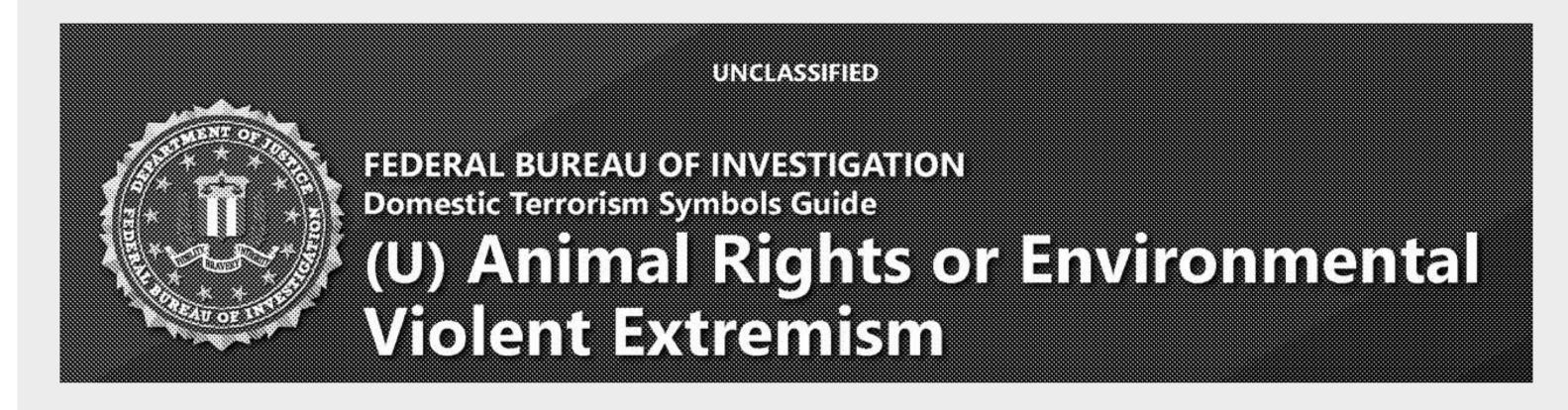
They have the power, but we have the night.

Definitions



"For the purposes of this article, "eco-terrorism" will be used to denote the use or threatened use of violence of a criminal nature against innocent victims or property by an environmentally oriented subnational group for environmental-political reasons, aimed at an audience beyond the target, and often of a symbolic nature."

(From Spikes to Bombs: The Rise of Eco-terrorism)

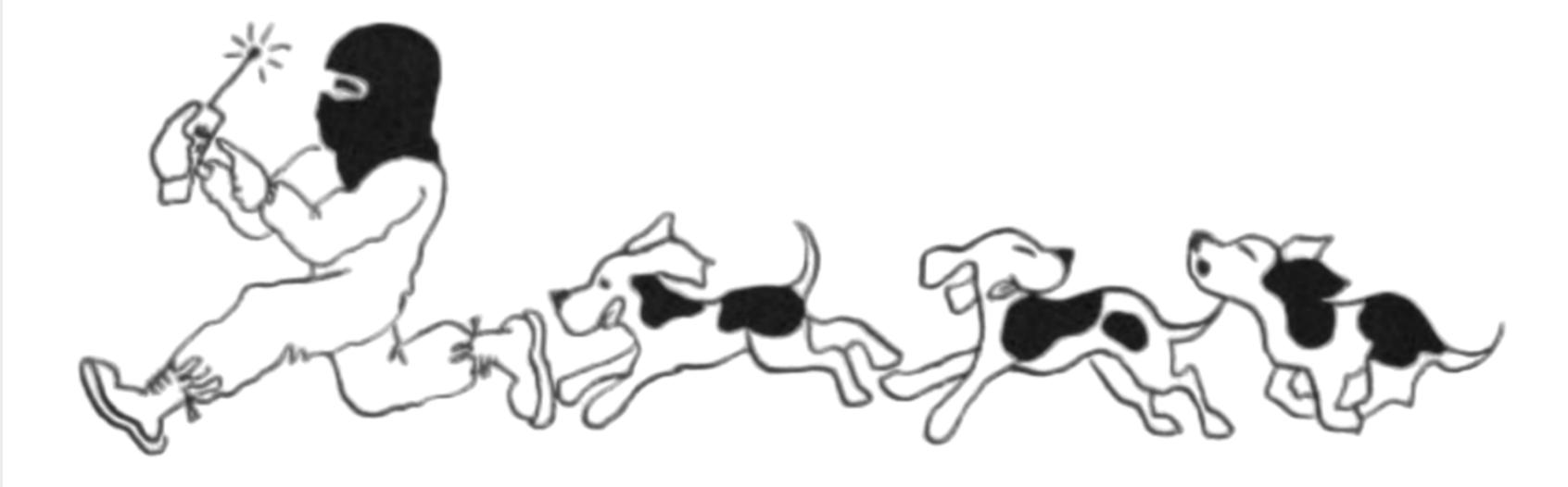


AREVEs (Animal Rights or Environmental Violent Extremists) believe criminal actions are necessary and justified to end perceived cruelty, harm or exploitation of animals, or destruction of natural resources and the environment.

(FBI Records: Domestic Terrorism Symbols Guide Part 01)

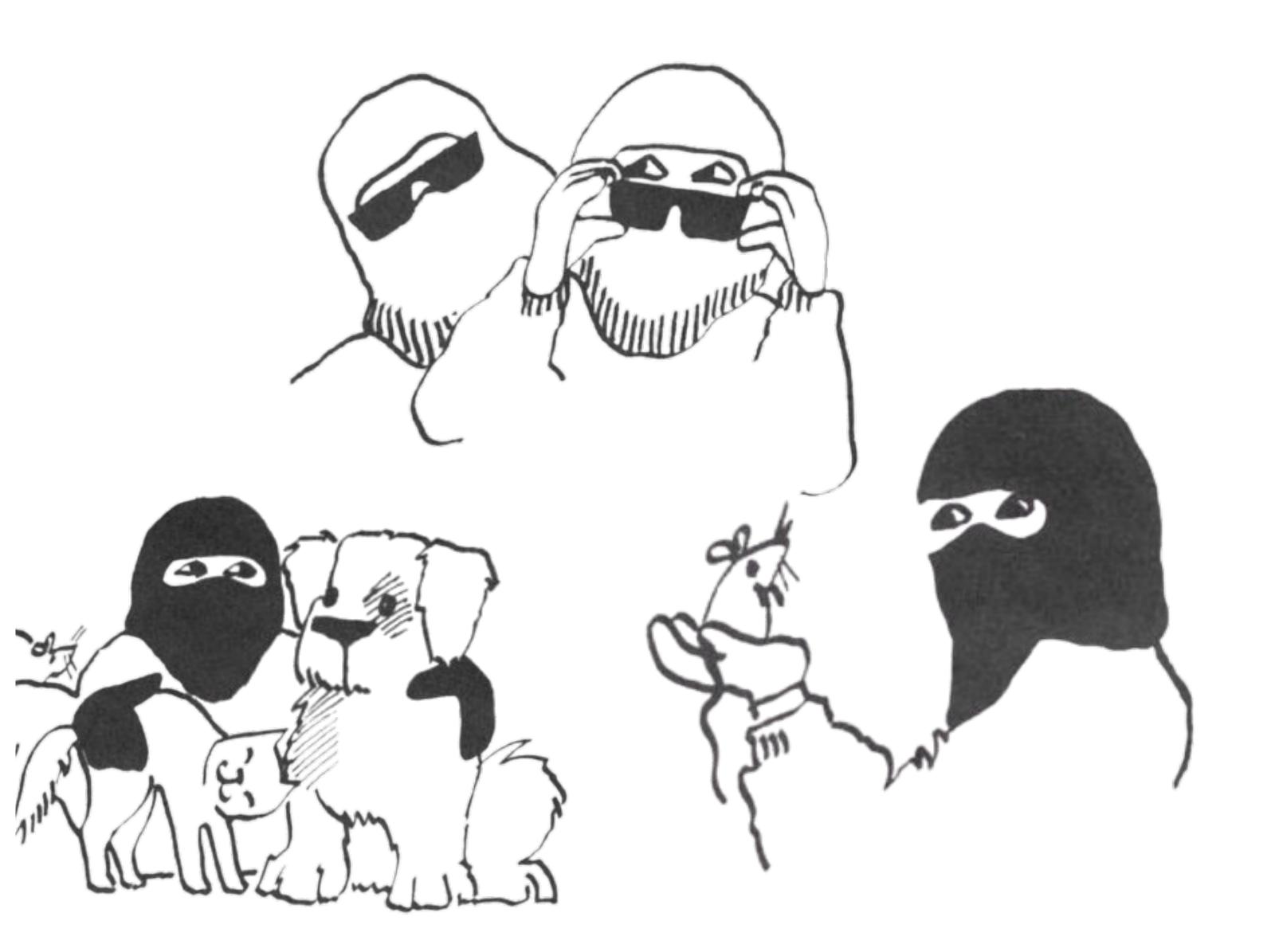
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Summary: Law enforcement agencies spend considerable resources on the identification of ecoterrorist suspects. This has proven challenging to them as these potential suspects often act within small autonomous cells. Individuals who don't participate in aboveground movement activities and who don't have prior criminal records are particularly hard to identify. Interestingly enough, the possession of movement literature like zines is an area of interest by law enforcement agencies.

Recommendations: Not participating in aboveground aspects of movements and avoiding criminal indictments of any kind continues to be a good strategy for individuals partaking in high-risk activities.





Together, eco-terrorists and animal rights extremists are one of the most serious domestic terrorism threats in the U.S. today...for several good reasons:

- The sheer volume of their crimes (over 2,000 since 1979);
- The huge economic impact (losses of more than \$110 million since 1979);
- The wide range of victims (from international corporations to lumber companies to animal testing facilities to genetic research firms); and
- Their increasingly violent rhetoric and tactics (one recent communiqué sent to a California product testing company said: "You might be able to protect your buildings, but can you protect the homes of every employee?").

ELF and ALF are probably the names you're most familiar with. The Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) are loosely-organized movements whose adherents engage in crimes like arson, fire bombings, vandalism, intimidation, assaults, stalking, etc. No membership dues are necessary—the only way to become a "member" is to engage in "direct action"...criminal activity designed to cause economic loss or destroy the victim company's operations.

So what are we doing to counter the threat? For one, we've mapped our environmental and animal rights extremism cases in order to give our investigators around the country and our executive management a big-picture look at what's happening and where. We're also analyzing information from financial records, phone records, and mail...and working to increase our human source reporting. And we're sharing intelligence with our partners through our Joint Terrorism Task Forces and other investigative endeavors. Sharing info with our partners, particularly at the local level, is crucial because many times they're the first ones at the crime scene.

We're also taking advantage of the 2006 revision to the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, which toughened penalties, created additional protections for people (the original law only covered property damage), and included secondary targets (often times companies that do business with primary targets are themselves targeted).

Our efforts have paid off—since 2005, our investigations have resulted in indictments against 30 individuals.

(Putting Intel to Work Against ELF and ALF Terrorists)

1. Preparatory Actions



(Pre-Incident Indicators of Terrorist Incidents: The Identification of Behavioral, Geographic, and Temporal Patterns of Preparatory Conduct)

Since September 11, 2001, state and federal expenditures for terrorism response have increased substantially. One criticism of current funding for counterterrorism is that allocations seem to assume that terrorist incidents are random and "can occur anywhere." While it is true that they "can" occur anywhere, the probability of their occurrence in specific locations varies widely (Davis et al., 2004). In many ways both the indiscriminate and spontaneous nature of terrorism has been overemphasized. Terrorist incidents do not materialize out of "thin air" -- they require time to plan, meet, procure and prepare explosive devices, and travel time to and from the selected target. These events are further constrained by the distances among the residences of the terrorists, where they meet and plan, where they procure or manufacture their explosives, And the distance to the target. ... Terrorists engage in a variety of non-terrorist criminal conduct prior to the commission of any terrorist act. These non-terrorist acts include crimes related to the creation of false identities for group members, thefts to procure funding for the group, thefts of weapons or explosive materials and, frequently, crimes related to the maintenance of internal security. These behaviors ultimately culminate in acts of terrorism. By examining these preparatory behaviors, routinized patterns of activity potentially can be identified.



Anti-Defamation League

Online Guides and Information

Publications like the ALF Primer provide operational instructions and advice and are available for download on several Web sites. The Primer advises activists, for instance, that if "you are using tools such as crowbars or bolt cutters (this is mostly for liberations), sharpen or file them after every action, since slight markings on the tool can leave traceable markings on what is opened." The Primer also offers instructions on gluing locks; damaging vehicles, telephone lines and security cameras; conducting surveillance; arson; and creating timers for incendiary devices.

Another manual, ARSON-Around with Auntie ALF, provides step-by-step instructions and diagrams for preparing various igniters and incendiary devices, as well as homemade napalm. "Arson is not always used by ALF in the course of an action, but when it is, it can be devastatingly effective," the guide notes. Devices described in ARSON-Around have been used in a number of actual attacks. In one instance, the destruction of an Oregon slaughterhouse in 1997, an ALF communiqué taking responsibility described how activists drilled holes in the walls, poured in 35 gallons of homemade napalm and then set three electrically timed incendiary devices to "halt what countless protests and letter-writing campaigns could never stop."

A guide published by ELF and posted on its Web site, Setting Fires With Electrical Timers: An Earth Liberation Front Guide, claims that "nothing on the following pages is beyond the talent of any activist."

(Ecoterrorism: Extremism in the Animal Rights and Environmentalist Movements)



National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism

A Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Center of Excellence

"These perpetrators were difficult to identify for several reasons (several of the chronic offenders offended for several years before apprehension). Very few of them were actively engaged in legal protests and movement-related activities prior to committing their crimes. Most were haphazardly organized into groups—they came together usually through personal contacts, functioned without a hierarchical organizational structure, and committed offenses as a small working cell. Such tactics make the collection of intelligence and investigation of such activities particularly challenging, and point to the continued need to attempt to better understand the criminal activities of such individuals and groups."

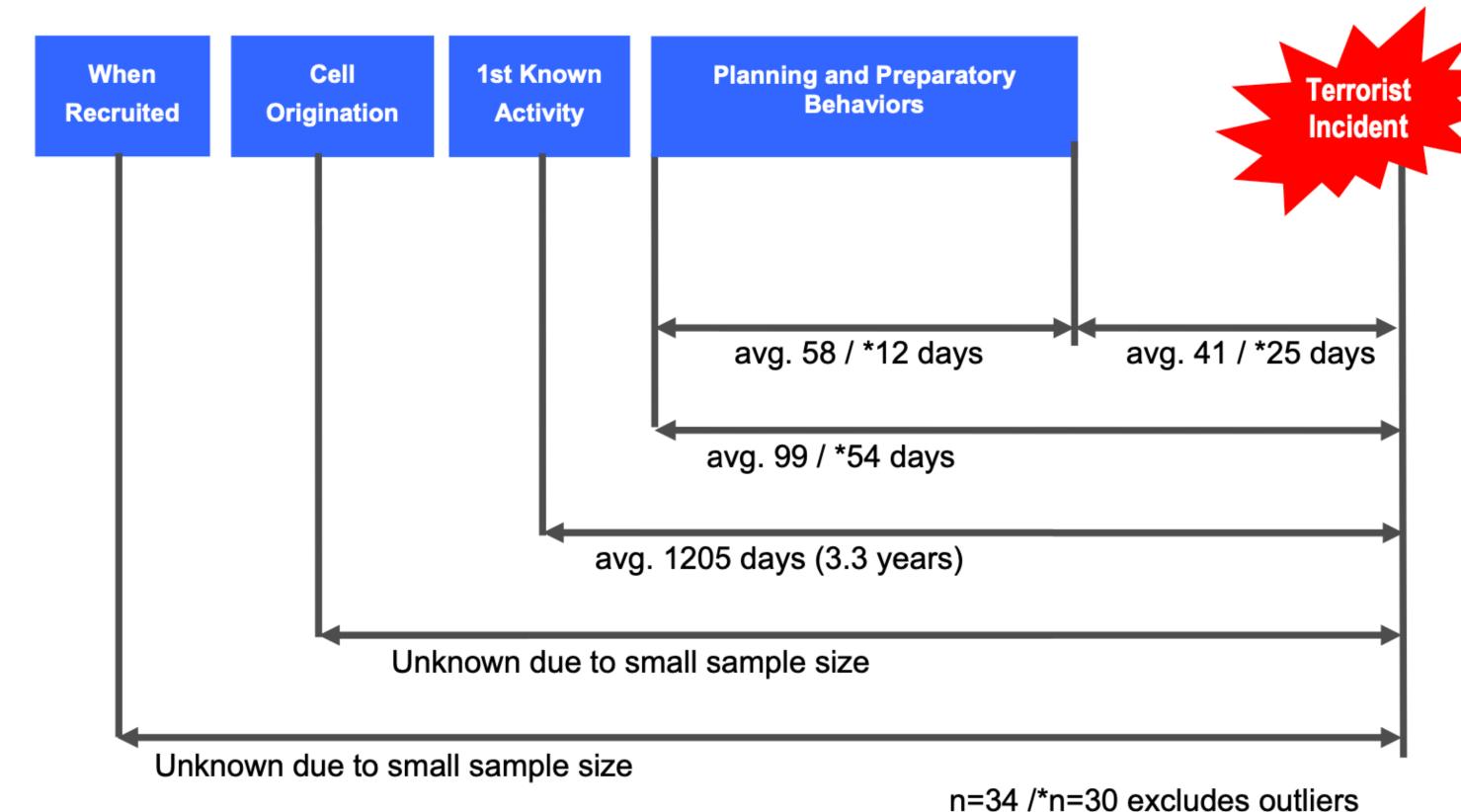
Table 5 presents the results related to participation in movement-related activities. In general, the offenders who were involved in the bombing and arson incidents studied here were not particularly active in such activities. Only 12.2% possessed any specific movement literature at the time of arrest, 6.8% produced ideological literature (pamphlets, articles, books), 3.4% appeared in the media prior to their first bombing/arson offense, and 6.1% participated in movement-related protests. Even fewer offenders leafleted (2.0%), and very few had a web presence (0.7%). Although offenders linked to multiple incidents were somewhat more likely to have participated in movement-related protests, in general both categories of offenders were not strongly engaged in publically promoting the aims of their movements using legal avenues.

Table 5. Participation in Movement-related Activities

Characteristics	All Offenders	Offenders with	Repeat Offenders
		One Offense	
Had Movement	12.2%	12.5%	12.2%
Literature			
In Media (prior to	3.4%	0%	4.3%
incident)			
Had Website	0.7%	0%	0.9%
Produced Literature	6.8%	0%	8.7%
Attended Protests	6.1%	3.1%	7.0%
Leafleted	2.0%	3.1%	1.7%

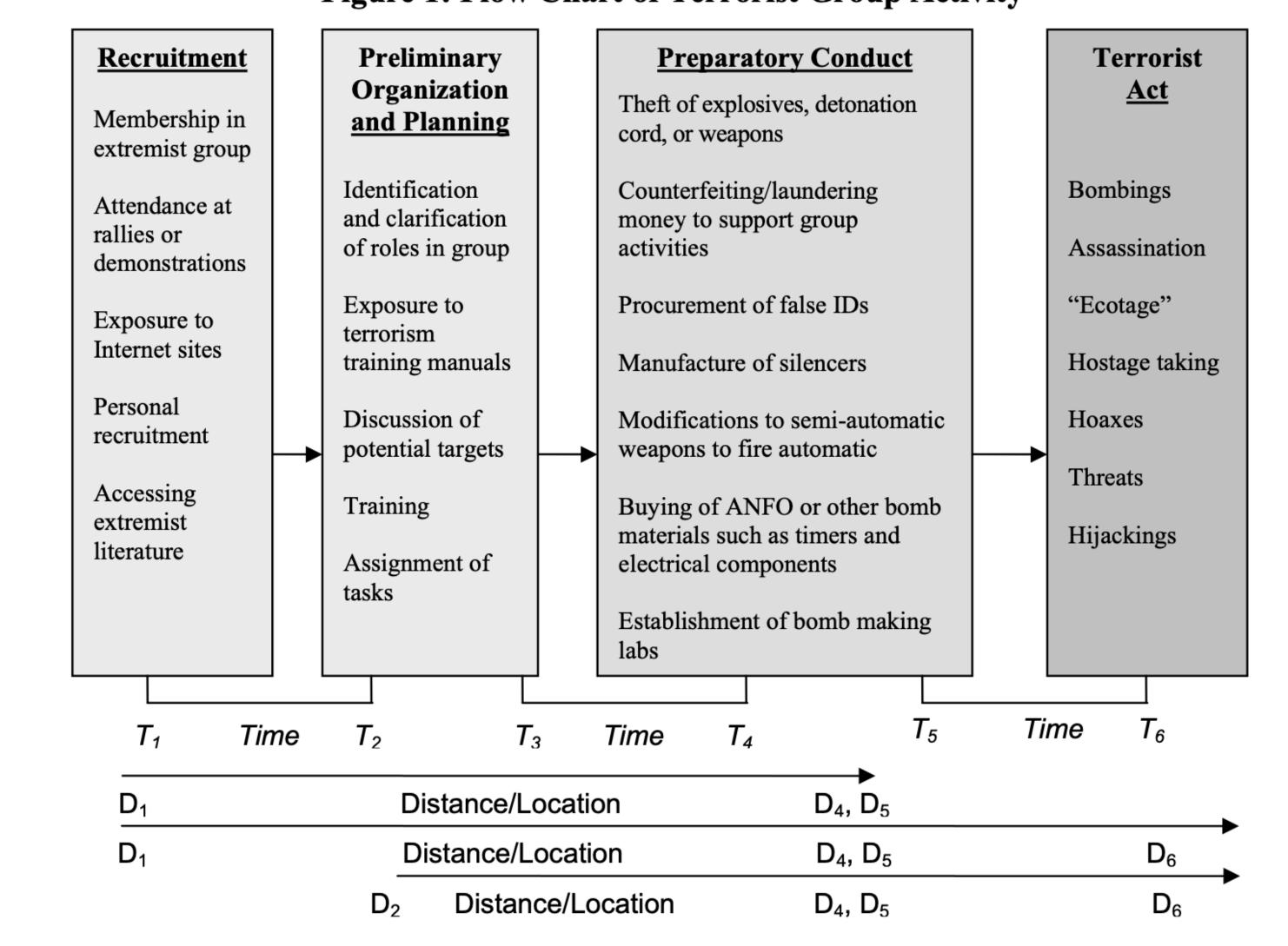
(An Overview of Bombing and Arson Attacks by Environmental and Animal Rights Extremists in the United States)

Figure 2: Temporal averages of terrorist group activities



(Geospatial and Temporal Patterns of Preparatory Conduct among American Terrorists)

Figure 1: Flow Chart of Terrorist Group Activity



(Geospatial and Temporal Patterns of Preparatory Conduct among American Terrorists)



(Pre-Incident Indicators of Terrorist Incidents: The Identification of Behavioral, Geographic, and Temporal Patterns of Preparatory Conduct)

Terrorist groups engaged in an average of 2.3 known behaviors per incident. Further examination, however, revealed that one-fourth (115 of 453; 25.3%) of these activities were "ancillary" - predominately criminal conduct associated with the terrorist group that could have been used as a "pre-incident indicator," but which was not directly related to the planning of the eventual terrorist incident. Of the 453 behaviors recorded, nearly one-third (145 of 453; 32.1%) involved a criminal offense. The most common of these crimes was involving acquiring, manufacturing, or testing bombs (24 of 145; 16.6%). Conspiracies do not frequently become known to law enforcement agencies until after the completion of the act or other arrests are made. Consequently, nonovert acts of conspiracies, such as meetings and phone calls, may not come to the attention of local law enforcement agencies. However, three-fourths of these crimes involved "observable" offenses which might lead the police to suspicion more sinister activities. Robbery (21 of 145; 14.4%), and murder (9 of 145; 6.1%), and training (9 of 145; 6.1%) constituted the remaining most common preparatory and ancillary offenses committed... For local law enforcement, knowledge that most terrorists "act locally" can be an important mindset as investigative agencies seek to prevent terrorism or apprehend the perpetrators of these acts. These local patterns may be used by agencies to more efficiently patrol known, high risk target areas and gather intelligence on suspected activities within a specific range from potential targets.

The results indicate that offending is driven by chronic, repeat offenders. Many of the offenders in the database were convicted of multiple crimes, and seven were linked to at least seven offenses. Table 2 presents data on the number of offenses tied to each convicted offender. This table indicates that there are 32 convicted offenders in the database linked to just one offense, 13 convicted offenders were linked to two offenses, four convicted offenders were linked to three offenses, and three convicted offenders were linked to four offenses. In addition, three offenders were linked to seven offenses, and one convicted offender each was linked to 8, 10, 11, and 15 offenses.

Table 2. Number of Offenses by Offender

Number of Offenses	Number of Offenders
1	32
2	13
3	4
4	3
7	3
8	1 □
10	1
11	1
15	1

(An Overview of Bombing and Arson Attacks by Environmental and Animal Rights Extremists in the United States)

There are several interesting findings that highlight policy relevant concerns. First, there was a relatively small group of individuals responsible for a large number of offenses... perpetrators were difficult to identify for several reasons: e.g., very few were actively engaged in legal protests and movement-related activities prior to committing their crimes, many came together through personal contacts, and most committed offenses working as part of a small cell.

(An Overview of Bombing and Arson Attacks by Environmental and Animal Rights Extremists in the United States)

Suspect Identification

Another interesting finding presented in this table is the group affiliation variable. Some of the offenders had specific ties to either ALF (6.1%) or ELF (38.6%), but most of them (55.3%) had at least some connection to both groups. The data also show that recruitment efforts were not substantial. It appears that most groups came together informally through friends and personal contacts (Chermak, 2002; Sageman, 2004). Fifty percent of all offenders and all of the offenders linked to multiple offenses joined a group after being contacted by someone they knew. Finally, these individuals are not linked to groups with any substantial organizational capacity, and most of them received very little financial support. In fact, over 71% of the individuals did not receive any financial support for their activities.

Table 6. Relationship with Movement

Characteristics	All Offenders	Offenders with One	Repeat Offenders
		Offense	
Nature of			
Involvement			
Lone Actor	5.3%	7.4%	4.8%
Acted with Others	6.9%	25.9%	1.9%
Formal Group	9.2%	11.1%	8.7%
Informal Group	78.6%	55.6%	84.6%
Group Affiliation			
ALF	6.1%	16.7%	4.2%
ELF	38.6%	50.0%	36.5%
ALF/ELF	55.3%	33.3%	59.4%
Role			
Leader	2.1%	0%	2.4%
Affiliated Member	89.4%	100.0%	88.1%
Other Role	8.5%	0%	9.4%
Recruited into Group			
Personal	50.0%	14.3%	100.0%
Connection	22.20/	E7 10/	00/
Individual	33.3%	57.1%	0%
Decision	16 70/	20.60/	00/
Internet	16.7%	28.6%	0%
Financing			
No Support	71.4%	75.0%	66.7%
Criminal Activities	14.3%	25.0%	0%
Group Funds	14.3%	0%	33.3%

(An Overview of Bombing and Arson Attacks by Environmental and Animal Rights Extremists in the United States)



Arming Police With Knowledge

For law enforcement agencies, the implications of these patterns are significant. Committing an act of terrorism will usually involve local preparations. Although much of this conduct will not necessarily be criminal, early intelligence may give law enforcement the opportunity to stop the terrorists before an incident occurs. Knowledge of the threat — for example, understanding how long environmental or international terrorists prepare for their attacks — will affect the manner in which local officials respond. Identifying preparatory actions by environmental extremists may signal that an attack is imminent, whereas similar behavior by an international group might suggest that an attack is still several months away.

Understanding that most terrorists "act locally" can be important to know as investigative agencies seek to prevent terrorism and arrest those commit such acts.

Understanding that most terrorists "act locally" can be important to know as investigative agencies seek to prevent terrorism and arrest those commit such acts. These local patterns may be used by agencies to more efficiently patrol known, high-risk target areas and gather intelligence on suspected actions within a specific distance from potential targets. As we continue to deepen our understanding of the relationship among the location of the terrorist's home, terrorist preparation activities and the target, this growing knowledge should help officers prevent and respond to attacks.

(A Look at Terrorist Behavior: How They Prepare, Where They Strike)

Summary: The time leading up to an action is of great interest to law enforcement agencies. While starting with smaller actions before taking on high risk targets is generally recommended, this is also a known pattern of behavior to investigators. Similarly, any illegal steps made in preparation of larger actions can potentially alert law enforcement agencies to your plans. Steps should be taken to avoid letting preparatory actions lead to interventions or leave clues relating to higher risk actions taken later on.

Recommendations: While long-term planning and preparatory actions are often necessary, consider spacing actions out to avoid leaving a pattern. Similarly, instead of preparatory actions around your own area, consider actions farther away than you may think necessary. Take specific precautions to avoid attention while gathering specific components for devices law enforcement agencies may be looking for.





Table 1. Target Types of ALF and ELF

Target Type	ALF	ELF
Private Homes		41.2%
Meat/Food Processing Plant	29.6%	3.1%
Automobile/Truck	2.8%	23.7%
Dealerships		
Universities	21.3%	3.1%
Fur/Leather Companies	16.7%	
Government Facilities	3.7%	7.6%
Timber/Logging Companies		8.4%
Fast Food Restaurants	10.2%	
Research Facilities	6.5%	3.1%
Power Plants		3.1%
Police	.9%	.8%
Pharmaceutical Companies	.9%	
Other Businesses	7.4%	6.1%

(An Overview of Bombing and Arson Attacks by Environmental and Animal Rights Extremists in the United States)

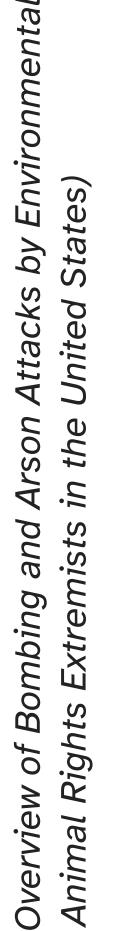
Summary: The ideology of ecoterrorist actions is shown clearly through their target selection. Actions will typically take place at night at unguarded locations and effort is taken to avoid any human or animal casualties. After these security-based selections, the targets perceived legitimacy and iconicity are the next two important factors.

Recommendations: The vitality and destructibility of targets should be considered alongside the other options involved in target selection. An action that strikes hard at the vital functions of an organization will have a greater impact than one made with consideration for its legitimacy. Similarly, the destructibility of a target should be considered. Although it involves higher risk, causing greater destruction of a target will likely be more impactful than actions that focus on more cosmetic alterations. In short: more bricks, less banners.

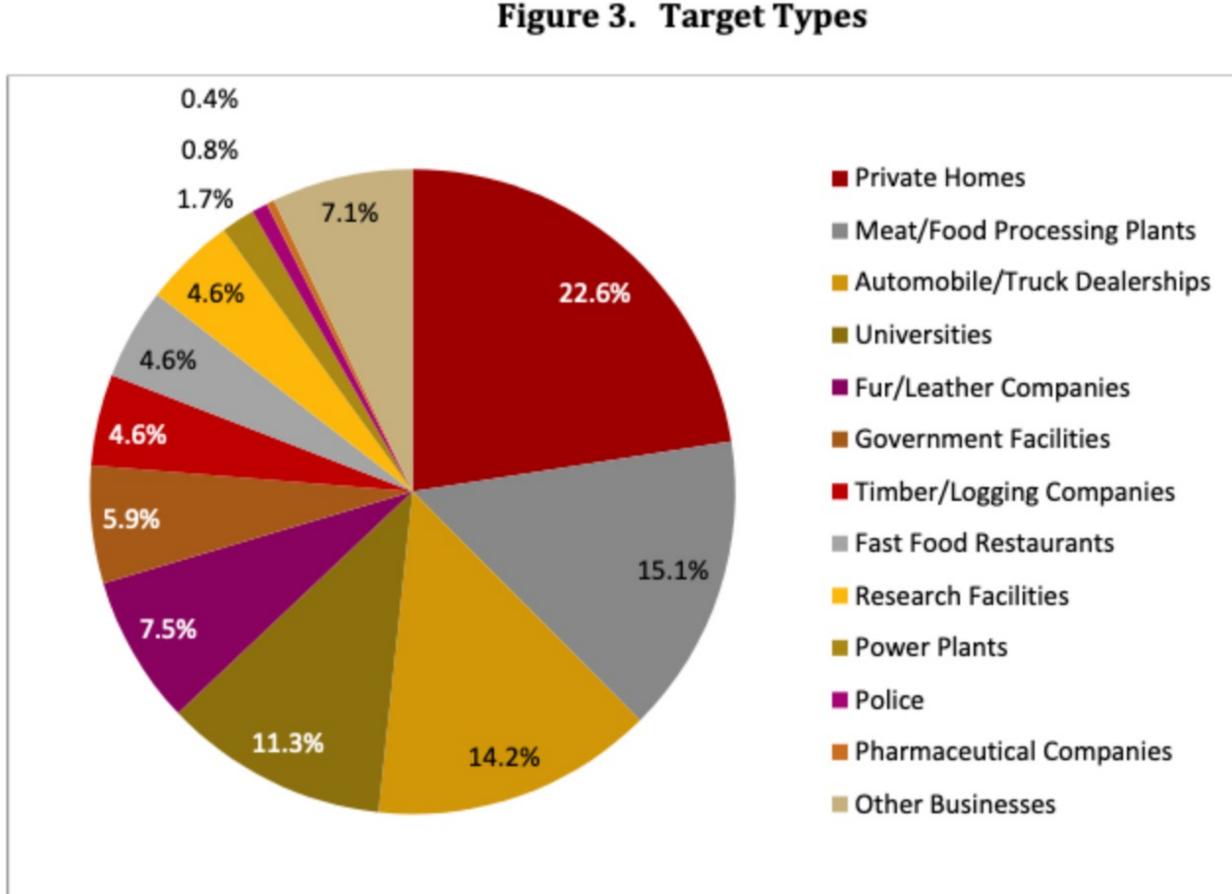
Executive Summary

This report focuses on criminal incidents committed by environmental and animal rights extremists in the United States between 1995 and 2010, and specifically, the arsons and bombings conducted by individuals affiliated with the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and Animal Liberation Front (ALF).

Between 1995 and 2010, there were a total of 239 arsons and bombings committed by these groups, with 55% attributed to ELF and 45% to ALF. Of these 239 incidents, 62% were bombings, and 38% were arsons. The vast majority of all incidents, 66%, occurred in the West. Over 42% of these incidents resulted in substantial or very substantial property damage and financial losses. Target types are displayed below.



[argets]



Assessing Eco-Terrorism Targets

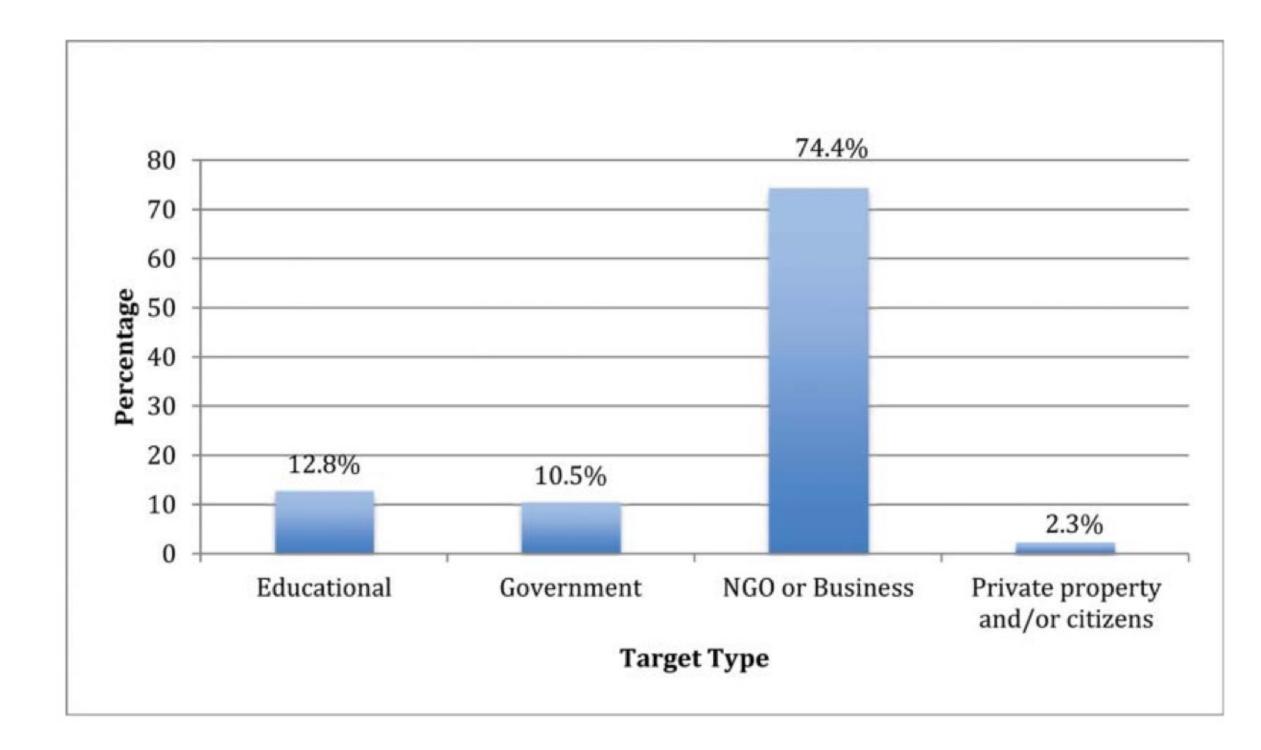


Figure 1. Types of eco-terrorism targets.

2. Target Distance

DISTANCE AND SUCCESS

Finally, Table 3 shows the analysis concerning the relationship between incident success and distance traveled. While two thirds of the incidents involving perpetrators who did not have to travel far resulted in success, plots involving individuals who lived over 100 miles from the target have a slightly higher rate of success (58.8%) compared to those who lived outside of the target city but within 100 miles (54.3% successful). While these patterns are interesting and suggest an advantage to living within the same city, these differences are not statistically significant. Previous ATS research has indicated that success rates vary significantly across ideological category, and the spatial impact on success may be dependent upon the distance-preferences of that particular group.

Table 3: Spatial Distribution and Success		
N = 247	Unsuccessful	Successful
Lived in same city (46)	32.6%	67.4%
Lived within 100 miles (116)	45.7%	54.3%
Lived over 100 miles (85)	41.2%	58.8%
Total	41.7%	58.3%

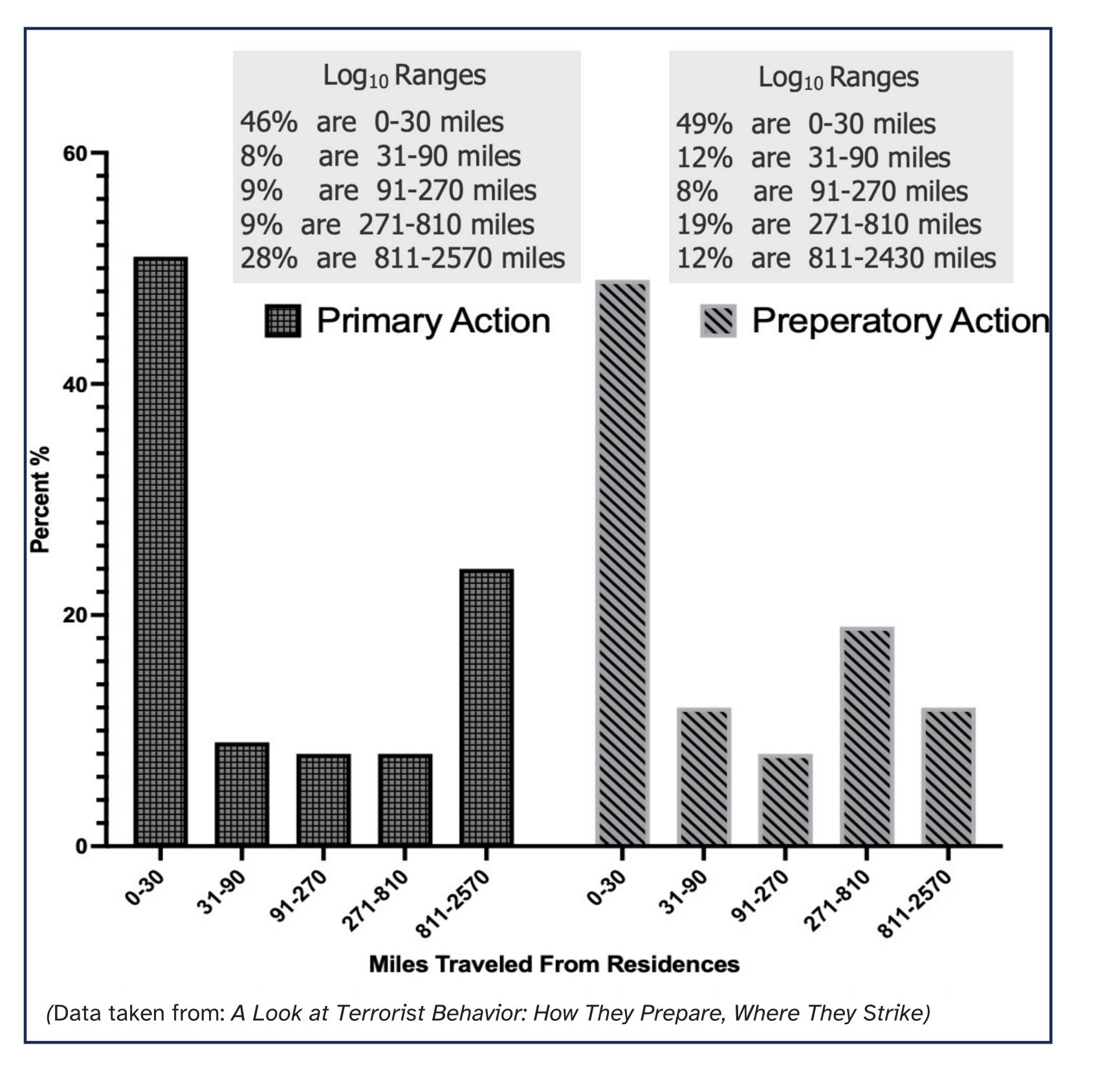
(Spatial Analysis of U.S. Terrorism Incidents)

The findings partially support our hypothesis, which states that targets of eco-terrorism closer in proximity to terrorists' residences will be more common than targets located further away. Specifically, Table 7 shows that approximately 33 percent of eco-terrorists lived in the same city as the intended target. On the other hand, we also find that nearly 49 percent of eco-terrorists reside on average 101 or more miles from the intended target. Importantly, it is often the case that co-conspirators traveled long distances with plans to attack a target in closer proximity to the home of a fellow conspirator. If multiple perpetrators were involved, the distance from the nearest residence to the intended target was considered.⁷⁹

Table 7 Nearness of targets (n = 133)

Category description	n	Percentage
1 = Offenders lived 10 miles or less from target	44	33.1
2 = Offenders lived within 11 to 100 miles from target	24	18
3 = Offenders lived over 101 miles from target	65	48.9

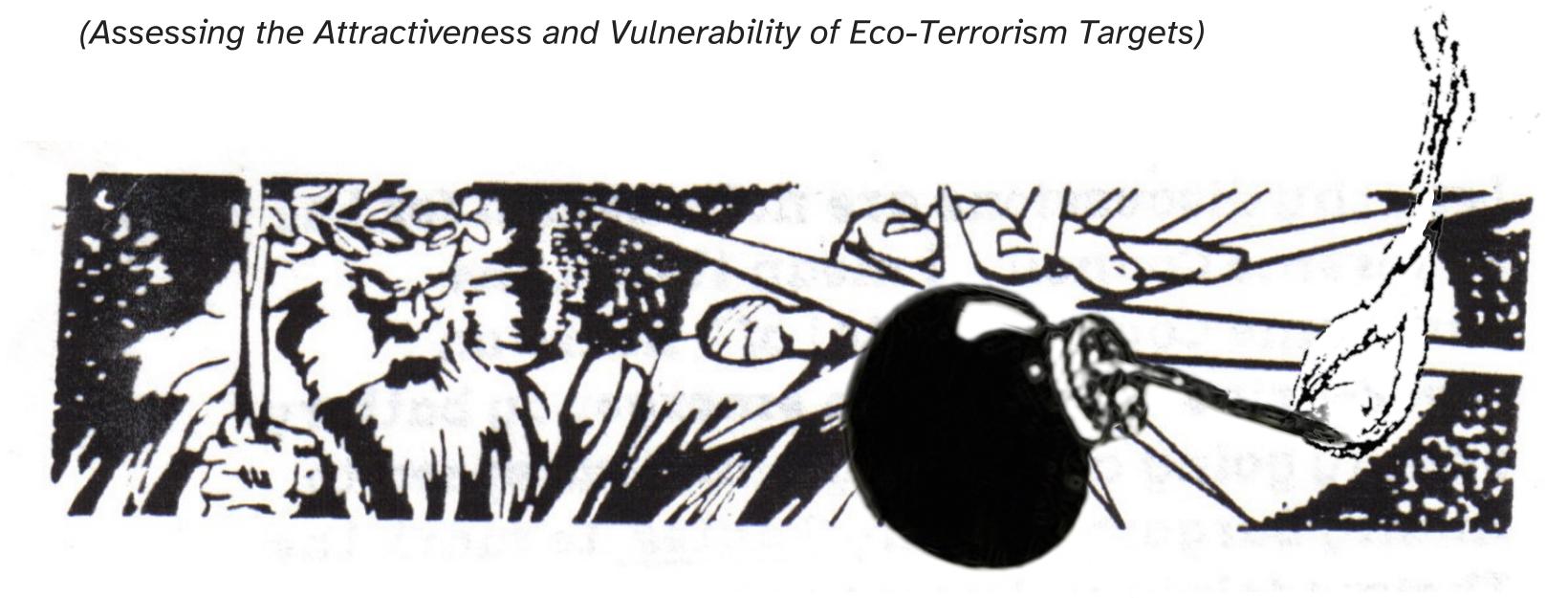
(Assessing the Attractiveness and Vulnerability of Eco-Terrorism Targets)



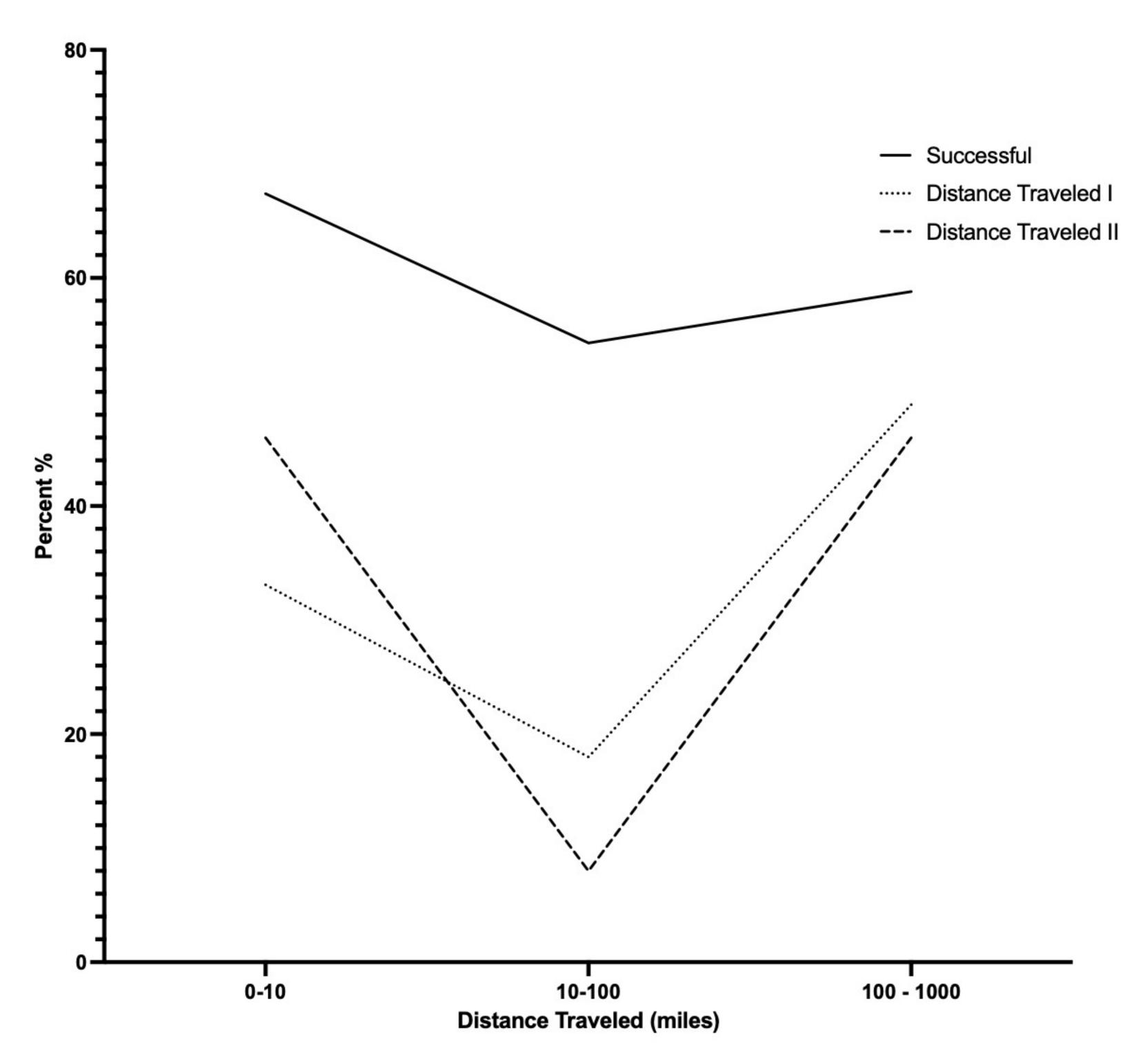
"While some eco-terrorists might see the benefits of traveling long distances to commit attacks, extensive travel can also present increased opportunities for interdiction by police or other public guardians."

(Assessing the Attractiveness and Vulnerability of Eco-Terrorism Targets)

	Target Criteria	Findings
D	destructible	our findings suggest that eco-terrorists are more likely to target less destructible structures (39.3 percent), rather than focusing their attention on more destructible types of targets (10.3 percent) Another possible explanation is that less destructible targets tend to present increased benefits for eco-terrorists. That is, despite the additional efforts required and associated risks, less destructible targets may be those viewed as especially harmful to animals and the environment (e.g., corporate headquarters building, research lab building).
O	occupied	our findings support our hypothesis and indicate that eco-terrorists continue to avoid human casualties by targeting unoccupied structures in approximately 90 percent of incidents.
N	near	targets of eco-terrorism closer in proximity to terrorists' residences will be more common than targets located further away
	easy	little to no security measures protect a majority of the targets chosen by eco-terrorists. While these findings are supportive of our hypothesis, we are somewhat surprised to find such little evidence of private security (less than 4 percent) and screening procedures (less than 1 percent). Considering the most common target types (e.g., local agricultural operations) the expense of such security measures likely places these forms of security out of reach. Slightly more, but still relatively few, eco-terrorism targets are protected by directed police patrol (15.8 percent) and physical security measures (15.8 percent).



	Target Criteria	Findings
E	exposed	while eco-terrorists select targets that are relatively easy to access, efforts are made to avoid potential contact with public guardians during the day. In fact, upon further analysis, we find that approximately 91 percent of incidents occurred at night.
	vital	approximately 60 percent of eco-terrorism incidents involve targets that are non-vital to the continued daily functioning of targeted organizations. Specifically, eco-terrorists select targets such as government office buildings and local conglomerates of larger corporations. Therefore, we find little support for our hypothesis that eco-terrorists are especially attracted to vital targets we find that the minority (40 percent) of eco-terrorist incidents have significant effects on the daily operations of targets. The most notable examples of this type include incidents targeting fur farms and educational research labs.
	iconic	it appears that eco-terrorists primarily target those who are widely recognized as being responsible for causing harm to the environment or animals Collectively, local agricultural operations and commercial targets constitute approximately 43 percent of targets and are considered highly iconic. Notably, slightly more than 25 percent of the targets analyzed are coded as major commercial symbols, such as automobiles at a car dealership, fast food restaurants, or other major corporations.
	legitimate	eco-terrorists are generally attracted to legitimate targets. Of the 133 targets in this study, approximately 60 percent house only individuals who work for the targeted organization. These types of targets include fur farms, construction companies, and other local commercial businesses where the general citizenry is unlikely to frequent. Overall, the results are consistent with previous accounts of eco-terrorists consciously avoiding potential harm to the general population.



Distance Traveled I: Assessing the Attractiveness and Vulnerability of Eco-Terrorism Targets Distance Traveled II: A Look at Terrorist Behavior: How They Prepare, Where They Strike Successful: Spatial Analysis of U.S. Terrorism Incidents

The graph above shows the distance traveled by terrorist groups within two datasets, represented with dashed lines. The solid line above shows the success rates of their actions at various distances. It should be noted that all three datasets only include individuals who have been caught, otherwise they wouldn't know how far they travelled. Although local actions are the most successful, there isn't a major difference in the success of actions after distances of greater than 10 miles.

Summary: While the specific distances may vary from study to study, it is generally found that ecoterrorists will either live near their target or travel to a coconspirator who lives near the target. Having a familiarity of the area an action will take place is important, but it will also put a target on your back if you live in the immediate area.

Recommendations: If possible, consider travelling farther to potential action locations. While traveling to and from an action is itself a risk, living outside the area of scrutiny by law enforcement investigations may ultimately prove worth it. The sweet spot for distance to an action may be in the range of greater than 30 miles and less than 100 miles away. Your location will be outside the immediate area of investigation, but the overall travel time is reduced.



Target Selection

"Assuming that terrorists are rational and that target selection is deliberate, Ronald Clarke and Graeme Newman2 have applied the principles of Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) to the evaluation of risks to potential terrorism targets based on eight criteria of vulnerability and attractiveness. Their conceptual framework, known by the acronym "EVIL DONE," contends that targets are the most attractive and vulnerable to terrorists when they are exposed, vital, iconic, legitimate, destructible, occupied, near, and easy. Challenging us to "think like terrorists""

