



## DISORDER IN THE COURT



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# **Incidents of Disorder in the Court**

**a general listing of court and judicial violence: assaults,  
knifings, murder-for-hire, suicides, bomb-plots, etc.**



**by Steven K. Swensen**

**A Center for Judicial and Executive Security (CJES),  
Judicial Counter-Violence Initiative (JCVI)**



**June 2011**

# CJES

## Center for Judicial and Executive Security

Steven K. Swensen, Director

Steven K. Swensen founded the Center for Judicial and Executive Security, LLC in July 2009 after a distinguished career with the United States Marshals Service. Stationed in the District of Minnesota, Steve was assigned the duties and responsibilities as a Deputy U.S. Marshal, Supervisory Deputy U.S. Marshal, and Protective Intelligence Investigator. He has been singled out for his developing related subject-matter-expertise in the specialized fields of Courthouse/Judicial Security, Threat, Risk, and Emergency Management.

In June of 2010, under the CJES/JCVI, Steve completed the first of its kind Court-Targeted Acts of Violence (CTAV) study into courthouse/judicial shootings, bombings, and arson-attacks. CTAV researched and documented those incidents occurring during the 40-year period between 1970-2009.

Steve's complete biography can be found on [www.CJESconsultants.com](http://www.CJESconsultants.com).

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The Center for Judicial and Executive Security (CJES) is based out of Saint Paul, Minnesota. Relying on particularly advanced professional experiences, collaborations, and partnerships; CJES provides quality, comprehensive, cost-effective, innovative and creative security, threat, risk, and emergency management products, services, and solutions for judicial, government, executive, corporate, business, educational, and law enforcement officials and institutions. It is also a stated mission goal of CJES to raise security awareness and make readily available various general security, threat, risk, and emergency management informational materials, guidelines, and considerations. In furtherance of this, CJES internet-site users will be able to directly access certain items that will increase both theirs and others personal safety and security.

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# **IN GRATITUDE**

*I would again like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the United States District Court, District of Minnesota. Without their valued support, assistance, guidance, and direction myself and others in the United States Marshals Service would not have been able to provide the appropriate heightened level of court and judicial security services we were able to achieve from 1986 - 2009; and I wouldn't have been so inspired to continue my research and studies in founding the Center for Judicial and Executive Security.*

**In publishing and making this incidents listing generally available CJES, LLC is not rendering any professional or other service for or on behalf of any person or entity, nor performing any other duty for such person or entity.**

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For questions, comments, inquiries or otherwise, please reference:

[www.CJESconsultants.com](http://www.CJESconsultants.com)

or contact CJES Director Steven K. Swensen at:

26 East Exchange Street, Suite 305

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

Office No. 651.222.7672 / Cellular No. 612.616.6744

[steve.swensen@CJESconsultants.com](mailto:steve.swensen@CJESconsultants.com)

This listing (dating from January 5, 2005 until May 26, 2011), which contains both actual and disrupted incidents of ***Disorder in the Court***, was prepared to promote court/judicial security through threat/risk awareness. While the listing of 103-incidents is quite extensive, and likely one of if not the most comprehensive, it should however not be considered all-inclusive – as to the total number of incidents occurring during the stated time frame. There certainly are others that to date I have not been able to document, and thus include within this document.

It is not only just those incidents that are tragically being carried out – reference CJES Judicial Counter-Violence Initiative (JCVI), Court-Targeted Acts of Violence (CTAV) Study statistics and findings – but also those that are continuously being deterred, prevented, and responded to that one/all must acknowledge and account for in order to develop and maintain optimal court/judicial security programs; and address potential liability-related issues. Although it is not possible to quantify the exact number of potential incidents that are being deterred by the conscientious efforts of dedicated personnel, there should be no mistaking that it certainly is a significant number.

It is important to note the distinct similarities between these type incidents and shootings, bombings, and arson-attacks. There can be no denying that with one-further ill-fated action on part of the threat source we could have had past incidents such as the Fulton County Courthouse Shootings, Hamilton County Courthouse Shooting, Roanoke County Courthouse Shootings, ... tragically repeated.

Attacks with edged weapons are also a heightened concern that is compounded when considering how readily accessible these weapons actually are. According to an Annual Report released by the Los Angeles County Superior Court; during 2008 officers at security screening stations detected and confiscated more than 50,000 knives, 21,000 razors, 8,200 handcuffs, and 114 stun guns from its 48-court facilities.

Case Study: On February 26, 2011 an official discovers an abandoned tool bag outside the McNamara Federal Building in Detroit, Michigan. It wasn't until March 18<sup>th</sup> however when the bag was run through a fluoroscope, and the Detroit Bomb Squad was called in, that an improvised explosive device (IED) was found inside it. Although this facility does not hold any court-related operations it is nonetheless demonstrates the importance of establishing, implementing, and reinforcing (via training, reviews, notices, directives, etc.) clear court/judicial security policies and procedures. In this case, a suspicious item was detected but not appropriately followed up on, with the potential result – being severe.

***Disorder in the Court*** re-emphasizes the critical operational values of: in-custody searches, weapon retention, intermediate weapons, prisoner security placement/positioning, the use of and limitations of restraints, securing evidence, security/mail screening, facility quality-control measures, incident displacement, surveys, assessments, protective intelligence/investigations, and threat management (i.e. threat source intent, ability, motive, mental health, history, opportunity, inhibitors, ...).

As the CJES/JCVI/CTAV Study points out – *Court Security is not just Judicial Security, it also directly concerns and impacts Public Safety, Officer Safety, and Violence in the Workplace.*

## DISORDER IN THE COURT 2005-2011 INCIDENTS

May 26, 2011	A litigant in a civil case physically assaults an attorney outside the United States Courthouse in Youngstown, Ohio and then assaults a police officer attempting to arrest him.
May 24, 2011	A defendant being taken into custody jumps out of a courtroom window and escapes from Helena Municipal Court in Helena, Montana.
May 13, 2011	A man assaults two probation officers attempting to take him in to custody at the Lehigh County Courthouse in Allentown, Pennsylvania.
May 9, 2011	A defense attorney is stabbed in the neck with a pencil by an in-custody defendant during proceedings at the Snohomish County Courthouse in Everett, Washington.
May 7, 2011	A defendant bites a deputy and runs out of the courthouse after being taken into custody during a court appearance at the Quincy District Courthouse, Quincy, Massachusetts.
April 31, 2011	After being sentenced in court to life in prison for murder, an in-custody defendant assaults the district attorney during proceedings at the Oklahoma County Courthouse in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
April 21, 2011	During family court at the Bergen County Courthouse in Hackensack, New Jersey a man becomes enraged and assaults a companion of his ex-wife. One responding officer suffers a leg injury during the incident.
April 15, 2011	During a conference on their divorce a man savagely beats his wife in a judges chamber at the Broward County Circuit Court in Plantation, Florida.
April 15, 2011	A man just acquitted of charges he threatened his ex-girlfriend immediately assaults her right outside the Dauphin County Courthouse in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
March 25, 2011	A prisoner escapes from the Lincoln County Courthouse in Charlestown, West Virginia by using the chain links of his handcuffs to choke a transport officer.
March 8, 2011	Depressed over being unemployed and financial issues a man commits suicide by jumping from the clock tower at the Santa Barbara County Courthouse in Santa Barbara, California.
February 7, 2011	An ex-boyfriend, and 4-others, assault and murder his ex-girlfriend as she exits Philadelphia Traffic Court in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
February 4, 2011	After being convicted of child molestation an on-bond defendant pulls out a gun at the Adams County Courthouse in Hettinger, North Dakota but before he can fire it is subdued by an Assistant Attorney General.
January 14, 2011	A prisoner attempts to escape from the Lake County Courthouse, Waukegan, Illinois by running out of the courtroom and jumping through a 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor window.
January 14, 2011	Entering through the exit doors of the Broward County Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; a man facing divorce, foreclosure, domestic violence and contempt charges pulls out a gun in the courthouse and threatens to kill himself.
December 28, 2010	Relatives of a murdered 19-month-old child attempt to assault an in-custody defendant, who was charged with killing her, at the Renville County Courthouse in Olivia, Minnesota.
December 28, 2010	An in-custody defendant hangs himself in a holding cell at the Salem District Court in Salem, Massachusetts.
December 14, 2010	A woman with a knife makes it through security screening and threatens to stab people before being subdued at the Bossier Parish Courthouse in Benton, Louisiana.

## DISORDER IN THE COURT 2005-2011 INCIDENTS

December 9, 2010	After being ordered taken into custody for parole violation, a man assaults a deputy sheriff and escapes from a courtroom at the Fremont County Courthouse in Canon City, Colorado.
November 30, 2010	An inmate on work release commits suicide by jumping out of a 11 <sup>th</sup> story window at the King County Courthouse in Seattle, Washington.
November 26, 2010	During undercover operations FBI agents arrest a suspect who believed he was detonating a bomb at the Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland, Oregon. Located within the square is the Federal Pioneer Courthouse where United States Court of Appeals Judges for the 9 <sup>th</sup> Circuit hold court proceedings and house chambers.
October 13, 2010	An in-custody juvenile, restrained in leg irons and handcuffs, breaks free from detention officers and leaps to his death from the 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor of the Hendricks County Courthouse in Danville, Indiana.
September 29, 2010	A state prison inmate is charged with planning the murder-for-hire of the Dakota County Attorney, and his sentencing judge, at the Dakota County Courthouse in Hastings, Minnesota.
September 10, 2010	A Perry County District Judge is repeatedly stabbed in a Hazard, Kentucky restaurant, by a suspect she had issued a restraining order against in a 2004 domestic violence case. Patrons come to the judges aid preventing serious injury.
August 3, 2010	The victims and defendants family brawl during the sentencing of a 13-year-old boy for murder at the Kent County Courthouse in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
July 9, 2010	After his conviction for murder a handcuffed prisoner assaults the prosecuting attorney outside a courtroom at the Dubuque County Courthouse in Dubuque, Iowa.
May 27, 2010	The family of a gang member just convicted in court for murder, assault juror members leaving Riverside County Superior Court in Riverside, California.
May 25, 2010	Appearing at the courthouse for violating an order of protection in a domestic case, a suspect sexually abuses a 3-year-old girl in the probation office at the Cook County Domestic Violence Courthouse in Chicago, Illinois.
May 14, 2010	A man becomes belligerent and assaults two-deputies when they confront him sitting outside a judges chambers at the Marion County Courthouse in Fairmont, West Virginia.
May 4, 2010	A Georgia militia member is arrested by the FBI in Tennessee for his plot to arrest state, local, and federal officials and violently disrupt trial proceedings at the Monroe County Courthouse in Madisonville, Tennessee.
April 29, 2010	An in-custody defendant repeatedly stabs himself in court with a pen before being subdued by deputies at the Allegheny County Courthouse in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
March 28, 2010	An improvised explosive device is found outside the United States Courthouse in Spokane, Washington.
March 26, 2010	A suspect is arrested for plotting to blow up the Monroe County Courthouse in Woodsville, Ohio. Blasting caps, IEDs, weapons, ammunition, and chemical compounds used to manufacture explosives were seized at his home.
March 13, 2010	A man commits suicide by jumping off of a 11 <sup>th</sup> floor emergency exit/balcony at the Orange County Superior Court in Santa Ana, California. The man had no known pending court cases.
November 18, 2009	A security officer for the Derry District Court in Derry, New Hampshire turns himself into authorities on charges of sexually assaulting two women in a courthouse conference room.
November 12, 2009	After being sentenced to prison on a probation violation, a sex offender slits his throat and stabs a deputy sheriff in court with an "exacto" knife at the Cleveland County Courthouse in Norman, Oklahoma.



## DISORDER IN THE COURT 2005-2011 INCIDENTS

November 11, 2009	An on-bond defendant takes out a knife at the Cleveland County Courthouse in Norman, Oklahoma and stabs himself in the throat. A responding deputies hands are severely cut while attempting to subdue the defendant.
November 7, 2009	An improvised incendiary device is hurled through a window into a courtroom at the Dorchester District Court in Dorchester, Massachusetts.
November 6, 2009	A man intentionally drives his car into the main lobby of the Burke County Courthouse in Morgantown, North Carolina. The man had an upcoming court date on drunk driving charges.
November 5, 2009	A suspect is arrested and charged with putting together bombing materials in a plot to blow up the Pike County Courthouse in Petersburg, Indiana.
October 29, 2009	After a hearing on their divorce case a husband is stabbed by his wife's boyfriend outside the Arapahoe County District Courthouse in Littleton, Colorado.
October 28, 2009	A man refusing to produce identification assaults a court security officer at the United States Courthouse in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
September 23, 2009	A suspect attempts to detonate a Truck Bomb at the United States Courthouse in Springfield, Illinois. The FBI prevents this attack, via undercover operations, using an inert improvised explosive device that couldn't be detonated.
August 20, 2009	A woman demanding to see the district attorney is arrested for having a firearm in the Cleveland County Courthouse in Norman, Oklahoma.
July 23, 2009	A janitor at the United States Courthouse in Las Vegas, Nevada locks a female co-worker in a courthouse bathroom and sexually assaults her.
July 15, 2009	After being sentenced to prison for aggravated battery a prisoner hangs himself in a holding cell at the Kane County Judicial Center in St. Charles, Illinois.
June 22, 2009	After being order taken into custody a man assaults a corrections officer and escapes from the Williams County Courthouse in Williston, North Dakota.
May 21, 2009	During a probation revocation hearing at the United States Courthouse in McAllen, Texas a federal prisoner pulls out a razor blade and slashes the face and neck of a Deputy U.S. Marshal.
May 17, 2009	An improvised incendiary device is discovered outside of the United States Courthouse in Sacramento, California. Two suspects are subsequently arrested and charged with the incident.
April 14, 2009	A juvenile defendant violently attacks his court-appointed lawyer during a hearing held at the Hennepin County Government Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
February 17, 2009	Serving a life sentence with no chance of parole a prisoner picks his handcuffs and escapes from a holding area at Maricopa County Superior Court in Phoenix, Arizona.
February 9, 2009	Officials discover a pipe bomb outside the Washington County Courthouse in Hillsboro, Oregon.
February 7, 2009	A prisoner attempting to escape from the Macomb County Courthouse in Mount Clemens, Michigan is found in a judges car trunk. The vehicle had been left unlocked and the prisoner used the interior trunk release button to get in.
January 26, 2009	A mistrial is declared at San Diego Superior Court in San Diego, California after an on-bond defendant smears human feces on the face of his attorney and then throws more at jurors.
November 13, 2008	While attempting to get a restraining order against his son a man is stabbed to death by his son at the Portsmouth General District Court in Portsmouth, Virginia.

## DISORDER IN THE COURT 2005-2011 INCIDENTS

October 22, 2008	A federal prisoner is subdued with a taser gun after he becomes violent in court and begins fighting with Deputy U.S. Marshals at the United States Courthouse in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
October 2, 2008	A man violently attacks a deputy prosecutor during a sentencing hearing in Munice City Court, Muncie, Indiana.
September 17, 2008	On trial for murder a prisoner escapes from the Jefferson County Courthouse in Bessemer, Alabama after overpowering a sheriff's bailiff and taking his .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol.
July 14, 2008	A prisoner assaults a deputy sheriff in court and attempts to escape from the Dallas County Courthouse in Dallas, Texas. A defense attorney, also a reserve police officer, then wrestles/holds the suspect for responding deputies.
June 19, 2008	A suspect being arrested for violating a protection order assaults a deputy sheriff attempting to arrest him at the Lancaster County Courthouse in Lincoln, Nebraska.
June 9, 2008	Just prior to his being sentenced for a double killing a prisoner violently attacks his attorney in court at the Hennepin County Government Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
May 13, 2008	After being found guilty of murder a prisoner violently attacks a deputy sheriff and attempts to get his firearm at the Calhoun County Justice Center in Battle Creek, Michigan.
May 8, 2008	A prisoner is seriously injured while attempting to escape from court by jumping through a 3 <sup>rd</sup> story window at the Denver City and County Building, Denver, Colorado.
May 1, 2008	A prisoner is subdued by deputies using tasers after he attempts to escape from court at the Dale County Courthouse in Ozark, Alabama.
April 4, 2008	A handcuffed prisoner grabs a court security officer and jumps out a courtroom window at Malden District Court in Malden, Massachusetts. While the prisoner is immediately apprehended the officer is seriously injured.
March 27, 2008	A man commits suicide by jumping from the 4 <sup>th</sup> floor balcony at D.C. Superior Court in Washington D.C.
March 12, 2008	A federal prison inmate and accomplices are charged with a murder-for-hire plot against a United States District Judge in McAllen, Texas.
March 11, 2008	Just prior to his sentencing a federal prisoner attempts with a razor blade to cut the throat of an Assistant U.S. Attorney in a courtroom at the United States Courthouse in New York, New York.
March 4, 2008	After his conviction for child molestation an on-bond defendant commits suicide by jumping off the 9 <sup>th</sup> story balcony at Orange County Superior Court in Santa Ana, California.
February 5, 2008	A prisoner assaults his attorney during a hearing at the Scott County Courthouse in Georgetown, Kentucky.
February 1, 2008	The bomb squad safely detonates a pipe bomb found outside the Erie County Courthouse in Erie, Pennsylvania.
December 7, 2007	A suspect is arrested and charged with plotting to bomb the Westmoreland County Courthouse in Greensbury, Pennsylvania.
September 4, 2007	A federal court security officer discovers a firearm in a bike pouch outside the United States Courthouse in Cleveland, Ohio and then subdues a federal probationer attempting to get it back.
August 30, 2007	After his civil suit is dismissed by the United States District Court a suspect goes to the housing complex where he used to live/work and critically shoots co-workers. He then goes back to the Bronx Courthouse in New York and surrenders himself and his handgun to court security officers.

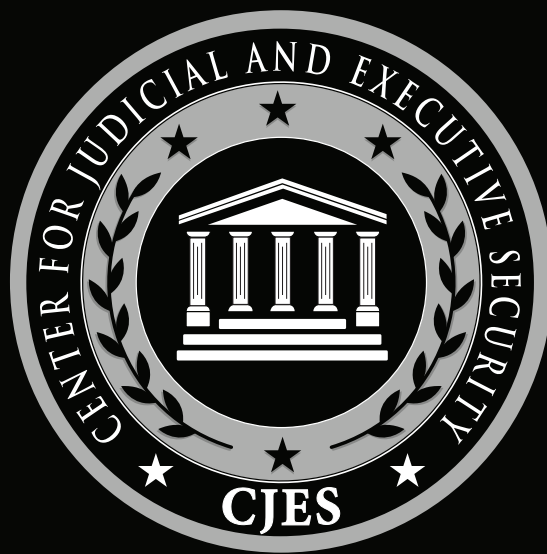
## DISORDER IN THE COURT 2005-2011 INCIDENTS

August 22, 2007	After setting off the magnetometer alarm, and then a hand-held metal detector, a man assaults a court security officer at the United States Courthouse in the Southern District of New York.
August 12, 2007	Distraught victim family members attack an in-custody defendant, accused of murdering 4-women, at the County Courthouse in Springfield, Massachusetts
July 9, 2007	While in detention at Clinton District Court in Clinton, Massachusetts a prisoner assaults a court security officer.
June 30, 2007	Sheriff deputies take away a handgun from an on-bond defendant awaiting sentencing at the Craighead County Courthouse in Jonesboro, Arkansas.
June 30, 2007	A state prison inmate accused of murdering a prison guard attempts to escape from the Howard County Courthouse in Ellicott City, Maryland.
June 27, 2007	After his rape conviction an on-bond defendant retrieves a shotgun from his car and tries to shoot a detective outside the Montmorency County Courthouse in Atlanta, Michigan.
June 22, 2007	After being ordered to pay \$4,000 in attorney fees over a disputed traffic accident, a civil litigant attempts to push an insurance companies attorney over a 4 <sup>th</sup> floor balcony at the Tippecanoe County Courthouse in Lafayette, Indiana.
May 21, 2007	An accused cop-shooter assaults a juror during trial proceedings at the Suffolk Superior Court in Boston, Massachusetts.
February 28, 2007	A rape suspect stabs his attorney with a 6" edged weapon during jury selection Norfolk County Superior Court in Dedham, Massachusetts.
February 15, 2007	A County Probate/Juvenile Court Judge is physically assaulted during recess of a hearing for non-support at the Darke County Courthouse in Greenville, Ohio.
January 30, 2007	At his federal sentencing a prisoner fights with U.S. Marshals at the United States Courthouse in Jackson, Mississippi. During the assault a Marshals firearm falls onto the floor and is picked up by Adams public defender.
November 17, 2006	A prisoner defendant restrained in handcuffs is repeatedly punched in court by his victims relatives at the Trumbull County Courthouse in Warren, Ohio.
November 2, 2005	A 39-year-old woman jumps to her death from the roof of the Criminal Justice Center in Los Angeles, California.
December 7, 2006	A defendant is assaulted, by her victims (killed in a drunk driving crash) relatives, on the steps of the Westborough District Court in Westborough, Massachusetts.
October 16, 2006	After his guilty verdict a prisoner defendant violently attacks an Assistant Commonwealth Attorney at the Fauquier County Circuit Court in Warrenton, Virginia.
July 10, 2006	After his request for a new lawyer and mistrial are denied a prisoner violently assaults his attorney at the St. Louis County Courthouse in Duluth, Minnesota.
April 4, 2006	A suspect is arrested and charged with plotting to blow up the Rice County Courthouse in Faribault, Minnesota. The suspect was apparently angered over his being prosecuted in 2004 for drug-related charges.
January 19, 2006	One murder defendant attempts to stab his defense attorney and another attempts to wrestle away a court officers gun at the Kings County Criminal Courthouse in Brooklyn, New York.
January 13, 2006	A prisoner defendant is sentenced to life in prison for his plot to blow up the United States Courthouse in Chicago, Illinois.

## DISORDER IN THE COURT 2005-2011 INCIDENTS

October 24, 2005	A federal prisoner sends a mail bomb to the United States Courthouse in Richmond, Virginia.
July 26, 2005	A federal prisoner violently attacks both of his lawyers during proceedings at the United States Courthouse in Chicago, Illinois.
July 12, 2005	A federal prisoner smuggles a knife into a courthouse holding cell and stabs another in-custody defendant at the United States Courthouse in Salt Lake City, Utah.
June 7, 2005	A federal prisoner is arrested for soliciting and setting up a murder-for-hire plot against a United States District Judge in London, Kentucky.
June 7, 2005	During his sentencing for plotting to kill a federal judge, prosecutor, and IRS agent; an in-custody defendant attempts to attack the presiding judge at the United States Courthouse in Boise, Idaho.
April 8, 2005	A federal prisoner is indicted at the United States Courthouse in Lexington, Kentucky for plotting to kill a Federal Judge and prosecutor.
March 28, 2005	A prisoner defendant attacks his attorney for the second time in a month during a court appearance at the United States Courthouse in Knoxville, Kentucky.
March 25, 2005	A suspect is arrested for soliciting the murder of the Pinellas County (St. Petersburg, Florida) Circuit Judge presiding over the Terri Schiavo "right-to-life" case.
February 13, 2005	An improvised explosive device hidden inside a duffel bag is found outside the Placer County Courthouse in Auburn, California.
January 5, 2005	An evidence bag containing ammunition had a bullet discharge from its casing, just missing a court reporter, during court proceedings at the United States Superior Court in Washington D.C.





# CJES

[steve.swensen@CJESconsultants.com](mailto:steve.swensen@CJESconsultants.com)

t: 651.222.7672  
m: 612.616.6744

26 East Exchange St, Suite 305  
Saint Paul, MN 55101

[www.CJESconsultants.com](http://www.CJESconsultants.com)