

National Neighborhood Watch Newsletter



April 6, 2015

New Resource

***Waking in Oak Creek* Profiles Law Enforcement-Community Partnerships in the Aftermath of Violence**

Not In Our Town's new film [Waking in Oak Creek](#) documents the powerful law enforcement and community response to the shooting at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin on August 5, 2012. After six Sikh worshippers were killed and Oak Creek Police Lieutenant Brian Murphy was shot 15 times by a white supremacist, the town leadership worked together to cultivate new bonds with the Sikh community and guide the community forward toward healing. A screening of *Waking in Oak Creek* can help launch important community dialogues about the need to:

- actively respond to hate and intolerance;
- build bridges between different groups in the community; and
- engage youth in building safe, inclusive communities.

Through the [Working Together for Safe, Inclusive Communities](#) collaboration with the COPS Office, DVDs of the film are available **free of charge** to the public, together with resources to help plan and lead screenings and training workshops. Additional resources include a [Guide for Community Screenings](#), an [Educator Lesson Plan](#), [outreach tools](#), and an [Evaluation Survey](#), among many others.

[Watch the trailer, request a free DVD, and download supplemental screening materials here.](#)

For more information or assistance organizing a community screening or training, please contact Not In Our Town at info@niot.org or [510-268-9675](tel:510-268-9675).

Homeland Security Begins at Home

By Janet Hawkins

Homeland Security: A Hometown Responsibility

Since the dawn of civilization, international conflict has led to the rise and fall of numerous nations. Yet, while borderlines have been drawn, erased, and redrawn countless times, one constant remains: during times of instability, governments must be prepared to counter domestic terrorism. Disloyal "insiders" pose a major threat to national stability, as Henry, 1st Duke of Lancaster, so aptly stated while reflecting on a battle victory that had taken place during the Hundred Years' War. The said event occurred on November 7, 1345, outside the French town of La Reole, where Henry was met by pro-English residents who pledged to deliver the town to him. The next day, a feint attack successfully drew the French garrison away from the main gate, which the conspirators opened to the English. In today's technologically advanced, global society, terrorists operating on home soil pose a very real and ever more deadly threat. Here in America, thwarting the efforts of those bent on inflicting death and destruction has become a complex undertaking as terrorist networks expand to include international organizations such as Al Qaeda and ISIS, their U.S.-based affiliates, and sympathizers, as well as domestic groups and unstable individuals with their own agendas of hatred. Just as doctors treat cancer, every infected "cell" must be neutralized to eradicate the terrorist menace. Accomplishing this mission requires unwavering commitment from all sectors—federal, state, and local government; first responders; businesses; community organizations; as well as individual citizens. Crime watch groups, which routinely train volunteers to identify and report suspicious activity and actively partner with law enforcement, are a key asset in this effort. Today, Neighborhood Watch groups are sharing their expertise to ensure community safety by adding domestic terrorism awareness, prevention, and response training to their agendas.

The Adversary Within: Homegrown Hatred

Anyone who has flown commercially or attended a Major League baseball game recently has probably seen posters promoting the If You See Something, Say Something™ campaign. This familiar U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) slogan reminds us that everyone plays a key role in terrorism prevention. In recent years, vigilant citizens have helped foil several high-profile terrorist plots by reporting suspicious activities. Examples include a 2008 case in which six men were convicted of engineering a plot to kill U.S. Army personnel at Fort Dix, New Jersey. A 16-month investigation into the case was triggered by a call from a Circuit City clerk asked to copy a customer's videotape. Disturbing footage of the six subjects firing weapons and calling for jihad prompted the employee to contact the FBI. Court proceedings in the Fort Dix case revealed that the defendants had trained in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, a half-hour drive from the base, reinforcing data that indicate most terrorists "act locally." According to a 2006 National Institute of Justice-funded study of 60 terrorist-related incidents that have occurred in the past 25 years, nearly half (44 percent) of all subjects examined lived within 30 miles of their targets. Furthermore, due to subjects' "new immigration status, lack of transportation, lack of knowledge of the urban landscape, or a desire to avoid attention," 92 percent of all preparatory acts investigated occurred within 28 miles of proposed target sites. Of course, tragedies such as the September 11, 2001, attacks also support the fact that terrorist acts can occur anywhere, at any time. Especially volatile and unpredictable are "lone wolves," unaffiliated individuals who commit violent acts, often in support of a recognized terrorist group's ideologies. Speaking to the Council on Foreign Relations last October, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson warned of the growing danger posed by "[t]hose who did not train at a terrorist camp or join the ranks of a terrorist organization overseas, but who are inspired here at home by a group's social media, literature or extremist ideology." Examples include Major Nidal Hasan, an Army psychiatrist turned radical Islamist who shot and killed 13 people at Fort Hood, Texas, in 2009.

Know Your Enemy

Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu's 2,500-year-old maxim applies today more than ever before. In order to prevent domestic terrorism, all community members, like foot soldiers on the battlefield, must learn to recognize potential warning signs. Both Neighborhood Watch and If You See Something, Say Something™ employ an "eyes and ears" approach, urging the public to report suspicious persons, activities, or objects to law enforcement. Witnesses are instructed to observe carefully in order to accurately describe to the authorities who or what they saw, when and where it occurred, and why it appeared suspicious.

Unfortunately, observers often hesitate to alert authorities because they are unsure what constitutes "suspicious" behavior or are afraid of being labeled "nosy neighbors." By teaching common warning signs, crime prevention volunteers can embolden community residents to speak up when "something is not quite right." Good training resources include the Neighborhood Watch Manual, which provides a list of activities that could signal criminal intent (e.g., a stranger peering into cars or windows; strange odors coming from a house, building, or vehicle) and offers tips for honing observation skills. For guidance specific to terrorist threats, the Counterterrorism Education Learning Lab (CELL) has produced a DHS-funded video that outlines these eight potential red flags:

1. **Surveillance:** Terror plotters often photograph, take notes, or make diagrams of proposed target sites. Be alert to persons who appear to be monitoring high-security areas.
2. **Elicitation:** Terrorists may attempt to glean information about targets via email, phone, or person-to-person communications.
3. **Security Tests:** Perpetrators may try to assess a target site's strengths and weaknesses by breaching barriers in order to gauge response capabilities.
4. **Supply Acquisition:** Plotters often store explosives, firearms and ammunition, and raw ingredients used to make incendiary devices. For example, Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh purchased 2,000 pounds of fertilizer and stockpiled seven crates of explosives, fuses, and blasting caps in a rented storage space.
5. **Funding:** Terror organizations commonly fund illicit activities via narcotics trafficking, robbery and burglary, counterfeiting, bogus charities, and sympathizer donations. Large cash payments, deposits, or withdrawals may also be suspicious.
6. **Impersonation:** DHS encourages citizens to be aware of individuals who don't seem to belong in the neighborhood, workplace, or business establishment, noting that terrorists may impersonate trusted authority figures (e.g., law enforcement officers, military personnel, or religious leaders).
7. **Rehearsal:** Trial or "dry" runs entail positioning accomplices and moving them around without committing the actual terrorist act.
8. **Deployment:** Perpetrators and supplies are put in position and the countdown begins. Authorities must be notified immediately to prevent imminent attack.

Although not on the CELL list, relinquishing personal possessions may be another warning sign. CNN reported that Fort Hood shooter Nidal Hasan gave away furniture to his neighbors on the morning before the incident. Likewise, several 9-11 hijackers are said to have sent money and belongings to family overseas prior to the attacks.

Keeping A Step Ahead

In the fight against domestic terrorism, knowing where perpetrators are likely to strike goes hand-in-hand with knowing what to look for. According to U.S. News and World Report, sites most at risk include military bases; nuclear, chemical, and natural gas plants; biolabs; rail and metro systems; and dams. Experts further warn that future targets might not be symbolic or universally recognizable but, instead, sites chosen solely based on the potential for large-scale impact. For example, the American Society of Civil Engineers lists more than 14,000 dams located within one mile upstream of city centers, where a single breach could endanger thousands of lives.

Neighborhood Watch groups should work with area government, law enforcement, and emergency management agencies to identify vulnerable targets within the community and determine potential threat types. An excellent resource for getting started is the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Ready campaign website, which provides descriptions of biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological hazards; cyberspace threats; and explosions, as well as step-by-step instructions to follow before, during, and after an attack.

Emergency responders can train Neighborhood Watch volunteers how to turn off gas lines and inspect and mark buildings following an incident. Group leaders may also want to contact fire and emergency medical service agencies to organize neighborhood hands-on training on topics such as CPR and disaster first aid, medical triage, and fire suppression. Another good resource is the Red Cross Training Support Center (1-800-RED-CROSS or support@redcrostraining.org), which offers first aid, CPR, and AED (automated external defibrillator) training to individuals, schools, and workplaces, as well as instructor (i.e., "train the trainer") certification.

As a group project, Neighborhood Watch participants may wish to assemble a community emergency preparedness kit that contains supplies needed for sheltering in place. The kit should contain water (one gallon per person, per day for at least three days), a three-day supply of nonperishable food and a can opener, dust masks, a battery-powered radio and NOAA weather radio, flashlights, extra batteries, a first aid kit, a whistle (to signal for help), moist towelettes and plastic bags for personal sanitation, wrench or pliers to turn off utilities, and local maps. The community kit should be stored in a cool, dry, and easily accessible place with items packed in airtight plastic bags. FEMA advises checking emergency supply kits periodically and replacing batteries, swollen or corroded food cans, and out-of-date first aid supplies and medications.

Neighborhood Watch volunteers should also encourage fellow residents to assemble their own family or individual emergency preparedness kits. In addition to the items found in the community kit, family kits might contain prescription medications and glasses, plastic utensils, food and water for pets, infant diapers and formula, important documents, sleeping bags or blankets, bleach (a disinfectant), a fire extinguisher, person hygiene supplies, mess kits, pencil and paper, books, and games or toys. A printable supply checklist is available from Ready.gov at www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/checklist_1.pdf.

The American Red Cross recommends that parents check with schools regarding emergency response procedures and provide administrators with updated contact information and names of caregivers authorized to pick up children. Advance planning is vital as telephone lines will likely be overwhelmed with calls following an incident.

Informed and Ready!

As DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson recently stated, the terrorist threat has become "more decentralized and more complex." Nonetheless, a growing list of foiled domestic terror plots reinforces the philosophy that enhanced security and increased public awareness are our nation's best defense.

Every American can join the fight to end terrorism, not by picking up arms, but by staying tuned to local and national news, remaining alert to his or her surroundings, and having an updated emergency plan.

Further Resources

[Counterterrorism Education Learning Lab](#)

[Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

[Federal Emergency Management Agency/Community Emergency Response Teams \(CERT\)](#)

[National Center for Disaster Preparedness](#)

[Ready Campaign](#)

[U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#)

¹Smith, Ph.D., Brent L. "A Look at Terrorist Behavior: How They Prepare, Where They Strike" May 2006, www.nij.gov/journals/260/Pages/terrorist-behavior.aspx#note2. Kingsbury, Alex, "Six Vulnerable Potential Terrorist

²Targets," March 29, 2010. www.usnews.com/news/slideshows/six-vulnerable-potential-terrorist-targets