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**Lone Wolf Terrorism in America:  
Using Knowledge of Radicalization Pathways to Forge Prevention Strategies**

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#2012-ZA-BX-0001  
FINAL SUMMARY OVERVIEW

## Abstract

This research offers the largest and most comprehensive database ever created on lone wolf terrorism, along with a theory-informed case study component based on direct contact with imprisoned lone wolf terrorists, and a comparative analysis distinguishing lone wolves from those who undergo radicalization in a group setting. Strictly in terms of lethality, the data indicate that *lone wolf terrorism in America is not on the rise*. Although lone wolf terrorism may not be increasing, it is undergoing two important changes in modus operandi. First, uniformed police and military personnel have become the primary target of lone wolf terrorists. Second, consistent with the relaxation of U.S. gun laws since the 1990s and the recent trend in mass shootings, the lone wolf's preferred weaponry is now a staggering range of high-velocity firearms. While there is no standard profile of the lone wolf terrorist, most of them are unemployed, single white males with a criminal record. Compared to members of terrorist groups, lone wolves are older, less educated and more prone to mental illness.

The study validates a series of commonalities associated with pathways to radicalization for lone wolf terrorists. The radicalization model indicates that lone wolf terrorism begins with a combination of *personal and political grievances* which form the basis for an *affinity with online sympathizers*. This is followed by the identification of an *enabler*, followed by the *broadcasting of terrorist intent*. The final commonality is a *triggering event*, or the catalyst for terrorism. The ability of law enforcement and intelligence communities to detect and prevent lone wolf terrorism demands a clear understanding of these radicalization processes. Such insight may provide investigators with a sort of detection system, or “signatures”—as minimal as they may appear—that an individual with a terrorist intent will demonstrate in preparing for an attack. Crucial to this understanding is the broadcasting of intent. While lone wolves physically isolate from society, at the same time they seek recognition for their causes through spoken statements and threats, manifestos, e-mail messages, texting and videotaped proclamations. Focusing on this kind of immediate objective of radicalization among lone wolves, rather than on their underlying grievances, may sharpen our focus on the dangers posed by lone wolf terrorism.

**Purpose of the project:** The purposes of this research were to create a database of lone wolf terrorism in America, along with a theory-informed case study component based on direct contact with incarcerated lone wolf terrorists, and a comparative analysis seeking to distinguish lone wolves from those who undergo radicalization in a group setting (See Appendix 1). The objective of the study was to test the validity of a series of empirically-based commonalities associated with pathways to radicalization for lone wolves.

**Project subjects:** See Appendix 2 for a discussion of methods used to recruit subjects.

**Project design and methods:** To be included in the database and case studies, a case was required to meet the following definition: Lone wolf terrorism is political violence perpetrated by individuals who act alone; who do not belong to an organized terrorist group or network; who act without the direct influence of a leader or hierarchy; and whose tactics and methods are conceived and directed by the individual without any direct outside command or direction.

We discovered 98 cases fitting this definition between 1940 and 2013—representing all known cases of American lone wolf terrorism for the period (see Appendix 3 for a list of cases). Information on the 98 cases was gathered from an extensive review of previous research, biographies and memoirs, journalistic sources, government reports, court documents, encyclopedias and documentary films. The database catalogues the 98 cases across 21 different variables, generating 2,058 original data points. (Binary coding was used by a three-person team of raters who examined the variables.) It is the largest and most comprehensive database ever created on lone wolf terrorism.

Of the 98 cases in the database, 38 cases occurred before the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and 60 took place after 9/11. Of the 60 lone wolf cases after 9/11, however, 15 cases were law enforcement sting operations involving confidential informants and undercover agents; hence,

they do not qualify as *authentic* lone wolf cases since more than one individual was involved. The sting cases were nevertheless included in the database because stings against standalone extremists have become a major counterterrorism strategy since 9/11. Indeed, they have recently been employed by the FBI to identify Americans with an interest in becoming foreign fighters, including those who have attempted to join ISIS. The following analysis of post-9/11 cases *excludes* the 15 stings and concentrates only on the authentic cases.

In summary, the database includes 38 lone wolf terrorists between 1940 and 2000 and 45 (authentic) lone wolves between 2001 and 2013, for a total of 83 cases. By comparing the pre-9/11 cases with the post-9/11 cases across the full spectrum of 21 variables, we identify trends in lone wolf terrorism and their underlying causes and potential control strategies for law enforcement.

**Data analysis:** Based upon a descriptive analysis of the data, the major research conclusions are as follows.

*Trends in Lone Wolf Terrorism:* From 1940 through 2000, the 38 lone wolf terrorists committed 171 attacks, claiming 98 lives and injuring another 305. An array of firearms and homemade bombs were used in the attacks. Roughly 60% of the lone wolves committed a single attack and 40% committed multiple attacks, including such prolific terrorists as Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski who committed 16 bombings over a 17-year period, the racist serial killer Joseph Paul Franklin responsible for an estimated 23 attacks over four years, and Muharem Kurbegovic, the “Alphabet Bomber,” who launched ten attacks in two years.

From 2001 through 2013, the 45 lone wolves committed 45 attacks, killing 55 people and injuring another 126. These attacks involved not only firearms and bombs but also airplanes, biological weapons, knives and construction equipment. In short, lone wolves have expanded

their arsenal of weaponry in the post-9/11 era. While the multiple attackers were prominent in the pre-9/11 era, the single attacker rose to prominence after 9/11. They include such lone mass-murderers as Nidal Hasan who killed 13 and injured 30 in the 2009 Fort Hood shooting, Jared Laughner who killed six and wounded 13 in the Tucson shooting of 2011, and Wade Page who killed six and wounded four in the 2012 shooting at the Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

Strictly in terms of lethality, the data indicate that *lone wolf terrorism in America is not on the rise*. Moreover, no decade has been bloodier than the 1990s when lone wolves left 212 victims, killing 30 and wounding 182 others.

*Modus Operandi:* Although lone wolf terrorism may not be increasing in the United States, it is undergoing dramatic changes in terms of modus operandi. The most significant change involves the targeting of uniformed police and military officers. Twelve law enforcement officers were killed or wounded by lone wolf terrorists in the 60 years preceding 9/11. This figure doubled in the first 13 years following 9/11 when the number of law enforcement personnel killed or wounded by lone wolves rose to 24. All of these attacks were bracketed by the years 2009 through 2013—the years coinciding with the Barack Obama presidency. Lone wolf attacks against police before 9/11 were motivated by black power, the Palestinian question and abortion. With one exception, since 9/11 attacks on law enforcement have been motivated by anti-government and white supremacy anger over the election of the nation's first African American president.

Not a single member of the U.S. military was targeted by lone wolf terrorists prior to 9/11. Since 9/11, lone wolves have killed or wounded 47 members of the military. Lone wolves have also attacked military bases or have been arrested in thwarted attacks against military installations. All of these terrorist attacks and plots were bracketed by the years 2009 to 2011. In

every case but one, they were conducted by al-Qaeda sympathizers angry over the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

*Weaponry:* Prior to 9/11, a total of 234 victims were killed or wounded in bombings perpetrated by lone wolf terrorists—a phenomenon undoubtedly related to the bombing campaigns of terrorist groups during much of the period. Since 9/11, there have been only six victims of lone wolf bombings. This decline may reflect the stringent government controls on the purchase of bomb-making materials enacted in the aftermath of Oklahoma City. Consistent with the relaxation of U.S. gun laws since the 1990s and the recent trend in mass shootings, the lone wolf's preferred weaponry is now a staggering range of high-velocity firearms. Not only has the lethality of firearms increased by an order of magnitude, but lone wolf attacks have also become more personal.

*Copycat Attacks:* Even though we were not anticipating it, the database shows evidence of a copycat phenomenon in a third of the lone wolf cases.

*Diversity of Lone Wolf Terrorism:* Lone wolf terrorism is a multi-faceted crime. In addition to the 171 attacks committed by lone wolves in the pre-9/11 era, they were also responsible for at least 34 threats or aborted attacks. Due to technological advances, the post-9/11 era has shown a greater number of threats and aborted attacks. These have included anthrax hoaxes against abortion clinics and a presidential candidate, the aborted assassination attempt on President Obama with a radioactive bomb, and the downing of an electrical power grid, representing an *innovation* in American terrorism.

*Background Factors:* While there is no standard profile of the American lone wolf terrorist, the evidence indicates that most of them are unemployed, single white males with a criminal record. Compared to members of terrorist groups, lone wolves are older, less educated

and more prone to mental illness. When compared to members of al-Qaeda, American lone wolf terrorists are more likely to be unmoored from society. The findings imply that lone wolf terrorism is caused by relative deprivation. In their social exclusion, lone individuals feel deprived of what they perceive as values to which they are entitled, and form grievances against the government responsible for their unemployment, discrimination and injustices. Their violence is a deviant adaptation to this gap between means and goals. One reason for this relatively high level of alienation is that more than half of the lone wolves embraced right-wing or anti-government ideologies. Nationalistic movements—such as American white supremacy movements—have tended to produce terrorists from the lower classes, while religious terrorists like al-Qaeda come from all classes.

### **Pathways to Radicalization**

*Loci of Radicalization:* Identifying the locus (or place) of radicalization is important because it draws attention to the social institution or means by which an individual is radicalized into violent extremism. Loci of radicalization are displayed in Appendix 4. The Appendix shows that the most common locus of radicalization in the pre-9/11 era was an extremist group that the lone wolves may have belonged to but had since abandoned. For lone wolf terrorists of the post-9/11 period, traditional loci of radicalization have been replaced by informal online social networks, the civilian workplace, and mass media.

*Motives:* Lone wolves tend to combine personal grievances with political grievances. Personal and political grievances are important because they go to the crucial question of motive. To validate the commonality, there must be evidence of *both* a personal and political grievance for any given case. For the pre-9/11 lone wolves, evidence of both themes was found in 30 of the 38 cases, or roughly 80% of the cases. For lone wolves of the post-9/11 era, evidence of both



themes was found in 36 of the 45 cases: again, representing 80% of the cases indicating that the commonality is a *signature* of lone wolf terrorism that distinguishes loners from organized terrorists who share collective grievances. The end result of radicalization is the same, however. For both lone wolves and organized terrorists, violence is considered the only alternative to an unjust system

*Affinity with Extremist Groups:* Affinity implies that lone wolf terrorists are in sympathy with extremist groups; that their beliefs are in accordance with a clearly-defined organizational entity. The analysis shows that 63% of the pre-9/11 lone wolves had an affinity with organized extremists, including Southern segregationist and neo-Nazi groups, Palestinian movements; and anti-abortion groups. *Affinity for extremist groups is declining.* Only 42% of the post-9/11 lone wolves were found to have an affinity with extremist organizations, including al-Qaeda, Tea Party Patriots, and the neo-Nazi National Alliance. Yet the overall finding implies that lone wolves may be seeking direction through venues other than organizations: namely, via networks of like-minded activists found online or on cable television. This finding is consistent with radicalization patterns among recent organized terrorists.

*Enablers:* Lone wolves are enabled through either *direct* means in the form of people who unwittingly assist in planning attacks, or *indirectly* by people who provide inspiration for terrorism. Whereas affinity for extremist groups is a vicarious experience best understood as ideological validation of beliefs, an enabler is best understood at a personal level as someone who either unknowingly performs tasks that make an attack possible, or someone who indirectly encourages terrorism by example. Enablers are also common among group actors.

During the pre-9/11 era, 57% of the lone wolf terrorists were enabled by others. In the post-9/11 era, the figure rose to 67%. Nearly all of the enabling was indirect. For jihadists of the

post-9/11 years, the most frequent enablers were Osama bin Laden and Anwar al-Awlaki. For white supremacists anti-government extremists of the post-9/11 period, the most frequent enablers were William Pierce, National Alliance founder and author of *The Turner Diaries*; and Internet personality Alex Jones.

*Broadcasting Intent:* While lone wolves physically isolate from society, at the same time they communicate with outsiders through spoken statements, threats, letters, manifestos and videotaped proclamations, similar to the jihadist martyrdom videos uploaded to the Internet by members of al-Qaeda and ISIS. Broadcasting intent can explicitly refer to an upcoming attack, or it can imply that an attack is imminent. Broadcasting intent may occur in the weeks, days and even hours before an attack. Broadcasting intent may be the most important commonality from the standpoint of prevention: If lone wolves announce their violent intentions beforehand, then presumably steps can be taken to stop them.

Broadcasting intent is pervasive among lone wolf terrorists. Evidence of broadcasting can be found in 84% of the pre-9/11 cases, including some the most crucial cases (the Unabomber, Eric Rudolph, Joseph Paul Franklin, and Leroy Moody). Among the post-9/11 lone wolf terrorists, 76% broadcasted their intent, often more than once. The broadcastings were made through e-mails, text messages, Facebook postings and Twitter feeds, PowerPoint presentations and Podcasts. It was done through television appearances; in statements to friends, family members, and mental health providers, transportation workers and police officers; in letters to lovers and newspaper editors; in town hall meetings and at protest rallies; and even in letters to Congress and the President of the United States. No case of broadcasting intent shows the potential for preventing a lone wolf attack better than Paul Ciancia's.

On the morning of his November 1, 2013 mass shooting at Los Angeles International Airport, killing and wounding three TSA officers and five bystanders, Ciancia ran into his roommate's bedroom and demanded a ride to LAX immediately. Around the same time, Ciancia sent text messages to his brother in Pennsville, New Jersey. One suggested that Ciancia was about to commit suicide. Alarmed, Ciancia's father called local police; who in turn called the Los Angeles Police Department. The call came in to the LAPD switchboard at 10:06 a.m. LAPD officers arrived at Ciancia's apartment six minutes later, but too late to prevent the shootings which had begun a mere 45 minutes earlier. On balance, Ciancia's rampage was nearly averted through a police response to the broadcasting of intent. Focusing on this kind of immediate objective of radicalization among lone wolves, rather than on their underlying grievances, may sharpen our focus on the dangers posed by lone wolf terrorism.

*Triggering Event:* The triggering event is a catalyst for lone wolf terrorism and such events are common among terrorist group members. For lone wolves, triggering events may be personal or political or some combination of the two. Triggering events are sometimes "sharp" or immediate. Other times events slowly accumulate over time (through a series of "escalation thresholds") until the lone wolf snaps under the pressure, triggering the act of terrorism. Evidence of a triggering event was found in 84% of the pre-9/11 cases and in 71% of the post-9/11 cases.

*The Commonalities of Lone Wolf Terrorism: A Summary:* The commonalities form a radicalization model indicating that lone wolf terrorism begins with *personal and political grievances* which become the basis for an *affinity with an extremist group*. This is followed by the identification of an *enabler*, followed by *broadcasting of intent*. The final commonality is a *triggering event*, or the catalyst for terrorism. The research validates the model, except for the

facet relating to the affinity with extremist groups during the post-9/11 era. This aspect of radicalization has changed over time and is not as important as it once was.

Four out of every 10 post-9/11 lone wolves demonstrated an affinity with extremist organizations, but affinities are an exception to the rule that lone wolf terrorists are becoming increasingly independent. At the root of this change is technology. With the rise of Internet chat rooms, conspiracy websites, Facebook and Twitter, online activists can connect scattered people who are worried about everything from drone strikes to a one-world government and the pending imposition of martial law in the United States and tell them that they do not worry in isolation. Moreover, radicalization is caused by an *affinity with online sympathizers*.

This new development in lone wolf terrorism is incorporated into the radicalization model presented in Appendix 5. Yet the model also includes affinity with extremist groups, even though this commonality of radicalization may be declining. The overarching point is this: Virtually all lone wolves demonstrate affinity with some person, community, or group, be it online or in the real world. This is a significant finding because it contests the policy assumption that lone wolf terrorists do not communicate or interact with others. They clearly do.

*Implications for Traveling to Syria:* The research applies the radicalization model to the 15 sting operations. The model effectively explains the sting cases in the same way that it explains authentic lone wolf cases. A case study based on open sources shows how the radicalization model may be used to explain lone wolves with the potential for traveling to Syria and joining ISIS.

### **Paradigmatic Case Studies**

The process of violent radicalization is so complex that a coherent government policy to halt lone wolf terrorism has yet to emerge. What is missing from security policy is a theoretical

guidepost for understanding the lone wolves' criminal thinking styles and the specific circumstances that set them on the pathway to violent extremism. Criminological life-course theory can therefore be used to identify the sequence of individual trajectories leading to terrorism and the extent to which those turning points are embedded in the commonalities of radicalization. The theory can also be used to discern whether one commonality is more important than another. But life course theory can tell us much more.

The emergence of a turning point in life opens up the possibility for an individual to “knife off”—to completely amputate—the past from the present. Freed from personal history, the individual can invest in new relationships (real or virtual) that both foster social support for radicalization and encourage activities centered on violence. At this point, conditions exist for the individual to perform an identity transformation into an armed warrior.

We take on the challenge of applying life course theory to lone wolf terrorism by drilling down on two paradigmatic cases of police and military ambushing based on direct contact with the lone wolves who committed the assassinations. The cases also address the complex issues of gun control and the effects of mental illness on radicalization. One case reveals that the *triggering event* superseded the importance of all other facets of radicalization because it fused the loner's personal proclivity for anger and violence together with his political grievance over the abuse of Muslims by U.S. military forces. This defining event of radicalization allowed the subject to dehumanize his victims while elevating himself to a position of moral sanctity whereby he self-identified as a holy warrior. The second case reveals a series of escalation thresholds influenced by a combination of personal grievances over a lack of employment prospects and an intensification of the loner's paranoid political beliefs through his affinity with online sympathizers. Along this pathway the loner experienced a number of turning point, none

more essential than his administrative discharge from military service which *triggered* his self-identification as an armed warrior, precipitating the assassination.

### **Implications for Counterterrorism**

The ability of law enforcement and intelligence communities to detect and prevent lone wolf terrorism demands a clear understanding of the radicalization process that lone wolves go through prior to their attacks. Insight into these processes may provide investigators with a sort of detection system, or “signatures”—as minimal as they may appear—that an individual with a terrorist intent will demonstrate in preparing for an attack.

Such signatures include the combining of personal and political grievances, broadcasting of terrorist intent, an affinity with online sympathizers/or extremist groups, the reliance on enablers, and triggering events. When fused with intelligence assembled by area specialists (religious scholars, psychologists, communications experts, explosive specialists and the like), these signatures could identify indicators of how lone wolf attacks are formulated. Equally important, investigators must have an understanding of counterterrorism efforts that have proven successful in the past, and the extent to which these successes have derived from an operational understanding of the radicalization process.

### **List of Scholarly Products Produced or in Process**

Hamm, Mark S. and Ramon Spaaij (under review) “Case Studies and Ethnography in Terrorism Research.” In *Handbook on the Criminology of Terrorism*, edited by Joshua Frelich and Gary LaFree. New York: Wiley.

Spaaij, Ramon and Mark S. Hamm (in press) “Key Issues and Research Agendas in Lone Wolf Terrorism: A Rejoinder to Becker.” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*.

Hamm, Mark S. and Ramon Spaaij *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism* (working title for a forthcoming book).

Hamm, Mark S. (2012) Review of *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism: Global Patterns, Motivations and Prevention* by Ramon Spaaij. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 6 (3).

## Appendix 1

### Sources for of the Comparative Analysis

Bakker, Edward (2007) *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe: Their Characteristics and the Circumstances in Which They Joined the Jihad: An Exploratory Study*. The Hague: Clingendael Institute.

Hamm, Mark S. (2007) *Terrorism as Crime: From Oklahoma City to Al-Qaeda and Beyond*. New York: New York University Press.

Hamm, Mark S. (1993) *American Skinheads: The Criminology and Control of Hate Crime*. Westport, CT: Praeger

Sageman, Marc (2008) *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Sageman, Marc (2004) *Understanding Terror Networks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Simi, Pete and Robert Futrell (2010) *American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement's Hidden Spaces of Hate*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Smith, Brent L. (1994) *Terrorism in America: Pipe Bombs and Pipe Dreams*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.



## Appendix 2

### **Correspondence and Interviews with Terrorist Inmates: Challenges, Opportunities and a Recommendation for the Justice Department**

Terrorism is arguably the most studied crime in the world today. Since 9/11, a thousand new books have been added to the terrorism literature each year. An average of four new books on terrorism is published each day; one book appears every six hours. Yet, it is estimated that less than 1 percent of these studies have involved direct contact with terrorists.<sup>1</sup>

In this study, we were granted unprecedented access to terrorist inmates in American prisons. It is one of the rare “1%ers” of terrorism studies to contain direct contact with terrorists, providing a gold mine of original data on the process of violent radicalization. We offer the following account of our experiences in an effort to help future researchers navigate the difficult process of establishing direct contact with terrorist inmates. One cause of this difficulty can be traced to the academy itself. As one observer notes, “academia is currently ill-equipped to handle social science research activities that occur in high-risk areas.”<sup>2</sup>

#### *The Grant*

In early October of 2012, we received notification from NIJ that our grant had been approved, with one condition: We would not receive funding until full IRB approval for human subjects had been obtained along with approval from the various prisons where we would conduct interviews and mail correspondence with the lone wolf terrorists selected for the study.

We submitted an application to the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) on October 19. Revisions were requested and revisions were submitted to the IRB in early January, 2013. Still, questions remained about human-subjects protection involving sensitive personal matters: How could we assure that prisoners would not experience psychological distress when asked questions about bombings and shootings that resulted in the death and wounding of others?

The IRB asked for further revisions on January 23. This time we were required to clarify the meaning of such terms as “custody” and “prison yard” and to explain the difference between trust and rapport. The third revision was submitted on February 22, but the IRB requested another revision addressing the security implications of sending inmates a postage stamp for return mailing of correspondence. A fourth revision was rejected for minor reasons on March 6, and a fifth revision was rejected on April 8 before the application was finally approved by the IRB on April 22. It had taken six months. The next stop was approvals at the prison level.

#### *Terrorist Inmates*

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<sup>1</sup> Silke, Andrew (2008) “Research on Terrorism: A Review of the Impact of 9/11 and the Global War on Terrorism.” In Chen, H. et al. (eds.) *Terrorism Infomatics: Knowledge Management and Data Mining for Homeland Security*, pp. 27-50; Post-2008 figures confirmed by e-mail from Andrew Silke to Mark Hamm, March 30, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Taarnby, Michael (2013) “Professionalizing High-Risk Field Research in Academia.” In Adam Dolnik (ed.), *Conducting Terrorism Field Research: A Guide*. New York: Routledge, p. 206.

There are not hundreds or even tens of lone wolf terrorists incarcerated in the United States but only about 20. The IRB stipulated that we were prohibited from studying prisoners with severe mental illnesses, which eliminated roughly half of the 20 inmates. The final list of inmate subjects included:

Islamic extremist Carlos Bledsoe (Abdulahakim Mohammad) imprisoned for life in the Arkansas Department of Corrections in connection with the fatal 2009 drive-by shooting attack on the Little Rock Army recruiting center.

White supremacist Richard Poplawski imprisoned on death row in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections for the killing of three Pittsburgh police officers in 2009.

Islamic extremist Yonathan Melaku imprisoned for 25 years in the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) for a series of firearm attacks on Northern Virginia military installations in 2010 and the 2011 attempted bombing of Arlington National Cemetery.

Sami Hassoun imprisoned for 23 years in the BOP for an al-Qaeda related attempted bombing of a Chicago bar.

White supremacist Kevin Harpham imprisoned for 32 years in the BOP in connection with the attempted bombing of a Martin Luther King Day parade in Spokane, Washington, in 2011.

Islamic extremist Amine el Khalifi imprisoned for 30 years in the BOP in connection with an attempted suicide bombing at the United States Capitol in 2012.

Islamic extremist Quazi Nafis imprisoned for 30 years in the BOP in connection with the attempted bombing of the Federal Reserve Bank in 2012.

Permissions to study these inmates were required from the research divisions of the Arkansas and Pennsylvania Departments of Corrections and the BOP. This was another extended process. Terrorist inmates are different from conventional criminals in terms of security concerns, so each of the inmates required vetting by counterintelligence and security officials. Each also required vetting by psychologists to assure that they did not suffer from severe mental illness. The prison approval process that began in late April of 2013 was completed on September 13, 2013.

Yet two more IRB approvals were required before the grant funds would be released. One was at the Department of Justice and the other was at the Australian Ethics Board, to cover the work of Ramon Spaaij, a faculty member at Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia.

Altogether, we were required to have a total of eight IRB/correctional agency approvals to study seven terrorist inmates. All of these approvals were completed by October, 2013 and the funds were released in November, 2013. All told, it took more than a year to gain full approval to conduct the research. And then the real work began.

### *Correspondence and Interviews*

Terrorist inmates typically demonstrate contempt for state authority (contempt for government is by definition a core terrorist value) and that includes researchers sponsored by the government. One inmate failed to return our introductory letters to him. Two others refused to participate, fearing that it would jeopardize their ongoing legal appeals.

Yet something unexpected also transpired. We exchanged a total of 20 letters with two of the inmates during our recruitment phase. Both inmates asked a series of questions about their participation in the project and we answered all of them. Even though they had not signed the IRB-approved Informed Consent statement, in these letters the inmates voluntarily revealed details about their violent radicalization within al-Qaeda and the American white supremacy movement. *We did not solicit this information.* Rather, the inmates freely offered the information on their own accord. They did so—again—without signing the Informed Consent statement. Despite this, both inmates eventually refused to participate in the research; one would agree to participate only if NIJ could assure him of a release from prison and extradition to a Third World country. The other inmate gave no reason. These circumstances pose a dilemma for the academic study of terrorism.

On one hand, these inmates were not trifling figures in the history of American lone wolf terrorism. Instead, their crimes are representative of significant changes in the modus operandi of lone wolf terrorists. They willingly divulged information about their radicalization to us in a series of letters. Such information is rare and it can be used to achieve the primary goal of this project and any other on the subject: To explain how people *evolve* into lone wolf terrorists. Without an understanding of the trajectories radicalized individuals have followed, our ability to counter violent radicalization will be severely limited.

On the other hand, researchers are ethically bound to obtain a subject's consent before correspondence can be used for research purposes.

This dilemma is resolved in the following way: No material contained in the two subjects' correspondence with the authors is used this report, nor will it be used in subsequent publications. That material will remain confidential. Only publicly available open source material is used or will be used in writing about these two subjects. However, the correspondence is employed as a sort of survey instrument to detect those aspects of the subjects' life stories that appear to be most important to them, thereby allowing for new insight into the process of radicalization that goes far beyond open source information.

### *The Contradiction*

Two other BOP subjects signed the Informed Consent (let's call them inmate A and inmate B for brevity) and a series of letters was exchanged with them. Inmate A sent three letters followed by a six-hour interview with him at the U.S. Penitentiary, Leavenworth. Inmate B sent a 6-page letter detailing his background and the social pressures leading to his radicalization. But inmate B stopped short of agreeing to an interview based upon an apparent contradiction in the meaning of research confidentiality. This situation raises an issue worthy of consideration for the

Department of Justice because it has implications for future investigators who attempt to conduct primary research on terrorist inmates within the BOP. The contradiction is as follows.

The terms of confidentiality assured in our Informed Consent statement, approved by the BOP, stipulates that: “The letters and interview notes will be used *for research purposes and no other purpose* without your consent.” Our introductory letter to all inmates explicitly stated that we were researchers, and not members of the media or law enforcement. Inmate B signed the Informed Consent based upon his understanding of these assurances.

Then, prior to his interview, inmate B was asked by prison staff to sign the BOP’s News Interview Authorization form which contains a different assurance:

“I do hereby authorize the news media represented by this person [researcher Mark Hamm who had already stated to the inmate that he did *not* represent the media] to use any information gathered about me during this interview for any legitimate purpose. I further authorize the Bureau of Prisons and the Department of Justice, and their authorized representatives, to release to representatives of the news media *any documents or information* relating to allegations or comments made by me in this interview.”<sup>3</sup>

Researchers are required to follow IRB regulations. Media representatives are not bound by these requirements. Our Informed Consent says that the interview will be conducted for research only, and no other purpose. The Informed Consent further assures that, “We will not ask to see your prison record during the research study.” This language is inconsistent with the BOP News Media form which states that not only will interview information be used for purposes other than research (i.e., for the purpose of news making) but it also allows for a review of documents or information relating to “allegations or comments” made by the prisoner. Hence, the inmate is required to agree to two different terms of confidentiality: one for research purposes and another for media purposes.

This contradiction can be resolved by the creation and implementation of another BOP form expressly designed for researchers working within the constraints of human-subjects protection.

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons, News Interview Authorization, BP-A0233, JUN 10.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **List of Cases**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Terrorist Event</b>	<b>Source</b>
1) 1940-56	George Metesky	New York bombings	Spaaij
2) 1958	Izola Curry	King Assassination attempt	Hamm
3) 1960	Richard Pavlick	Kennedy assassination attempt	Hamm
4) 1963	Floyd Simpson	Alabama civil rights murder	Hewitt
5) 1963	Byron de la Beckwith	Evers assassination	Hewitt/Spaaij
6) 1968	James Earl Ray	King assassination	Hewitt
7) 1968	Valorie Solanas	Warhol assassination attempt	Hamm
8) 1968	Sirhan Sirhan	R. Kennedy assassination	Spaaij/Hewitt
9) 1970-75	Neal Long	Dayton murder spree	Spaaij/Hewitt
10) 1972-73	Mark Essex	New Orleans police killings	Spaaij/Hewitt
11) 1973-74	Muharem Kurbegovic	LA airport killings/nerve gas threat	Spaaij
12) 1974	Samuel Byck	Nixon assassination attempt	Hamm
13) 1975	Lynnette Fromme	Ford assassination attempt	Hamm
14) 1975	Sara Jane Moore	Ford assassination attempt	Hamm
15) 1976-80	Joseph Paul Franklin	Murder, bombing spree	Spaaij/Hewitt
16) 1978-95	Theodore Kaczynski	Bombing campaign	Spaaij
17) 1978	Dan White	Moscone/Milk assassinations	Hamm
18) 1980	Joseph Christopher	Buffalo killing spree	Spaaij/Hewitt
19) 1981	Claude Dallas	Idaho game warden killings	Hamm

20) 1982	Frank Spisak	Cleveland killing spree	Spaaij/Hewitt
21) 1982	Norman Mayer	Washington bomb plot	Spaaij
22) 1983	Hussein Kholya	Texas plane hijacking	Spaaij
23) 1989	Leroy Moody	Southeastern mail bombings	Spaaij/Hewitt
24) 1992-93	Rachelle Shannon	Western abortion attacks	Spaaij
25) 1993	Mir Aimal Kansi	CIA shootings	Spaaij/Hewitt
26) 1993	Michael Griffin	Pensacola abortion killing	Spaaij/Hewitt
27) 1993	Colin Ferguson	Long Island train shootings	Spaaij
28) 1994	Rashid Baz	New York shooting	Spaaij
29) 1994	Paul Hill	Pensacola abortion killing	Spaaij/Hewitt
30) 1994	John Salvi	Boston abortion killing	Spaaij/Hewitt
31) 1996	Larry Shoemake	Mississippi shootings	Spaaij
32) 1996-98	Eric Rudolph	Southern bombing spree	Spaaij/Hewitt
33) 1997	Ali Abu Kamal	New York shooting	Spaaij
34) 1998	James Kopp	New York abortion killing	Spaaij
35) 1999	Benjamin Smith	Midwestern killing spree	Hewitt
36) 1999	Buford Furrow	Los Angeles shootings	Spaaij/Hewitt
37) 2000	Ronald Taylor	Pennsylvania shootings	Spaaij
38) 2000	Rich Baumhammers	Pittsburgh killing spree	Spaaij
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39) 2001	Bruce Ivins	Anthrax attacks	Hamm
40) 2001	Clayton Waagner	Anthrax hoaxes	Spaaij
41) 2002	Luke Helder	Midwestern mail bombings	Spaaij

42) 2002	Hesham Hadayet	Los Angeles airport killings	Spaaij
43) 2002	Steve Kim	United Nations shooting	Spaaij
44) 2002	Charles Bishop	Florida plane attack	Spaaij
45) 2003	Dwight Watson	Lincoln Memorial bomb plot	Spaaij
46) 2004	Van Crocker*	Tennessee ricin plot	Hamm
47) 2006	M. Taheri-azar	Chapel Hill auto attack	Spaaij
48) 2006	Naveed Haq	Seattle shootings	Spaaij
49) 2007	Paul Evans	Austin abortion bombing	Spaaij
50) 2008	Marc Ramsey	McCain anthrax hoax	Hamm
51) 2008	Jim David Adkisson	Knoxville church shootings	Hamm
52) 2008	James Cummings	Maine dirty bomb plot	Drake
53) 2009	Scott Roeder	Wichita abortion killing	Spaaij
54) 2009	Carlos Bledsoe	Little Rock military shooting	Spaaij/Hamm
55) 2009	Michael Finton*	Springfield bomb plot	Hamm
56) 2009	Nidal Hasan	Fort Hood shooting	Spaaij
57) 2009	Richard Poplawski	Pittsburgh police killings	Hamm
58) 2009	Joshua Cartwright	Florida police killings	Hamm
59) 2009	James von Brunn	Washington Holocaust killing	Hamm
60) 2009	Keith Luke	Massachusetts killing spree	Hamm
61) 2009	Hosam Smadi*	Dallas bomb plot	Hamm
62) 2010	Joseph Stack	Austin IRS plane attack	Spaaij
63) 2010	M Mohamud*	Portland bomb plot	Hamm
64) 2010	James Lee	DC Discovery Channel attack	Drake

65) 2010	Yonathan Melaku	N. Virginia military shooting	Drake
66) 2010	Sandlin Smith	Florida mosque bombing	Hamm
67) 2010	Justin Moose*	N. Carolina abortion bombing	Hamm
68) 2010	Byron Williams	California police shootout	Hamm
69) 2010	John Bedell	Pentagon police shooting	Hamm
70) 2010	Casey Brezik	Missouri assassination attempt	Hamm
71) 2010	Antonio Martinez*	Maryland military bomb plot	Hamm
72) 2010	Farooque Ahmed*	Washington metro bomb plot	Spaij
73) 2010	Sami Hassoun*	Chicago bomb plot	Hamm
74) 2011	Khalid Aldawsari	Bush bomb plot	Hamm
75) 2011	Rezwan Ferdaus*	Pentagon bomb plot	Hamm
76) 2011	Jared Loughner	Tucson Giffords shootings	Hamm
77) 2011	Kevin Harpham	Spokane MLK bombing	Hamm
78) 2011	Jose Pimentel*	New York subway bomb plot	Hamm
79) 2011	Ralph Lang	Wisconsin abortion clinic attack	Hamm
80) 2011	Naser Jason Abdo	Fort Hood bomb plot	Hamm
81) 2011	O.R.O-Hernandez	Obama assassination plot	Drake
82) 2012	Sami Osmakac*	Tampa bomb plot	Spaij
83) 2012	Amine el Khalifi*	Capitol suicide bomb plot	Hamm
84) 2012	Wade Page	Milwaukee Sikh shootings	Hamm
85) 2012	Thomas Caffall	Texas A&M shootings	Hamm
86) 2012	Floyd Corkins	Washington DC shooting	Hamm
87) 2012	Adel Daoud*	Chicago bomb plot	Hamm



88) 2012	Francis Grady	Wisconsin abortion clinic arson	Hamm
89) 2012	Gregory Weiler	Oklahoma church bomb plot	Hamm
90) 2012	Quazi Nafis*	Federal Reserve bomb plot	Hamm
91) 2012	Raulie Casteel	Michigan highway shootings	Hamm
92) 2013	Derek Shrout	Alabama school bomb plot	Hamm
93) 2013	Jimmy Lee Dykes	Alabama kidnaping	Hamm
94) 2013	Christopher Dorner	Los Angeles shootings	Hamm
95) 2013	Matthew Buquet	Spokane ricin plot	Hamm
96) 2013	Jason Woodring	Arkansas power grid attack	Hamm
97) 2013	Paul Ciancia	LA Airport shooting	Hamm
98) 2013	Terry Loewen*	Wichita bomb plot	Hamm

\* FBI sting operation (except for Jose Pimentel, case 78, NYPD sting)

**Summary:**

98 cases

38 pre-9/11 cases (all authentic lone wolf cases)

60 post-9/11 cases

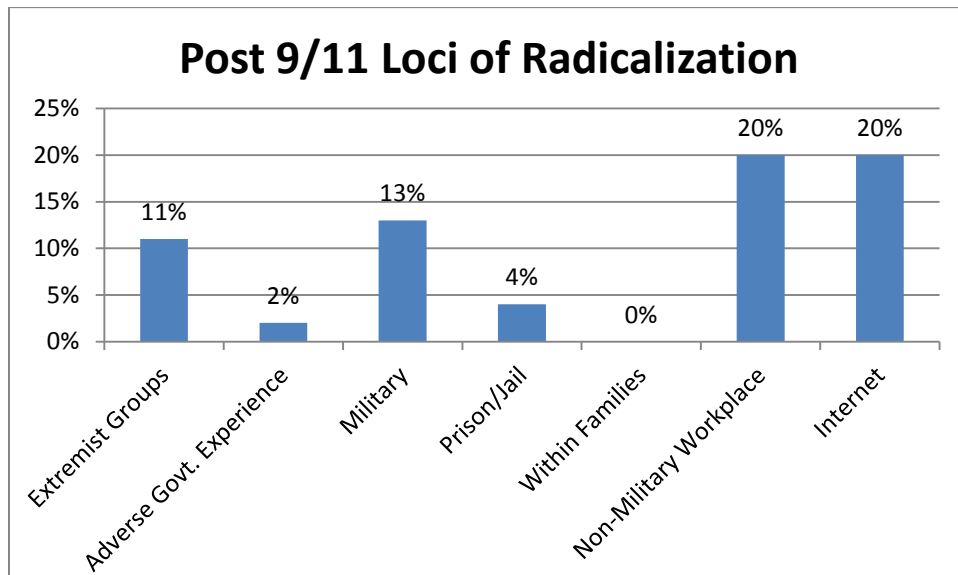
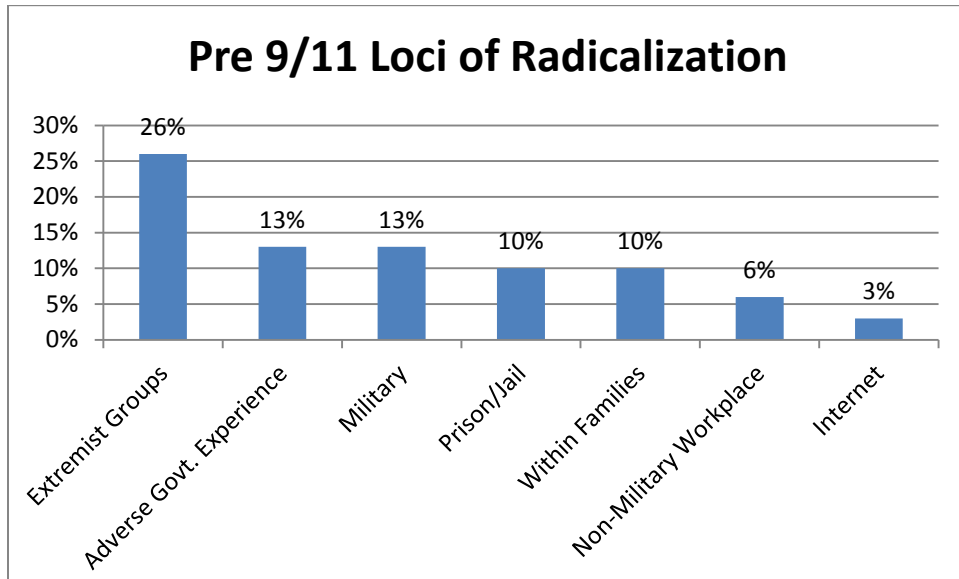
15 post-9/11 stings (not to be included in authentic lone wolf cases)

45 authentic lone wolf post-9/11 cases

Primary Sources: Hewitt, Christopher (2003) *Understanding Terrorism in America: From the Klan to Al-Qaeda*. New York: Routledge; Spaaij, Ramon (2012) *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism: Global Patterns, Motivations and Prevention*. New York: Springer.

## Appendix 4

### Loci of Radicalization for Lone Wolf Terrorists



## Appendix 5

### The Radicalization Model of Lone Wolf Terrorism

