

Suspect in NYE machete attack studied Quran, considered international targets, officials say

From [NBC News](#)

The man suspected of attacking three New York City police officers with a machete on New Year's Eve had been studying the Quran and considered carrying out an international attack, according to law enforcement sources who shared new information about the suspect's movements before the attack.

Trevor Bickford, 19, of Wells, Maine, nearly 300 miles from Times Square, told investigators that he self-radicalized over the past three or four months, said two senior officials briefed on the attack, who characterized the suspect as a homegrown violent extremist motivated in part by Salafi extremism. . . most Muslim violent extremist movements – including Al Qaeda – are rooted in Salafism, a fundamentalist Islamic movement based on 13th and 14th century teachings.

Bickford was arrested on two counts of attempted murder and two counts of attempted assault.

A spokesperson for the Manhattan district attorney's office said Tuesday that the timing of Bickford's arraignment remains unclear. Officials say the Justice Department continues to look into whether federal terrorism-related charges are warranted.

One of the two senior officials briefed on the attack said Bickford indicated he had initially looked into carrying out "jihad" against Burma or China because of how those governments treat Muslims. . . he considered New York as a

target just before he traveled to the city and that he solidified his plans to attack upon his arrival, adding that he said women and children would be off-limits. *So some of the traditions of western culture remained in him.*

In his diary, Bickford referred to nonbelievers as “kuffar” and indicated he wanted to die for his religion, officials said. Bickford also made pro-jihadist statements from his hospital bed after the attack,

During the attack – which occurred said shortly after 10 p.m. at West 52nd Street and Eighth Avenue, just outside high-security checkpoints that celebrants had to pass through – Bickford yelled “Allahu Akbar,” an Islamic phrase meaning “God is the greatest,” law enforcement sources said. *I suspected that he had, otherwise the ‘possible Islamic motive’ would not have been mentioned so quickly.*