Case Study: Ryan

Case Summary

Ryan is a first-year/sophomore-standing student whose case begins with academic difficulties, a failed psychology course, and a sustained grievance against Prof Plum after Ryan did not complete both the final exam and the final project. Ryan pursued the formal grievance process, was denied, and continued seeking support after being told there were no remaining appeal options. Ryan also had legal issues noted through CCAP[1] that include a first OWI with refusal to take a breathalyzer and possession of LSD.

The case escalates in fall 2025. A classmate reported feeling threatened with possible physical violence from Ryan in class, and Prof Plum reported a persistent hostile tone, stating that although Ryan had made "zero threats," Prof Plum feared Ryan might do something harmful if things did not go their way.

The most concrete interpersonal incident involved Chris. Ryan approached Chris before class, requested contact information, asked Chris to go to Kwik Trip, and later sent Instagram voice messages singing graphic, violent lyrics. Chris blocked Ryan and contacted law enforcement. UWPD instructed Ryan not to contact Chris further, and Ryan stated they understood. A Title IX harassment report later resulted in a no-contact order, though Chris did not pursue an investigation.

Ryan also made multiple suicidal or despairing statements. They reported "constant suicidal ideation" in a class discussion post, made despondent comments in class check-ins, stated they would kill themselves before being "put in a box," and later told a classmate that "suicide is probably the worst thing" but that they had "something worse than suicide planned." Ryan denied being suicidal during police contact, had supportive roommates, was connected with counseling but did not find it effective, and refused to speak with the crisis worker on 12/9/25.

[1] Consolidated Court Automation Programs (CCAP) is the official information technology system and case management network used by the Wisconsin Court System.

PATHWAYS SCORING

Pathways Factor	Score	Rationale
Suicide	2	Repeated suicidal ideation/despair statements, "constant suicidal ideation," "kill themselves before being put in a box," and "something worse than suicide planned"; no confirmed suicide plan and Ryan denied suicidality during assessment
Depression	2	Despondent statements, hopeless wording, academic decline, and suicidal ideation; no detailed clinical history given.
Self-Injury	0	None reported
Alcohol/THC	1	OWI with refusal is documented; "available for 4:20" suggests THC, but no confirmed pattern of use.
Serious Drug Use	2	Possession of LSD charge with deferred agreement; later police determined the recording was a song mostly about drugs.
Being Teased	0	None reported
Social Problems	2	Chris felt he was "off"/uneasy; classmate felt threatened; Prof experienced tone as hostile and difficult to read.
Academic Trouble	3	Low GPA, academic concern, failed class, academic probation, and fear of failing.
Financial Insecurity	2	Ryan told a classmate that if they failed classes, they would be homeless; no additional financial facts provided.
Adjusting to Change	0	None reported
Loss or Bereavement	0	None reported
Being Stalked	0	None reported
Anxiety	1	Worry, academic pressure, and distress are present, but no panic attacks, chronic anxiety, or avoidance pattern is described.
Intense Thoughts/Actions	2	Ongoing fixation on grievance outcome, circular responses to police, escalating statements, and difficulty accepting outcomes.
Hallucinations/Delusions	0	None reported
Group Pressure	0	None reported
Vandalism	0	None reported
Being Controlled	0	None reported
Harassing Behaviors	2	Unwanted Instagram contact with graphic violent content, Chris blocking Ryan, law enforcement contact, Title IX harassment report, and a no-contact order.

Pathways Factor	Score	Rationale
Stalking Others	1	Boundary-crossing contact toward Chris is present, but no repeated following, monitoring, no-contact violation, or ongoing pursuit is described.
Acts of IPV	0	None reported
Sexual Violence	0	Title IX harassment is reported, and the song lyrics include violent/sexualized content, but no sexual assault, coercion, or unwanted sexual contact is described.
Incel Behavior	0	None reported
Eating/Sleeping	0	None reported
Affective Violence	2	Angry/hostile tone, emotionally charged interactions, perceived possible physical violence, and police involvement around threatening communications.
Trolling Actions	0	None reported
Transient Threats	2	Graphic song messages, hostile tone, and "something worse than suicide planned" are threatening or threat-like, remains ambiguous and Ryan denied intent.
Substantive Threats	2	The "something worse than suicide planned" statement and reference to a recording raise concern, but police determined the video was mostly a song about drugs and no clear target, weapon, time, or location is confirmed.
White Supremacy	0	None reported
Weapons Interest/Access	0	None reported

PATHWAYS SUMMARY

The Pathways Triage Assessment includes thirty items scored on a three-point scale (1 for low concern, 2 for moderate concern, and 3 for high concern). Scores in this case were:

- **Low concern:** Alcohol/THC, Anxiety, and Stalking Others.
- **Moderate concern:** Suicide, Depression, Serious Drug Use, Social Problems, Financial Insecurity, Intense Thoughts/Actions, Harassing Behaviors, Affective Violence, Transient Threats, and Substantive Threats.
- **High concern:** Academic Trouble.

The overall rating for Pathways was high, with an indication to complete the Suicide Wayfinder assessment and a full Violence Risk Assessment through DarkFox.

Guidance from Pathways includes:

- Make an immediate referral to counseling, discuss any obstacles to them seeking care, and walk the individual to the clinic
- Encourage social connection, clubs, sports, activities
- Discuss the pros/cons of their alcohol and drug use and explore harm reduction strategies
- Encourage referrals to NA/AA or substance counseling as needed
- Address legal and conduct issues and how to remain in good standing
- Discuss any interruption of academics, relationships, and life skills
- Identify triggers and any comforts or reducers
- Identify high-risk behaviors and engage in harm reduction
- Make a referral to academic support
- Identify and manage disruptive behaviors and conduct violations
- Contact emergency contacts/guardian under FERPA
- Use the Title IX/EEO and conduct processes to address behavior
- Set clear conduct limits and monitor for compliance
- Facilitate a meeting with conduct, parents/emergency contact, and police, with BIT/CARE involvement
- Consider suspension or a short-term leave, with BIT/CARE involvement

DARKFOX SCORING

DarkFox Factor	Score	Rationale
Violence Risk Assessment Factors		
Alone	1	Social difficulty and multiple people feel uneasy, but supportive roommates are reported.
Catalyst	2	Academic failure, denied grievance, Title IX/no-contact process, legal issues, and possible homelessness are active stressors.
Free Fall	3	Facing legal, academic, and Title IX difficulties, with increasing suicidal ideation.
Hopelessness	2	Repeated suicidal/despairing statements and fear of homelessness.
Aggrieved	2	Sustained grievance toward Prof Plum and difficulty accepting institutional outcomes.
Vengeance	1	Possible retaliatory meaning in "something worse than suicide," but no explicit revenge statement.
Incel	0	None reported
Costuming	0	None reported
Sadist	0	None reported
Research	0	None reported
Checklist	1	"Recording of the plan" is concerning but was later characterized mostly as a song about drugs.
Objectification	0	None reported
Consumed	2	Ongoing grievance fixation and repeated difficulty accepting outcomes.
Irrational	1	Circular/unclear explanations, but no delusions or psychosis indicators.
Encouragers	0	None reported
Bullied/Teased	0	None reported
Defiant	1	Refused crisis worker and struggled with limits, but no confirmed no-contact violation.
Impulsivity	2	Boundary-crossing contact, emotionally charged communications, and escalating statements.
Weapons Interest	0	None reported
Weapons Acquisition	0	None reported

DarkFox Factor	Score	Rationale
Threat Assessment Factors		
Direct	1	Messages went directly to Chris, but Ryan reportedly made "zero threats" toward Prof Plum and intent remains ambiguous.
Lethality	2	Graphic violent content and "something worse than suicide planned" raise serious-harm concern.
Time	1	Stressors are time-linked to grades/housing/discipline, but no attack timing is given.
Leakage	2	"Something worse than suicide planned" plus reference to a recording should be treated as possible leakage until clarified.
Location	1	Campus/class context and Chris contact are known, but no attack location.
Organization	1	A "recording/plan" exists, but no coherent operational plan confirmed.
Tone	2	Hostile, despondent, threatening/ambiguous tone across multiple reports.
Rhetoric	1	Violent artistic/song content; not clearly ideological or manifesto-like.
Planning	1	"Plan" language is present, but content appears mostly music/drug-related and lacks details.
Penetration	0	None reported
Approach	2	Ryan approached Chris, requested contact, sent unwanted messages, and a no-contact order followed.
Blaze	0	None reported
Suicide Assessment Factors		
Statement	3	Repeated direct suicidal/despairing statements: "constant suicidal ideation," "kill themselves before being put in a box," and "something worse than suicide planned."
Treatment	2	Connected to counseling but reports it is not effective; refused crisis worker.
Self-Injury	0	None reported
Self-Concept	2	Failure, homelessness fear, hopelessness/despair.
Eat	0	None reported
Sleep	0	None reported
Substances	2	OWI refusal, LSD possession, and drug-related recording context.
Attempts	2	No known attempt, but repeated SI and possible "plan" language require urgent clarification.

DARKFOX SUMMARY

The DarkFox Violence Risk and Threat Assessment system evaluates risk areas and rates them as moderate, high, or extreme concern. Scores in this case were:

- **Violence Risk Assessment**
  - **Low concern:** Alone, Vengeance, Checklist, Irrational, and Defiant.
  - **Moderate concern:** Catalyst, Hopeless, Aggrieved, Consumed, and Impulsive.
  - **High concern:** Free Fall.
- **Threat Assessment.**
  - **Low concern:** Direct, Time, Location, Organization, Rhetoric, and Planning.
  - **Moderate concern:** Lethality, Leakage, Tone, and Approach.
  - **High concern:** None.
- **Suicide Assessment**
  - **Low concern:** None.
  - **Moderate concern:** Treatment, Self-Concept, Substances, and Attempts.
  - **High concern:** Statement

The factor scores are used to rate the overall risk in seven areas as Low, Moderate, High, or Extreme. The risk ratings in this case were:

- Vulnerability: Extreme
- Negative Thoughts: High
- Environmental Stressors: Extreme
- Suicidality: Extreme
- Attack Preparation: Low
- Attach Approach: High
- Threat: Exteme

Ryan presents a combined-risk picture requiring active case management and safety planning. The strongest concerns are suicidal/despairing statements, grievance/fixation, boundary-crossing contact, threatening/ambiguous communications, substance/legal stressors, academic/housing pressure, and refusal/minimization of help. The case does not currently show confirmed access to a weapon, a specific attack target/time/place/method, or verified operational planning.

Guidance from DarkFox includes:

- An immediate assessment for suicide should be conducted by a licensed clinical staff member, given the extreme isolation, suicidal thoughts, and hopelessness about a positive future outcome. Given the overwhelming isolation, pain, and difficulty at work and school, a counseling connection is critical.
- Feeling trapped and desperate, immediate steps should be taken to identify alternative options to acting out violently or engaging in self-harm or suicide. Given they have little hope of improvement, more extreme actions such as killing themselves or other people become more likely.

- The upcoming discipline actions or suspension from school have the real potential to increase the stress and feelings of hopelessness. Efforts should be made to discuss the impact of these upcoming events, as they bring with them disturbances that could escalate thoughts of suicide and/or violence toward others.
- Pending criminal charges could have massive impacts on finances, personal freedom, and feelings of depression. Efforts should be made to discuss the impact of these charges and the disturbances that could escalate thoughts of suicide and/or violence to others.
- Substance use may impact their ability to connect with others, create a rise in isolation, and negatively impact their ability to function at work or school. Help them understand the negative impact of their use and encourage them to cut back. Referrals to substance abuse counseling, Alcoholics Anonymous, and/or conversations with a trusted adult, school counselor, work supervisor, human resources, or EAP counselor may help. If other suicide risk factors are present, take immediate steps to limit or remove any weapons from the home, encourage parents to change the safe combination, or set up additional challenges to access.
- Upsetting changes and multiple losses have the potential to further destabilize someone on the pathway to violence. Efforts should be made to provide additional support and accommodations, given the recent losses and challenges faced at school, at work, at home, and with friends. A coordinated response with the school, college, or workplace BIT/CARE and/or threat team would be advised.
- With intensifying thoughts about real or perceived injustices, there is an increased justification for violent action against the target of their frustrations. Talking with them about the intensity of these feelings and how they may motivate acting out against the target of their frustration will help further assess the risk and develop alternative strategies. Encourage them to talk to a trusted adult or counselor to help lessen the intensity of their frustrations.
- The threats include upsetting and cruel descriptions and lay blame on the target to punish them or make their life more difficult. These concerns are further heightened when other threatening behaviors such as direct, lethal, time, location, rhetoric, leakage, planning, approach, blaze, veteran, or suicide are present. Conversations that encourage open dialogue and explore alternative perspectives on grievances and injustices would be useful.
- The fantasy of attacking a person or location and talking openly about their plans presents an increased risk of violence. The concern is further heightened when there are other threatening behaviors such as direct, lethal, time, location, tone, rhetoric, planning, blaze, veteran, or suicide. Talking with them about the motivation for their plans and discussing alternatives to the behavior will help further assess the risk and develop alternative strategies. Consider an open-source intelligence review to determine if there are concerning social media posts. A coordinated response with the school, college, or workplace BIT/CARE and/or threat team would be advised. This consultation with the BIT/CARE and/or threat team will help determine if more intensive involvement with law enforcement is warranted.

OVERALL RISK/VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT

Overall, Ryan presents a moderate-high, combined risk picture rather than a single-issue case, with urgent reassessment triggers. The case should not be treated as an imminent targeted-violence case on the current facts because there is no confirmed access to a weapon, a target-specific attack plan, a time/place, or operational preparation. But it also should not be treated as only a distressed-student case, because the pattern now includes grievance fixation, unwanted contact, violent communications, suicidal statements, "plan" language, police involvement, and refusal of crisis support.

The primary concerns are cumulative: academic decline and probation, a sustained grievance toward Prof Plum, legal/substance issues, social conflict, unwanted contact with Chris, graphic violent communications, a Title IX/no-contact response, and repeated suicidal or despairing statements. The strongest self-harm indicators are Ryan's statements about "constant suicidal ideation," killing themselves before being "put in a box," and having "something worse than suicide planned."

From a violence risk/threat perspective, the case raises concern for leakage, grievance/fixation, affective violence, impulsivity, and approach behavior, but the available facts do not yet establish an imminent or operationalized targeted-violence plan. There is no confirmed access to weapons, target-specific plan, time, location, attack preparation, or tactical research. The "something worse than suicide" statement and reference to a recording should be treated as highly concerning, ambiguous leakage until clarified, not dismissed as harmless, and not assumed to prove an imminent attack.

The central question of current risk management revolves around whether Ryan is primarily in distress, moving toward self-harm, moving toward harm to others, or presenting a combined risk picture that requires active case management and safety planning.

Given the uncertainty, focus on active management with detailed safety planning. Ryan should remain under coordinated BIT/CARE/TAT management with one clear lead, recurring reassessment, no-contact monitoring, direct suicide and violence-risk assessment, review of the recording/messages, assessment of weapons/lethal-means access, and safety planning for Chris, Prof Plum, and the reporting classmate.

The team should also address stabilizing factors such as academic planning, housing/financial concerns, counseling engagement, substance-use assessment, and clear behavioral expectations, because the risk appears dynamic and tied to escalating stressors.

Recommended interventions:

- coordinated BIT/CARE/TAT review
- confirm no-contact compliance
- review the recording/messages; assess current suicidality, harm to others, intoxication, access to weapons/lethal means, and current location
- safety plan for Chris, Prof Plum, and the reporting classmate
- set clear thresholds for emergency action, interim restrictions, or mandated assessment.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLANATION

A more detailed discussion and collection of interview questions is available in Appendix A.

Priority Area	Follow-Up Questions
"Something worse than suicide"	What exactly did Ryan mean by this statement? Was it about self-harm or harm to others, disappearance, drugs, or something symbolic?
"Plan"/recording	What was on the recording referenced? Did it include names, locations, threats, images, captions, or instructions? When was it created, and why did Ryan describe it as a "plan"?
Current self-harm	Does Ryan currently have SI? What changed between Ryan's written statements about constant SI and later denials of suicidality?
Harm-to-others risk	Who does Ryan blame for his situation? Are Chris, Prof, classmates, or the university targets of blame, resentment, or fixation?
Actionability/means	Does Ryan have access to weapons, lethal means, vehicles, substances, or other tools that increase risk? Has he researched methods, locations, security, schedules, or detection avoidance?
Chris and no-contact	Has Ryan had any contact with Chris since being warned and the no-contact order issued? Is Ryan monitoring Chris or trying to justify further contact?
Prof grievance/fixation	Is Ryan still focused on Prof Plum or the failed grievance? Does Ryan accept that the process is over, or are they continuing to seek reversal, vindication, punishment, or an apology?
Academic/housing stress	What is Ryan's academic status now? Is homelessness a real, imminent concern or only a fear? What practical supports are available?
Substance use/legal	What is the current pattern of alcohol, THC, LSD, or other drug use? Are court/deferred-agreement issues adding pressure? Is substance use affecting judgment, mood, impulsivity/compliance?
MH engagement	Is Ryan in counseling? What does he mean by "counseling is not effective"? Would he accept another provider, crisis support, psychiatric evaluation, or case-management support?
Protective anchors	Who can reliably support Ryan right now? Are roommates, family, faculty, advisors, or friends aware enough and willing enough to help? What has helped Ryan de-escalate in the past?
Reporter support/safety	What do Chris, Prof Plum, the reporting classmate, and other faculty need to feel safe/supported?
Pattern over time	Are the incidents separate distress events, or are they forming an escalating pathway? Are Ryan's statements becoming more specific, more frequent, more organized, or more tied to consequences?
Management thresholds	What specific behaviors would trigger emergency action, interim restrictions, housing/class changes, welfare checks, conduct action, or LE response? Who is responsible for monitoring each trigger?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE THE BEHAVIORS OF CONCERN BEING REPORTED/OBSERVED?

The initial concerns are academic decline, continued fixation on the Prof Plum grievance, difficulty accepting institutional outcomes, legal/substance-related concerns, and felt threat from others. Ryan is on academic concern/probation, has a failed course connected to the Prof Plum grievance, remains upset after the grievance process is exhausted, and has CCAP entries for OWI with refusal to take a breathalyzer and LSD possession. A classmate reports feeling threatened with possible physical violence, and Prof Plum reports a hostile tone and fear that Ryan might do something harmful, while also noting Ryan has made "zero threats."

WHAT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS NECESSARY TO ASSESS RISK ACCURATELY?

The BIT would need more detail on the classmate's report, including what Ryan said or did, whether there was any specific target, gesture, intimidation, or implied threat. The team should clarify Prof Plum's observed behaviors. Which actions led him to believe Ryan might become violent, whether those behaviors occurred in class, during office hours, or via email, and whether they have escalated.

The team also needs information about Ryan's current functioning: class attendance, assignments, sleep/eating if known, substance use pattern, counseling engagement, roommate or residence hall concerns, access to weapons, prior conduct history beyond the listed legal issues, and whether Ryan has made any statements about self-harm or harm to others. At this point, the evidence is concerning but still incomplete.

OF THE TWO DPREP TOOLS, WHICH DID YOU USE AND WHY: PATHWAYS OR DARKFOX?

Primary tool: Pathways. At this stage, the case is more about distress, academic deterioration, grievance fixation, substance/legal concerns, social friction, and ambiguous threat perception than a clearly developed targeted violence pathway. Pathways is the better first tool because it helps organize broad behavioral and well-being factors such as Academic Trouble, Serious Drug Use, Social Problems, Affective Violence, and Transient Threats.

Secondary lens: DarkFox. DarkFox-style threat thinking is useful as a screen for actionability, direct threat, planning, leakage, and approach behavior. However, Section 1 does not yet include a specific target, method, time, weapon, or plan. General behavioral indicators are distinct from more actionable threat elements such as actionability, direct threats, planning, and approach.

WHAT DO THE REPORTERS WANT OR NEED?

Prof Plum appears to want guidance, validation that the concern is being taken seriously, and a practical plan for interacting with Ryan in class. The classmate needs to be heard, asked for specific behavioral details, and told how to report additional concerns. Ryan appears to want continued support around the denied grievance, though the institution has already explained that no appeal options remain.

WHAT INTERVENTIONS ARE APPROPRIATE CURRENTLY? WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Intervention	Responsible party
Open or update the BIT/CARE case file and consolidate reports.	BIT chair/DOS
Meet with Ryan to review concerns, grievance closure, academic status, and behavioral expectations.	DOS/Case manager
Provide academic support, referral, and probation planning.	Advising/Student success
Clarify legal/Substance and assess the need for conduct follow-up	Student conduct/DOS
Consult with Counseling within ROI; encourage support.	Counseling/DoS
Obtain more specific information from Prof and classmate.	BIT case manager
Provide Prof with guidance on classroom safety and reporting.	DoS/Academic chair/UWPD
Screen for threats, weapons access, SI, and escalation.	BIT/Counseling/UWPD

WHAT OTHER QUESTIONS SHOULD THE TEAM CONSIDER?

The team should ask whether Ryan has made similar comments in other classes, whether there are residence life concerns, whether the grievance has become a fixation, whether Ryan has access to weapons, whether substance use is affecting judgment, and whether academic failure is becoming a trigger for despair or anger.

HOW SHOULD THE BIT BALANCE PRIVACY, DUE PROCESS, AND COMMUNITY SAFETY?

The BIT should share information on a need-to-know basis, document behavior rather than impressions alone, avoid treating "hostile vibe" as proof of dangerousness, and still take the fear of reporters seriously. Ryan should receive clear notice of concerns and an opportunity to respond. Community safety can be supported through classroom planning, reporting pathways, and closer monitoring without prematurely labeling Ryan as violent.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WHAT HAS CHANGED? WHAT DO PATHWAYS OR DARKFOX INDICATE?

The case shifts from felt threat and grievance concern to direct unwanted contact, graphic violent communication, police involvement, suicidal ideation, Title IX involvement, and a no-contact order. Ryan approaches Chris, requests contact, sends violent song lyrics after Chris declines further engagement, and then gives an unclear explanation to UWPD. Ryan later reports "constant suicidal ideation," makes despondent statements, and says they would kill themselves before being "put in a box."

Pathways indicates a broader and more elevated profile: Suicide, Depression, Harassing Behaviors, Serious Drug Use, Academic Trouble, Social Problems, Affective Violence, Transient Threats, and possible Substantive Threats. DarkFox-style analysis would flag the music communications as threat-relevant because they were directed to a specific person, repeated after rejection, and caused fear, but the case still lacks confirmed access to a weapon, time/place specificity, or a clear attack plan.

HOW SHOULD THE TEAM ASSESS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MUSIC-BASED COMMUNICATIONS AND RYAN'S EXPLANATIONS?

The team should not dismiss the messages simply because Ryan describes them as music-based communication. Ryan contacted Chris after Chris declined further interaction, sent violent lyrics, continued after Chris objected, and then gave circular answers when asked whether the lyrics were intended as a threat.

The team should assess the content, recipient, timing, repetition, Ryan's intent, Chris's fear, whether Ryan had any fixation on Chris, whether Ryan complied with the no-contact direction, and whether similar communications were sent to others. The Pathways guide treats harassing behavior and stalking-related behavior as more concerning when unwanted contact continues despite limits, involves law enforcement or conduct, or shows an inability to stop.

WHAT INDICATORS SUGGEST ELEVATED RISK FOR SELF-HARM, HARM TO OTHERS, OR BOTH?

Risk direction	Indicators
Self-harm	Ryan reports "constant suicidal ideation," says they have "done everything I can," appears despondent in multiple class check-ins, says they would kill themselves before being "put in a box," and does not find counseling effective.
Harm to others	Chris receives violent graphic messages and feels threatened; Prof Plum and a classmate report fear; Ryan is evasive when asked if the lyrics were meant to threaten Chris; a no-contact order is put in place.
Both	The case contains suicidal language, grievance/fixation, legal/substance issues, social boundary problems, and threat-like communications. This combination raises concern even when Ryan denies current suicidal intent.

WHAT COORDINATED RESPONSE IS NECESSARY ACROSS DEPARTMENTS? COMMUNICATION WITH LEADERSHIP?

A coordinated response should include the Dean of Students, UWPD, Counseling, Title IX, Student Conduct, Residence Life, Academic Affairs, and the relevant faculty/department leadership. Leadership should receive a need-to-know briefing focused on the safety posture, the no-contact order status, the academic/classroom implications, and the next steps. The briefing should avoid unnecessary clinical or private details.

WHAT SUPPORT PLANS ARE INDICATED FOR REPORTERS?

Chris needs a no-contact order, clear reporting instructions, safety planning, counseling information, academic support if the situation affects class participation, and a named contact in DoS or Title IX. Prof Plum needs classroom safety planning, guidance on documentation, a clear way to request assistance, and support from the department chair. Other faculty who submitted SOC reports should be told how to submit future observations and what changes require immediate escalation.

HOW SHOULD THE INSTITUTION RESPOND WHEN A STUDENT DECLINES HELP OR MINIMIZES CONCERNS?

The institution should continue offering support, but it should not rely solely on Ryan's denial or minimization. The team should document refusals, set clear behavioral expectations, monitor compliance with the no-contact order, use policy-based interventions where appropriate, and reassess risk as new information becomes available. A refusal to engage with help is not automatically misconduct, but it matters when combined with suicidal statements, threatening communications, and escalating reports.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD THE TEAM CONSIDER?

The team should consider whether Chris's wish not to pursue criminal charges limits only that process, not the institution's responsibility to respond. The team should also consider whether Ryan's deferred agreement increases stress, whether the Title IX process is experienced by Ryan as a trigger, whether supportive roommates are reliable protective factors, and whether substance use is increasing impulsivity.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WHAT HAS CHANGED? WHAT DO PATHWAYS OR DARKFOX INDICATE?

The case escalates again because Ryan now links academic failure, possible homelessness, suicide, and "something worse than suicide planned." Ryan says they have a recording of the plan, the classmate reports it to UWPD, Ryan denies suicidality, police determine the video is mostly a song about drugs, and Ryan refuses to speak with the crisis worker.

Pathways indicates a cumulative high-concern picture across Academic Trouble, Suicide, Depression, Financial Insecurity, Serious Drug Use, Harassing Behaviors, Affective Violence, Transient Threats, and Substantive Threats. DarkFox-style analysis would treat the statement as possible leakage or planning language until clarified. Leakage is communication to a third party that involves clues or details about possible harm and planning, such as thinking or writing about what someone may do to correct an injustice or seek revenge.

HOW SHOULD THE BIT INTERPRET STATEMENTS SUGGESTING "SOMETHING WORSE THAN SUICIDE"?

The BIT should interpret the statement as highly concerning, ambiguous leakage, not as proof of an imminent attack, and not as harmless simply because Ryan later denied suicidality. The statement combines self-harm language, possible harm-to-others implication, academic/housing stress, and reference to a recorded "plan." The correct response is to clarify target, intent, means, timeline, access, grievance, and whether the "recording" contains threat content or artistic/drug-related content only.

WHAT IMMEDIATE SAFETY ACTIONS ARE WARRANTED DESPITE RYAN'S DENIAL OF SUICIDALITY?

Immediate actions should include an urgent BIT/CARE/TAT review, direct assessment of Ryan by trained staff, UWPD involvement consistent with the report already made, review of the recording and related communications, confirmation of no-contact-order compliance, and updated safety planning for Chris, Prof Plum, and the reporting classmate as appropriate. The team should also assess access to weapons, current location, substance use, housing status, academic status, and whether emergency removal, interim restrictions, or mandated assessment is available under institutional policy.

WHAT UNRESOLVED RISK FACTORS HAVE ACCUMULATED ACROSS THE FULL TIMELINE?

Accumulated factor	Case basis
Academic Trouble	Low GPA, failed class, academic probation, fear of failing classes.
Grievance/fixation	Continued inability to accept the Prof Plum grievance outcome.
Serious Drug/Alcohol	OWI refusal and LSD possession; later video mostly about drugs.
Social Problems	Classmate, Chris, and Prof Plum all report unease or threat perception.
Harassing Behaviors	Unwanted Instagram messages, police response, Title IX report, no-contact order.
Suicide	Constant suicidal ideation, despondent statements, "kill themselves before being put in a box," and "suicide is probably the worst thing."
Financial Insecurity	Ryan says failing classes could mean homelessness.
Transient/Substantive Threats	Graphic violent lyrics, "something worse than suicide planned," and a reference to a recording of the plan.
Help refusal/minimization	Denies suicidality and refuses to speak with the crisis worker.

WHAT LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IS NOW NECESSARY?

Ryan needs a coordinated case-management plan with one clear lead, recurring BIT reviews, documented risk formulation, and defined escalation triggers. The plan should include academic planning, housing/financial support assessment, counseling or mental health evaluation, substance use assessment, conduct/Title IX coordination, no-contact order monitoring, and safety planning for affected parties. The team should also determine what conditions must be met for Ryan to remain in classes or housing, and what policy-based steps apply if risk cannot be managed safely.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD THE TABLE CONSIDER?

The table should account for the risks of both overreaction and underreaction. Ryan's statements are ambiguous, but the ambiguity now sits on top of a pattern: academic deterioration, grievance, substance/legal issues, threatening communications, suicidal language, refusal of crisis support, and multiple reporters feeling unsafe. The team should continue to use objective facts, preserve due process, avoid unsupported clinical conclusions, and move from episodic responses to active threat-management planning.

APPENDIX A: SUPPLEMENTAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SUMMARY TOPICS TO EXPLORE

1. What did Ryan mean by "something worse than suicide," and is there a target, time, location, method, or intended audience?
2. Does Ryan have access to weapons, lethal means, substances, or other tools connected to a plan?
3. Is Ryan currently suicidal, homicidal, intoxicated, or unable to safety plan?
4. Has Ryan complied with the no-contact order involving Chris?
5. Is Ryan's grievance with Prof Plum still active, worsening, or becoming more personalized?
6. What immediate stressor is most destabilizing right now: grades, housing, Title IX, legal status, isolation, or counseling failure?
7. Who can serve as a real protective anchor, not just a listed support?

WHAT EXACTLY DID THE CLASSMATE OBSERVE?

The report says a classmate felt threatened with possible physical violence, but the case does not specify Ryan's words, gestures, proximity, tone, body language, or whether a specific person was targeted. That missing detail matters because Prof Plum also reports a hostile tone, but states Ryan made "zero threats."

Core questions:

- What did Ryan say or do that caused the classmate to feel threatened?
- Was there a direct statement, gesture, physical movement, intimidation, or implied threat?
- Was the concern about Ryan's general demeanor or a specific incident?
- Did anyone else witness it?

HOW FIXED IS RYAN ON PROF PLUM AND THE GRIEVANCE?

Ryan pursued the formal grievance process, was denied, and continued to seek support even after being told there were no remaining appeal options.

Core questions:

- Does Ryan accept that the process is over, or do they continue to seek reversal, apology, punishment, or vindication?
- Has Ryan communicated about Prof Plum outside official channels?
- Has the grievance become a broader "unfair system" narrative?
- Does Ryan blame Prof Plum personally for academic consequences?

WHAT IS THE CURRENT IMPACT OF ACADEMIC TROUBLE?

Ryan's GPA, academic concern, and later academic probation are documented, but the case does not fully describe Ryan's current academic functioning.

Core questions:

- Is Ryan attending class, submitting work, and communicating appropriately with faculty?
- Are grades continuing to decline?
- Does Ryan understand what is required to recover academically?
- Is academic failure linked to hopelessness, anger, or threats?

WHAT IS THE PATTERN OF SUBSTANCE USE?

The case includes a first OWI refusal and an LSD possession charge, but not frequency, impairment, treatment needs, or whether use is connected to behavior.

Core questions:

- Was the LSD possession isolated or part of ongoing serious drug use?
- Is alcohol or drug use affecting judgment, mood, class behavior, or impulse control?
- Are there court, deferred-agreement, probation, or compliance conditions?
- Is Ryan using substances to cope with distress?

WHAT BASELINE PROTECTIVE FACTORS EXIST?

The case initially gives very little about stabilizers.

Core questions:

- Who does Ryan trust?
- Are family, roommates, friends, advisors, or counselors meaningfully involved?
- Is Ryan willing to engage with any campus resource?
- What has helped Ryan de-escalate in the past?

WHAT WAS RYAN'S INTENT TOWARD CHRIS?

Ryan approached Chris, requested contact information, sent graphic violent song lyrics, continued after Chris objected, and then gave unclear answers when asked whether the messages were meant as threats.

Core questions:

- Was Ryan attempting humor, flirtation, intimidation, testing boundaries, or threatening?
- Did Ryan send similar messages to anyone else?
- Why did Ryan continue after Chris said it was not okay?
- Did Ryan understand the impact on Chris?

IS THIS HARASSMENT, STALKING, OR A ONE-TIME BOUNDARY VIOLATION?

A Title IX harassment report was made, Chris declined an investigation, and a no-contact order was put in place.

Core questions:

- Has Ryan attempted any direct, indirect, online, third-party, or accidental contact with Chris since the warning/no-contact order?
- Does Ryan monitor Chris online or in person?
- Does Ryan believe Chris wronged them or owes them contact?
- Are there shared classes, residence areas, or campus locations that require safety planning?

HOW SHOULD THE TEAM INTERPRET THE VIOLENT SONG LYRICS?

The Pathways guide treats transient threats as low-actionability threats often made reactively, but also notes that repeated, more specific, or target-narrowing threats may move toward substantive concern.

Core questions:

- Were the lyrics selected because of their violent content?
- Did the lyrics map onto Chris, Prof Plum, Ryan, or no one specific?
- Did Ryan send them during intoxication or distress?
- Did Ryan show remorse, minimization, amusement, or confusion afterward?

WHAT IS THE CURRENT SUICIDE/SELF-HARM RISK?

Ryan wrote about "constant suicidal ideation," made despondent statements in class check-ins, denied suicidality during assessment, reported supportive roommates, and stated counseling was not effective.

Core questions:

- Does Ryan have a suicide plan, method, access, time frame, or rehearsal behavior?
- What does "done everything I can" mean?
- What did Ryan mean by "there's a chance I can't do anything"?
- Are supportive roommates actually aware, available, and willing to help?
- What is Ryan's level of engagement with counseling now?

WHAT DOES "PUT IN A BOX" MEAN TO RYAN?

Ryan stated they would kill themselves before being "put in a box" during the Title IX-related meeting.

Core questions:

- Does "box" mean jail, hospitalization, suspension, expulsion, being labeled, or loss of autonomy?
- Was this a suicidal threat, an expression of panic, or resistance to accountability?
- What consequences does Ryan fear most?
- Does Ryan see any acceptable alternatives?

WHAT DID RYAN MEAN BY "SOMETHING WORSE THAN SUICIDE PLANNED"?

This is the central unresolved question. Ryan linked academic failure, homelessness, suicide, "something worse than suicide," and a recording of a plan. Police later determined the video was mostly a song about drugs, and Ryan refused to speak with the crisis worker.

Core questions:

- What exactly was said before and after the statement?
- Was Ryan referring to self-harm, harm to others, public humiliation, disappearance, substance use, retaliation, or something symbolic?
- Was there a target, location, time, method, or intended audience?
- Was the "recording" created before the conversation or shown impulsively in the moment?
- Did the recording contain only music, or did it include statements, imagery, captions, names, or plans?

IS THERE ACTIONABILITY?

Actionability is access to the means and materials to carry out an attack, and identifies time/location movement as especially important.

Core questions:

- Does Ryan have access to weapons, lethal means, vehicles, controlled substances, or other tools of harm?
- Has Ryan researched methods, locations, schedules, security, or targets?
- Has Ryan made preparations, collected materials, written notes, recorded messages, or given anything away?
- Is there any indication of a deadline tied to grades, housing, court, Title IX, or probation?

IS THIS FREE FALL, CATALYST, LEAKAGE, OR PLANNING?

The case now includes academic decline, possible homelessness, suicidal language, grievance, substance/legal issues, social conflict, and help refusal. "Free fall" is defined as multiple chronic problems intersecting with hopelessness and impaired functioning.

Core questions:

- Is Ryan deteriorating gradually, or did a specific event trigger acute escalation?
- Is the "something worse" statement leakage of actual intent or a distressed/ambiguous expression?
- Is Ryan becoming more organized or more chaotic?
- Are statements becoming more specific over time?

WHAT IS RYAN'S CURRENT STATE AND LOCATION?

Because Ryan denied suicidality but refused to engage with the crisis worker, the team still lacks a reliable, current risk picture.

Core questions:

- Where is Ryan now, and who is physically near them?
- Are they intoxicated, sleep-deprived, panicked, angry, or withdrawn?
- Are roommates aware of what to do if the risk increases?
- Is Ryan attending class, isolating, missing, or escalating contact with others?

WHAT HAS ACCUMULATED ACROSS THE FULL TIMELINE?

The unanswered assessment question is no longer about one incident. It is about the cumulative pattern: academic trouble, grievance fixation, substance/legal issues, Chris-related harassment concerns, suicidal statements, a no-contact order, possible homelessness, and the "something worse than suicide" statement.

Core questions:

- Are these separate distress events, or one escalating pathway?
- Which people or systems does Ryan blame?
- Is Ryan more likely to harm self, others, or both?
- Which interventions have worked, failed, or been refused?
- What conditions would reduce risk enough for continued participation in housing/classes?