

Intelligence Bulletin

San Diego Islamic Center Shooting

22 May 2026

Executive Summary

- At approximately 11:45 A.M. local time on May 18, 2026, two individuals carried out a mass shooting at the Islamic Center of San Diego in San Diego, CA, killing three people.
- The shooters have been identified as Cain Clark (age 17) and Caleb Vazquez (age 18). Both died a short distance from the scene inside a vehicle, with one assailant killing the other before killing himself.
 - News coverage has indicated that a landscaper may have also been shot at by the duo but escaped injury.
- Their attack emulated the Saints Culture script of accelerationist terrorism first seen in Christchurch, NZ in 2019.
 - In line with that script, the day after the attack, a recording of the livestreamed shooting and a manifesto from each of the perpetrators circulated online.
 - The core ideological aspect of the manifestos centered on the violent conspiracy theory the Great Replacement, the same motivating narrative that exists in most Saints attackers.
 - The manifestos reflect the growing digital trend of over-inclusive elements that amount to a “kitchen sink” model of legacy seeking.
 - The Sons of Tarrant referenced in Vazquez’s manifesto section suggests an attempt to revive the Terrorgram Saints Culture in a parallel structure and under a new era of guidance.
 - ICDE’s investigation also revealed engagement with and understanding of past NVE attackers that serve in a similar capacity to the Saints Culture.
- The digital footprint connected to the perpetrators shows two individuals that were very active online. The materials exhibit clear indicators of militant accelerationist concepts and tactics, and a considerable amount of leakage related to their association with violent content and digital ecosystems.
 - Digital platforms identified that likely played a key role in the attackers’ digital journey towards violence include: TikTok, Steam, Rumble, X, Instagram, Kick and Discord.
 - While Discord appears in the circulated recording of the livestream, it does **NOT** appear to be the platform where the attack was livestreamed.

Overview

On May 18, 2026, at approximately 11:45 A.M. local time, Cain Clark (age 17) and Caleb Vazquez (age 18) carried out a mass shooting at the Islamic Center of San Diego in San Diego, CA, killing three people. The attack fit the accelerationist Saints Culture tactical model and was accompanied by two documents allegedly written by the perpetrators. These documents (bound into one PDF) were distributed alongside a recording of a semi-successful livestream of the attack onto WatchPeopleDie.

The FBI has noted that the shooters [met](#) online, but both were from the San Diego area. ICDE’s review of their digital footprint was indexed primarily on Cain Clark. There is currently less verified information about Caleb Vazquez, but in the manifesto attributed to him, he identifies as a straight male who is “about 70-85% of European genetic descent.” Notably their racial identity did not prevent nor dissuade their uptake of neofascist and white supremacist views.

With the perpetrators death, state of mind analysis is difficult; however, ICDE's analysis of social media activity associated with the perpetrators clearly displayed indoctrination into hate-based digital communities and neofascist accelerationism beliefs, particularly the Great Replacement conspiracy theory. Additionally, the identified content suggests that the two may have been ideating on their attack for many months and have planned their suicide carefully. Two influences are most salient with this modality: Columbine and a dark anime known as Ongezellig. See images below:



Image 1. Two social media posts associated with the attackers that serve as leakage for their joint tactical approach to the attack.

ICDE noted significant leakage associated with the two perpetrators, meaning their online profiles and acquisition of tactical materials could have been interpreted as leading to a likely attack.. Most concerning, Cain Clark's mother called police "hours before" the attack to report that her son was missing along with her vehicle and several firearms. News coverage has indicated she also told police that Clark was suicidal. However, officers later stated that aspects of the report—including Clark leaving in camouflage clothing with another individual—appeared inconsistent with suicidal behavior. Police were still at the Clark residence when they were notified of the attack and left to respond to the Islamic Center a short distance away.

A relatively unique element of this accelerationist attack is that it was conducted by two perpetrators, whereas most militant accelerationist and NVE attacks have been carried out by lone actors. Online accounts connected to the perpetrators that ICDE has reviewed indicate engagement with Columbine fandom, referencing another violent duo that may have partially inspired this attack. ICDE has also noted that the World Terror Coalition (WTC), which announced its debut on Telegram in April 2026, explicitly referenced possibilities for "teams of fighters" in future attacks, which may separately increase the likelihood of multiple-perpetrator attacks with accelerationist and NVE linkages.

Accelerationist Elements

The attackers followed the cultural [script](#) pioneered by Brenton Tarrant and engaged in a number of behavioral aspects that place their actions squarely into the Saints Culture framework. The attackers emulated Tarrant's use of the Sonnenrad in the form of a morale patch on a tactical vest. They inscribed white letters on their stolen firearms in the same manner as Tarrant and wore skullmasks as an identifier of their adherence to militant accelerationism.



Image 2. Image of attackers' tactical gear adorned with a sonnenrad (left) and Tarrant's gear (right).



Image 3. Images of attackers' gun with white lettering (left) and Tarrant's gun with white lettering (right).

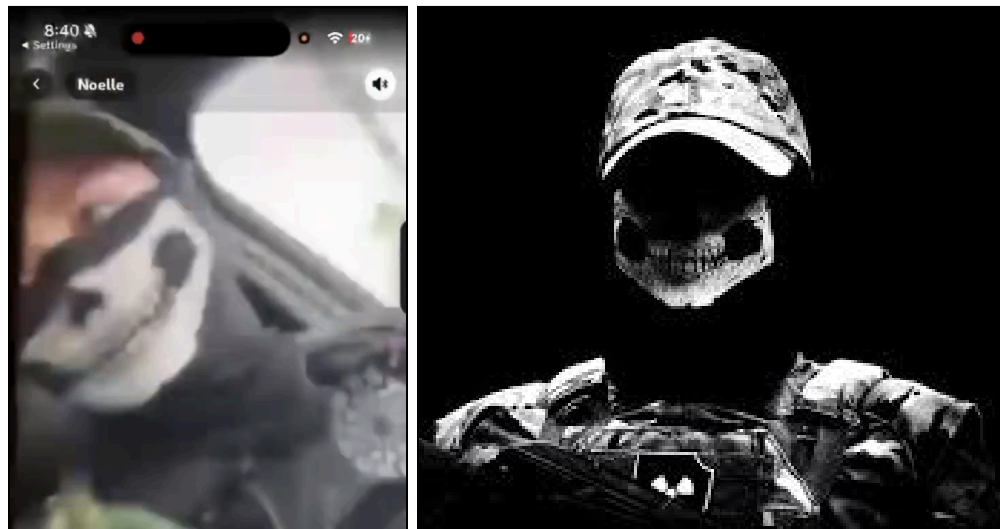


Image 4. The attackers (left) wore skullmasks that were made fashionable by Atomwaffen Division and other Iron March era neofascist accelerationism networks (right).



Image 5. The attackers used the Totenkopf skull image over their faces (left) in a manner made fashionable by Atomwaffen Division and other Iron March era neofascist accelerationism networks (right).

Additionally, both manifestos had several direct references to accelerationist figures and precepts. Vazquez articulated how “[there is no political solution](#)” and that violence in the name of race war is inevitable. He mentioned Atomwaffen Division twice as inspiration, including specifically noting the efficacy of their propaganda—largely designed by Patrick MacDonald (aka Dark Foreigner) who has been [sentenced](#) to 10 years in prison in Canada for terrorism charges related to these materials. Clark’s manifesto induces readers to read *Militant Accelerationism* as one of several “important book[s]” and specifically calls out “saints” in his list of influences.

ICDE’s review of Clark’s X account showed clear and explicit engagement with accelerationist content and networks. Multiple posts across Clark’s digital footprint included a Sonnenrad. ICDE identified an April 2, 2026 repost on X of a well known Tempel ov Blood image. The attackers’ digital footprint also showed clear adherence to Siege Culture and the notion of a looming race war. This was also apparent on the white lettered inscriptions on at least two of the firearms (unclear if elsewhere as the footage is poor). He followed an account belonging to James Mason (see image below). Clark’s Kik account used a banner image that included the Atomwaffen Division logo and a profile picture that was a female figure in a Nazi uniform.

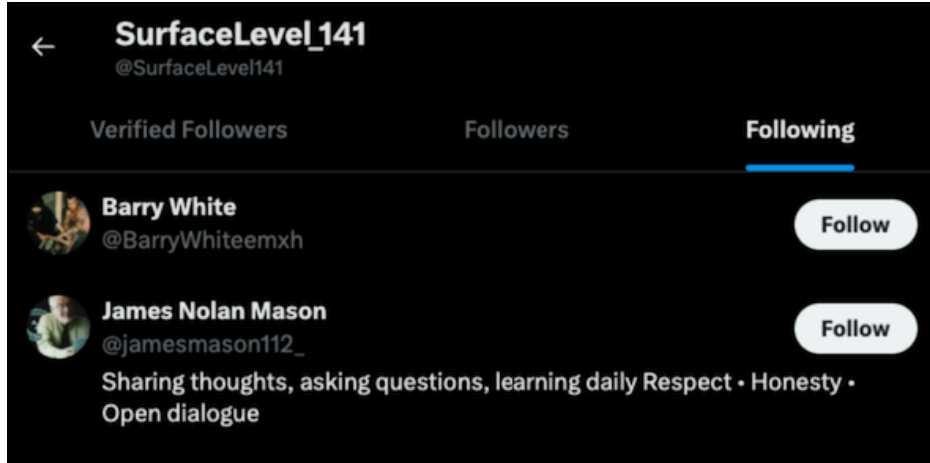


Image 6. Accounts that Clark was following on X, specifically highlighting James Nolan Mason.

Clark was also clearly engaging with eco-fascist content, including the use of the 141 slogan related to anti-deforestation. Notably, the content that was reposted by Clark shows a narrative structure that incentivizes and encourages individuals to take action, stating “You could be the one” four times. This is the same narrative structure present in the Great Replacement conspiracy theory and in Saint Culture that seeks to mobilize individuals to acts of terrorism.

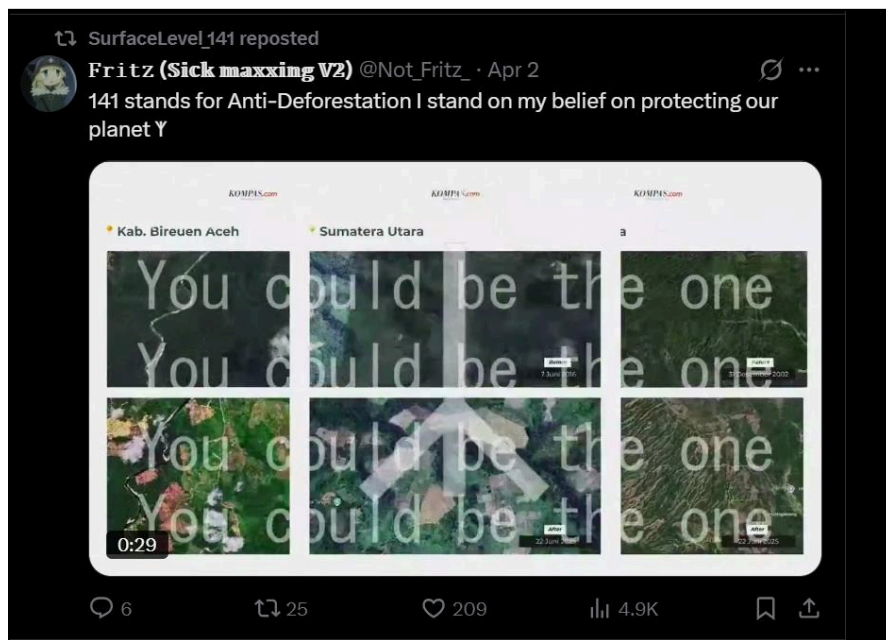


Image 7. Screenshot of a “141” slogan repost by Clark on X.

Following the review of the perpetrators' digital footprint and a careful examination of their manifestos, ICDE has concluded that the perpetrators were best described as accelerationist *consumers* that mobilized to violence. This is a classification that puts them in the same category as Payton Gendron, but outside of the *innovator* category that includes Tarrant and Juraj Krajčík—the perpetrator of the Bratislava attack. As *consumers*, Clark and Vazquez are best conceptualized as a product of the ecosystem's framing of violence as a necessary solution structure to grievances it generates within its audience. Such individuals require minimal guidance from a handler or a dedicated accelerationist network, instead relying primarily on passive state content and/or secondary activity online to mobilize

to violence. This is possible because so much of the content that would likely be leveraged by a radicalizer and presented to a recruit is routinely shared and readily available on mainstream social media sites like TikTok and X.

The principle justification for this assessment derives from the lack of unique factors in their attack modality, targeting, and ideological justifications. Specifically, much of the manifestos, namely Vazquez's, appears to be copied from Tarrant and follows an expected pattern for Saints attackers, but deviates little from that baseline. Additionally, with the Terrorgram ecosystem's diminished status, particularly after the arrests of the main Terrorgram Collective figures, the perpetrators lack of an apparent connection to an active handler or leadership stands in stark contrast to deep and direct ties that Krajčik displayed. This disparity highlights the durability of the passive capability of the Saints Culture to mobilize individuals to violence even without an active leadership.

Perhaps the most identifiable component of the attackers' ideological adherence to the neofascist strain of militant accelerationism is the central role that the Great Replacement plays in their manifestos. ICDE assesses this as a firmly held belief within the attackers, though a significant portion of their expression of the conspiracy theory exists in an emulatory or replicative manner. There is little discussion beyond the base rate in the Terrorgram annals, far-right zeitgeist, and within the manifestos of past aspiring Saint Culture attackers.

NVE Connections

ICDE assesses the attackers' relationship to NVE to be proximal, but not embedded or active participants. In the section of the combined PDF allegedly written by Caleb Vazquez, he provides two inspirations that are direct references to nihilistic violent extremist (NVE) actors and ecosystems. Both were listed with no additional context in the manifesto as "honorable mentions" under a section of "Heroes and Inspirations."

The first reference is Solomon Henderson, the perpetrator of the targeted violence attack at Antioch High School in Nashville, TN.¹ Images displaying Henderson's uptake of the Saints Culture script and post-attack uptake by NVE actors below.



Image 8. Henderson taking a selfie in a skullmask and tactical gear in a Saints Culture model.

¹ Read ICDE's Intelligence Bulletin on the Antioch attack [here](#).

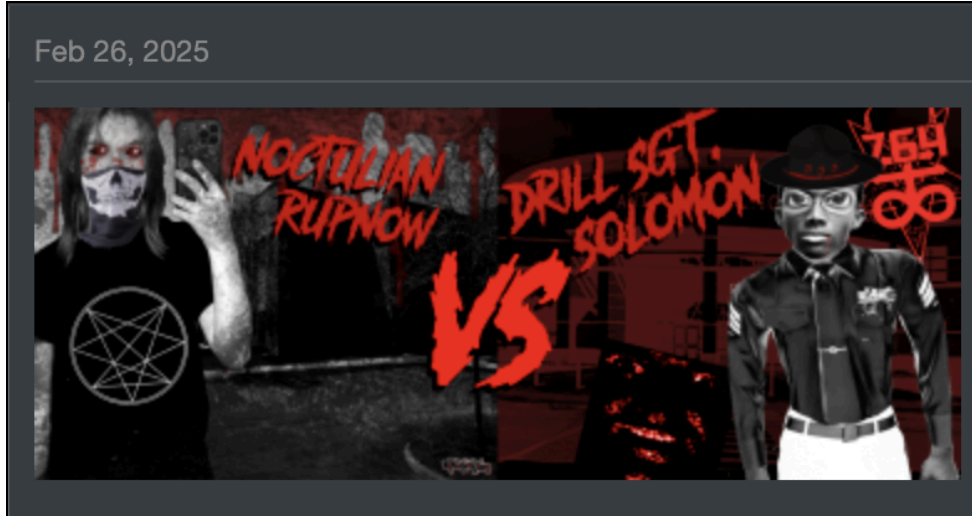


Image 9. A screenshot of a post from the NVE forum Skibidi Farms glorifying Rupnow and Henderson in O9A-coded and NVE coded contexts.

The second reference is to “Noctulian Freakybob”—a character that has taken center stage for the NVE network associated with Skibidi Farms and Fellas Farm. ICDE investigations attribute to this network considerable levels of CSAM production and dissemination, as well as radicalization to violence against schools. Noctulian Freakybob is an appropriation of the cartoon character Spongebob and is represented through various visuals that represent the character with weapons, texts, and other key symbols relevant to NVE tactics and concepts.



Image 10. Image shows one example of how Noctulian Freakybob is portrayed. In this case, the character is styled to resemble Tarrant but also holds a key O9A text.

Attack Analysis

There are multiple detectable influences on the target selection and modality of the attacker perpetrated by Clark and Vazquez. The most notable is the uptake of the Christchurch script, established by Brenton Tarrant. Both perpetrators wore military fatigue clothing, adorned themselves with the Sonnenrad, wore a skullmask, and semi-successful livestream of their attack.

Another influence on the target selection and modality of their attack is the 1989 novel titled *Hunter* by William Luther Pierce. ICDE identified three audio book files of *Hunter* on the Telegram channel associated with Cain Clark (SurfaceLevel_141).

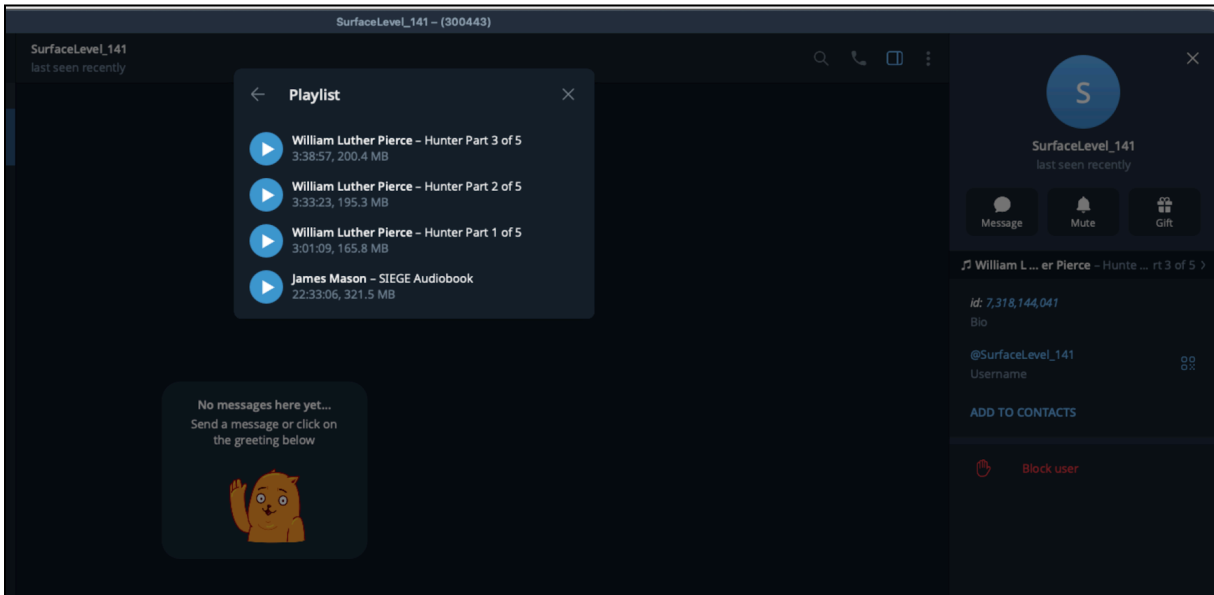


Image 11. A screenshot of Cain Clark's Telegram account

In *Hunter*, Pierce's protagonist Oscar Yeager drives between different attack sites while carrying out a series of escalating shootings and assassinations that are intended to trigger wider racial violence. It is not presently clear if the perpetrators intended to carry out a larger, multi-site assault; however, Vazquez's manifesto included blank spaces for three locations followed by expressing a desire to "go after other targets or to cause a little more chaos to distract and increase the response time to where we actually are." News coverage of the San Diego attack indicated that a landscaper near the Islamic Center may have also been shot at by the duo but escaped injury. This incident plus the manifesto reference likely indicate that *Hunter* served as inspiration for this attack.

Dual-Attacker

In a first for a militant accelerationism attack, there were two perpetrators operating in concert with one another. They appear to have jointly radicalized, ideated and planned the attack. ICDE believes the reason for this is in part due to their unique relationship (social media activity associated with them appears to show a deep bond between them), but it may also be an evolution in mobilization to violence that stems from the prevalence and influence of the Columbine attackers. Evidence from Clark and Vazquez social media reinforces this theory. Clark posted an anime styled image of the Columbine perpetrators on December 22, 2025.



Image 12. Anime styled image of the Columbine attackers posted to Steam by Cain Clark.

Authorities have relayed that Clark was allegedly suicidal according to his mother. There is a considerable connection between mass shooting and suicidal ideation, and Columbine and militant accelerationism ecosystems online.

Video Surrounding the Attack

The shooters appear to have attempted to livestream the attack. A 10 minute, 24 second video taken of a phone screen playing a video was posted to Watch People Die alongside a manifesto attributed to the shooters.² ICDE has since confirmed the authenticity of these materials with officials.

The posted video has no sound, and visual details are difficult to discern because the original video taken by the perpetrators as well as the secondary video taken of the original recording are both very jerky and blurry. Specifically, a user named Noelle attends a live call with "Otto" on Signal. She records the call on a second phone. On the second phone, she is attending a live call with only one of the perpetrators (Named "A"/"Avery" on Signal).

The video does not clearly capture any victims, limiting its propaganda value, though the attackers' deaths are recorded at the end.

Manifesto Analysis

The shooters' manifesto was posted as a single PDF, but essentially is two stand-alone documents in the same file. It has an almost-blank first page with "Tab 1" at the top that was likely accidentally included, followed by 32 pages attributed to "Caleb," a blank page, then 41 pages attributed to "Cain Clark." Both sections have complementary themes but—other than some limited passages that talk in plural first person ("our" instead of "my")—do not directly reference each other or the specific attack they carried out. Important points and connections from each section of the manifesto are described below.

² The Watch People Die thread where these materials were posted has been removed, but segments of the video, namely the suicide portion, may still be easily found.

Caleb Vazquez Portion

Vazquez's half of the manifesto is titled "The New Crusade: Sons of Tarrant." Crusade verbiage and framing is common across extremist groups, especially those who frame their mission in religious or quasi-religious terms. It is especially common among entities that see Great Replacement style arguments as existential threats. "Sons of Tarrant" is a clear homage to Brenton Tarrant, the 2019 Christchurch shooter who has come to be revered as a "Saint" in militant accelerationist culture for both his writing and his legacy. Both portions of the manifesto and especially Caleb's are heavily derivative of material from Tarrant and Juraj Krajčik, the Bratislava shooter, who was himself heavily referential of Tarrant.

Calling himself a "son" of Tarrant is likely meant to indicate and inspire a new generation of violence separate from the Terrorgram era, but referential to its legacy. This message is further reinforced by a line at the bottom of the page reading, "a sons of Tarrant debut manifesto" —a clear indication of hopes there will be other violent "sons" following this duo's own violence.

Largely mimicking Tarrant, Vazquez has several sections filled with hate against a variety of groups: Jews, women, Muslims, Black people, migrants, and LGBTQ individuals. These sections repeat familiar tropes and stereotypes. He then provides some limited details regarding how he sees himself (straight and male, largely of European ancestry) and complains of having been socially ostracized. He, like several other attackers with manifestos, lists suggested readings and key individuals and entities that have inspired his radicalization.

Cain Clark Portion

Clark's portion is generally less developed and sophisticated than Vazquez's while still echoing shared themes. He relies more heavily on recognizable quotations from key extremist figures or influences to start most sections and light paraphrases of familiar exclusionary or accelerationist principles throughout. He differs only slightly from Vazquez by including short diatribes against paganism (saying fights between it and Christianity are harmful to having a coherent white race) and superficial considerations of socio-economic structures that disadvantage average people—something he blames on Jews.

Notably, he does include a quote from Mike Ma to affirm accelerationist principles and reiterates the framing of the attack as a Crusade. He says the attack is in the interest of future generations and includes a slight paraphrase of the 14 Words. Clark urges readers to start their own crusade, saying, "It does not matter if you go alone or if you have a friend to go with you. [...] For the sake of our future."