

# ISIS/Extremism Community Briefing

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## Abstract

There has been significant media attention to recent suspicious activities in Missouri in the context of ISIS-announced intent to conduct attacks in the US. The Lawrence County Sheriff's Auxiliary is providing a community briefing on the potential domestic ISIS terrorism threat (and extremism generally) in the context of 4Q2015 suspicious activity in Missouri. The briefing consists of a talk, a question-and-answer session, and materials for additional reading/viewing. This is the working paper for the top-level presentation; the briefing is designed to mix and match sub-presentations going into greater detail on specific subjects.

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Invocation

#### Psalm 27:1-4 (NIV)

The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?

When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.

Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.

One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.

### 1.2 Legal

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### 1.3 Acknowledgements

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### 1.4 Overview

#### LCSA Intelligence Section

- Sheriff’s Auxiliary are non-peace-officer volunteers;
- Our mission includes providing emergency preparedness training;
- Our intelligence section performs research and analysis for LCSO;

- We also prepare briefings for LCSO, mutual aid partners, and public on request;

### Current Events

- Paris Attacks<sup>1</sup> and San Bernardino<sup>2</sup> caught public attention;
- 40% of Americans think we are losing 'War on Terror'<sup>3</sup>;
- Recent suspicious activity in Missouri:
  - Will it happen here?
  - How do we understand the threat of terrorism and ISIS?
- How does the community keep itself safe?
  - What should we be looking for?

### The Bottom Line

1. Some reports are due to heightened attention (this is *good*);
  - (a) They may not indicate a change from normal patterns;
2. *Some* of the activity is concerning or cannot be ruled out as concerning;
3. Likelihood of an attack in Lawrence County is *near zero*;
4. We may see preparatory activity in Lawrence County for attacks *elsewhere*;
5. If we can discover and interrupt plots, we can save lives;

In the wake of the Paris attacks, San Bernardino, and Orlando, the public has began paying much more attention to certain kinds of suspicious activity. This is good and is *exactly what law enforcement wants*, but it also means that there is a sudden and artificial spike in reported numbers of certain activities despite the fact that they have been going on the whole time (e.g. bulk phone purchases). The numbers therefore look much more alarming than they actually are.

Even taking that into account, however, some of the activity we are seeing is concerning and may indicate terrorist activity. It is highly unlikely that there will be a terrorist attack inside Lawrence County (or even Southwest Missouri) because we just are not strategically important. We will get into possible exceptions later on. It is more likely that we may see preparatory activity in Lawrence

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<sup>1</sup>November 2015

<sup>2</sup>December 2015

<sup>3</sup>ORC International 2015

County for attacks planned against higher-population/higher-value targets elsewhere. When Timothy McVeigh bombed the Murrah P. Federal Building, he obtained materials and built the bomb well outside the city. People saw some of this activity, but the importance was not understood until later [Michel and Harbeck, 2001].

If we can discover and interrupt plots in progress, we can save lives elsewhere. This is not something the Sheriff's Office or the Auxiliary can do on its own: community participation is required.

A good example of existing activity suddenly being reported are the bulk pre-paid phone purchases. Pre-paid cell phones can be used by terrorists either as remote detonators for explosives or as 'burner phones' for coordination, but there is also a thriving black market in pre-paid phones for more mundane purposes, some criminal and some merely shady (see pp 14).

### The Purpose of Terrorism

- Goal of terrorism: cause fear and mass-panic for an ideological purpose;
- When we overreact we do terrorists' work for them;

The precautionary approach toward the danger of terrorism is justified on the grounds that it represents a threat to our existence. In light of such a grave threat, policy-makers feel entitled to abandon traditional forms of evidence-based policy-making.<sup>4</sup>

The precautionary approach does not necessarily encourage cautious behavior. In its search for worst-case scenarios, it continually raises the stakes and fuels the demand for action.<sup>5</sup>

When we talk about terrorism, it is useful to define what we mean. Unfortunately, there are many definitions and there are often partisan reasons pushing one definition over another. By labeling someone a terrorist, it colors the political debate and mobilizes national/international legal machinery against them. In general, we want to label actions by our enemies terrorism and actions we take ourselves, not terrorism [TRAC, 2009, Joshua Sinai, 2008, Schmid, 2011]. In Southwest Missouri, we are familiar with some of this debate from the 2008 MIAC Scandal. We do not want to get too deep into the topic here, but recognize that the issue exists, *especially* when looking at terrorism statistics.

Terrorism researchers often refer to the Academic Consensus Definition of Terrorism Schmid ACDT 2011, 86-87 which we will get into further in a sub-presentation [Vought, 2016c, pp 4-5]. For now, we need to focus on the fact that terrorism is not just violence but *a campaign of violence for an ideological purpose* which it hopes to accomplish by causing *fear*.

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<sup>4</sup>Furedi, 2007, pp 72

<sup>5</sup>Furedi, 2007, pp 71

Much of the fear of terrorism is fear of the unknown: *Why are they doing this? Where will they strike next? Are they **crazy**?* Information and understanding counters fear.

Furedi, quoted above, discusses our tendency to give up evidence-based reasoning (the “probabilistic approach”) for emergency response and public policy because of the fear of terrorism. We start to believe that we cannot predict and cannot effectively respond to terrorism, so we start making irrational choices. The irony is that the kind of reasoning that this promotes does not necessarily make us safer [Furedi, 2007]. One of the goals of this briefing is to provide information to the public for making informed, rational choices.

## 2 Summary of Recent Events

This section summarizes selected recent terrorist attacks and how attacks have changed. Because of time constraints, we cannot get into much detail and will concentrate on Western countries, mainly the US.

### 2.1 Western Countries

#### Paris/Brussels

- 13 Nov 2015, 7 (+1) attackers at 6 sites in Paris;
- 129 dead, 352 wounded<sup>6</sup>;
- Hostage standoff at Bataclan Concert Hall;
- 30 dead, many wounded in related attacks in Belgium<sup>7</sup>
- Russian airliner and Beirut bombing same week<sup>8</sup>;
- New type of attack for ISIS<sup>9</sup>;
- Female suicide bomber<sup>10</sup>?

The attacks in Paris grabbed world attention. Joseph Fitsanakis argues in an IntelNews article that the other attacks the same week, particularly the Beirut bombing, were actually more important to intelligence analysis because of the sophistication required to penetrate a well-defended target [2015]. Regardless, the Paris attacks shocked people with the brutality of simultaneous attacks against soft civilian targets and a 3-hour hostage stand-off. The attackers combined military firearms, grenades, and suicide vests. The attacks and their aftermath also involved a female jihadist who cried “Help!” to draw police

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<sup>6</sup>Mullen et al., 2015

<sup>7</sup>BBC, 2016a

<sup>8</sup>Fitsanakis, 2015

<sup>9</sup>Jenkins, 2015, pp 4

<sup>10</sup>Sawer and Samuel, 2015

in, participated in a firefight with the police, and then may have detonated a suicide vest [Sawer and Samuel, 2015]<sup>11</sup>. As authorities closed in on one of the suspected terrorists, Salah Abdeslam, a Belgium terrorist cell may have accelerated a series of attacks planned for Easter, resulting in 30 dead and dozens wounded at the Zaventem airport and Maelbeek metro station[BBC, 2016a,b].

The Paris/Brussels Attacks may represent a new style of attack for ISIS, both in the combination of firearms and suicide vests, which is more familiar to Palestine or Chechnya, and in the fact that it was mainly organized and executed by French and Belgian nationals with coordination by a Syrian ISIS supporter rather than being entirely homegrown or entirely foreign-planned. The combination of remote support and local autonomy may have contributed to the scale and effectiveness of the attack [Jenkins, 2015].

The suicide attacks at the Paris stadium largely failed to hit their intended targets because one of the bombers was caught with the explosive vest going through security; it is thought that this caused all three attackers to detonate early [Robinson and Landauro, 2015]. One bomber's vest did not detonate, possibly because it was defective [Drozdiak et al., 2015].

An attack on a Mali hotel 20 November 2015 may demonstrate that Al Qaeda is trying to regain the world spotlight from ISIS [Barnard and MacFarquhar, 2015]. One-upsmanship between terrorist groups can drive escalation of world conflicts.

### Colorado Springs (Abortion Clinic)

- 27 November 2015 Planned Parenthood Clinic;
- 3 killed, 9 wounded in standoff, shooter surrendered;
- Claims he was “warrior for the babies”<sup>12</sup>;
- Not competent to stand trial<sup>13</sup>;
- Attack involved firearms and propane tanks<sup>14</sup>;

Initially, much of the information in this case was under seal. In April, the Colorado Supreme Court ordered the (redacted) arrest records, probable cause statement, and related affidavits released[Roberts, 2016]. This is allowing us to start building a detailed timeline, evaluate tactics and police response. Dear carried four rifles and a handgun to the shooting (other weapons in his car). He also arranged propane tanks outside with the intent of shooting them to make them explode (which did not work). After attacking individuals outside the

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<sup>11</sup>There is some question whether the woman, Hasna Ait Boulahcen, was wearing the suicide vest or a man who also died in the explosion [BBC, 2015a]. Either way, female jihadis actively participating in attacks is highly unusual in the West.

<sup>12</sup>Steffen, 2015, Benzel, 2016

<sup>13</sup>Grinberg, 2016

<sup>14</sup>El Paso County Arrest Records for Robert Lewis Dear [2015, pp 10 of PDF, in 'Attachment A']



Figure 1: Robert Lewis Dear mugshot (Colorado Springs Police Department)

clinic and then entering the clinic (which went into lockdown), he concentrated most of his attention on shooting at the police until they breached the building and forced his surrender. He also wore a homemade ballistic vest made of tape and silver coins [El Paso County Arrest Records for Robert Lewis Dear, 2015].

The attacker, Robert Dear, is attempting to plead guilty, claims he is a “warrior for the babies” and phoned a confession to a Denver news station from jail. On 11 May 2016, the Colorado 4th Judicial District Judge ruled that Dear is at least temporarily not competent to stand trial, to be evaluated in 90 days [Grinberg, 2016]. Because this case involves the death penalty and competency issues, even a full confession and guilty plea will not avoid a trial [Benzel, 2016].

In the phoned confession, Dear claims that he impulsively attacked the clinic because he believed that the feds were following him and wanted to choose a place for a “last stand”. This may be one explanation for why there were few casualties inside the clinic: if he was attempting to provoke a police response and commit suicide-by-cop, then the clinic personnel were not actual targets, but the police and, ultimately, himself.

Given the stated motive of abortion protest and the target of a Planned Parenthood clinic, this event qualifies as terrorism (see page 4) and is counted in our preliminary 2015 statistics [Vought, 2016d], at least given what we know now. That may change given further information, including the results of the competency hearing. The case will likely involve some of the same issues of mental illness and legal competency that the Aurora, Colorado shooting raised. Whether the event is defined as “terrorism” or not does not necessarily *make any difference to the victims*, but it does figure into our analysis of terrorism and violent radicalization as a phenomenon and potential solutions.

## San Bernardino

- 2 Dec 2015 at San Bernardino California Inland Regional Center;
- 2 attackers (husband and wife) killed 14, wounded 17;
- Mass shooting, built bombs, but **did not detonate**;
- Attackers killed in later gunfight with police<sup>15</sup>;
- Wife, Tashfeen Malik, lied on “fiancé” visa;
- Marriage may have been to further the plot<sup>16</sup>;

The Inland Regional Center is a medical center for the disabled in San Bernardino. The only motive for selecting that particular target appears to be that the husband, Syed Farook, worked there. The attack occurred during an employee Christmas party. The attackers opened fire, caused casualties, and then left. The attackers were killed in a later car chase and gunfight with the police [BBC, 2015b]. Bombs were found at the scene which failed to detonate and the attackers had a large cache of ammunition and explosives in their garage indicating that they had been planning other attacks [Serrano et al., 2015].

The wife, Tashfeen Malik came to the US on a K-1 “fiancé” visa and apparently lied on her background check application. Malik showed evidence of possible terrorist training and may have been the mastermind of the plot. It is unknown whether Farook radicalized first and sought Malik or she radicalized him. In any case, it appears that attacks had been planned for years [Serrano and Bennett, 2015, Serrano et al., 2015]. Malik wore traditional Islamic garb, including a burqa, however, her behavior was extremely unusual: she apparently did not show her face or hair even to male relatives and no one in the local mosque knew her [Qazi, 2015].

Enrique Marquez, Jr., a friend of Syed Farook, has been indicted on federal charges of conspiracy and material support of terrorism, and specifically with making the straw purchase of two firearms used in the shooting [Helsel, 2015]. Federal prosecutors allege that Marquez had connection to jihadi terrorists and that he plotted to participate in attacks in 2011 and 2012 but backed out when another group of jihadists was arrested in California [CBS, 2016a].

This attack, like Paris, seems to be a hybrid style, planned to use firearms and explosives, possibly initiated overseas but carried out by a US husband-wife team with a high degree of autonomy.

## Rochester New Year’s Eve Plot

- 31 Nov 2015 plot to attack sportsbar with machete;
- Alleged ISIS foreign fighter aspirant asked to prove himself;

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<sup>15</sup>BBC, 2015b

<sup>16</sup>Serrano and Bennett, 2015

- FBI sting involving multiple paid informants<sup>17</sup>;
- Accused may be mentally ill<sup>18</sup>;
- FBI bought weapons, may have provided plan, drove him to site<sup>19</sup>;
- *May* represent a new twist in tactics;

Emanuel Lutchman, a prison convert to Islam, was arrested in connection with an alleged plot to attack a Rochester, NY sportsbar on New Year’s Eve with a machete and knife [Reuters, 2015b]. The plot is difficult to analyze because it involved a non-traditional FBI sting<sup>20</sup>. The suspect allegedly contacted a “foreign person” who might have been an ISIS supporter and said that he wanted to go to Syria to be a foreign fighter. The overseas contact then asked the suspect to ‘prove himself’ by attacking a US target. Most of the people with whom the suspect interacted were actually paid criminal informants [Kalpec, 2015]. It is asserted that the accused was mentally disturbed, medicated, and barely competent [AP, 2016]. It is not known, therefore, how much of the plot was his idea and it is doubtful whether he could have done anything on his own (discussion in Osnos, 2016).

The Justice Department complaint is included in the bibliography; read it for yourself and come to your own conclusions, but notice that the FBI is careful to not say whether the overseas contact was actually an ISIS member or another informant (or possibly an intelligence asset from a different agency). That means that unless more information is revealed, we cannot effectively judge the nature of the plot to predict future threats. As of this writing, the criminal case has been adjourned until June 2016[Craig, 2016].

**However**, if the plot actually came from an overseas ISIS contact, it may signal a change in ISIS tactics. In many previous cases, ISIS attempted to get people who aspired to be foreign fighters to Syria without requiring them to commit US violence. Three-fourths of the foreign fighter aspirants arrested in the US are not involved in any plans for domestic violence (e.g. CNS, 2014). *If* ISIS is changing its approach to foreign-fighter aspirants, it **may** signal an increase in related domestic violence against dispersed, *extremely difficult to predict* targets.

This is not the first FBI sting of ISIS supporters in Rochester. Mufid Elgeeh recently plead guilty to Material Support of Terrorism charges [Craig, 2015].

### Philadelphia Attack on Police Officer

- 7 January 2016, attacker ambushed officer at point-blank range;

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<sup>17</sup>Reuters, 2015b, Kalpec, 2015

<sup>18</sup>AP, 2016

<sup>19</sup>Kalpec, 2015

<sup>20</sup>“Non-traditional sting” is a Human Rights Watch’s term [2014] for the phenomenon, which has been criticized as raising civil liberties concerns, but also, for our purposes, making threat analysis difficult because it is difficult to discern what the motives of the suspect were versus what was suggested to them by the FBI.

- Fired 13 shots into vehicle at stoplight, critically wounding officer;
- Officer got out of vehicle and returned fire, attacker wounded, arrested;
- Edward Archer claims attack was for ISIS;
- Investigation ongoing for three possibly connected individuals<sup>21</sup>;

This is a recent event with a still-developing investigation. The shooter claims involvement with ISIS but has not made clear *how* he is involved or if he was coordinating with other ISIS members. There are **unconfirmed** reports that Archer was a prison-convert and in social media-contact with ISIS. The police are looking for three individuals who may have been radicalized at the same time<sup>22</sup>. Archer travelled to the Middle East previously and authorities do not know how he paid for it (he is unemployed).

This may or may not connect with ISIS' request to Lutchman that he prove himself by committing an attack prior to joining ISIS in Syria, but it does look like Archer expected to get away with the attack and was extremely surprised when his victim fought back with skill and courage. Archer has been arraigned for attempted murder and trial is ongoing[CBS, 2016b].

### Terrorists Often Lack Skill In Explosives

- Propane tanks did not explode at Planned Parenthood shooting;<sup>23</sup>
- One Paris attacker's vest did not detonate<sup>24</sup>;
- Explosives failed to detonate in San Bernardino<sup>25</sup>;
- Boston Marathon Bombing only killed 3<sup>26</sup>;
- Times Square Bomb did not explode<sup>27</sup>;
- Attempts to buy explosives often result in arrests;
- Terrorists often resort to more crude methods;

Contrary to what people may believe, terrorists outside of the Middle East have proved only very rarely to have any skill with using bombs. Reports from Paris lead us to believe that few people were actually killed by explosives and the majority died from gunshot wounds [Drozdiak et al., 2015]. In San Bernardino the homemade explosives (the couple manufactured a dozen pipebombs) failed

<sup>21</sup>Esposito et al., 2016

<sup>22</sup>But see statement from FBI Director that Archer acted alone [Roebuck, 2016].

<sup>23</sup>El Paso County Arrest Records for Robert Lewis Dear [2015, pp 10 of PDF, in 'Attachment A']

<sup>24</sup>Drozdiak et al. [2015]

<sup>25</sup>Serrano et al. [2015]

<sup>26</sup>CNN [2015]

<sup>27</sup>Baker and Rashbaum [2010]

to detonate [Serrano et al., 2015]. The 2010 Times Square car bomb failed to detonate [Baker and Rashbaum, 2010]. The 2013 pressure cooker bomb used at the Boston Marathon killed only three [CNN, 2015].

Explosives require bravery and skill to construct. Despite a wealth of guidance on constructing bombs [Serrano et al., 2015] many terrorists are rightly not confident in their abilities to actually follow the instructions correctly. In some instances this has led to a great boon for law enforcement. In two Kansas based incidents and one in Missouri would be bombers searching for bombs have allowed the FBI to trap them in sting operations [McLaughlin, 2013, Stanglin, 2015, Wallis, 2014].

Guns have proven to be more reliable than explosives. The San Bernardino attackers killed 14 people with firearms while the Paris-based attackers killed 128 people, mostly with firearms. For US citizens, whether they be homegrown violent extremists or domestic terrorists, acquiring a firearm is possible. For non-US citizens entering the country on ISIS' behalf acquiring a firearm can be more difficult and therefore they may attempt a more risky maneuver such as acquiring the materials for an explosive device, or use simpler weapons.

Simpler weapons can be just as dangerous. A Canadian ISIS supporter struck two Canadian soldiers with a car in October 2014, killing one [Austen, 2014]. On September 18, 2015 Islamic Uighur separatists armed with knives killed 50 Chinese coal miners [Reuters, 2015a]. A New York based ISIS-inspired attacker was killed while trying to strike NYPD officers with a hatchet [Dienst, 2014].

The approach of combining firearms (or knives, etc) *and* explosives has two major advantages: 1) the firearms provide a fallback if the explosives fail to detonate, and 2) they can be used to create a “double-tap” attack by provoking emergency responders with the initial violence and then detonating the explosives to kill arriving police and paramedics.

## 2.2 Missouri Activity

### Safya Roe Yassin

- Buffalo, MO resident arrested 18 February 2016;
- Christian convert to Islam;
- Charged with “communicating threats of violence over the Internet”;
- Allegedly re-tweeted from ISIS accounts, including threats against FBI agents;
- Trial set for September;

According to the Criminal Complaint, a complaint call was made regarding Yassin (see Figure 2) in January of 2015 by an individual that Yassin had converted to Islam who became concerned that Yassin had begun trying to rally support for ISIS. Examination of social media accounts showed posts threatening



Figure 2: Safya Roe Yassin (photo: Greene County Jail)

two FBI agents, sharing a link containing personal information (address, phone numbers, photos, credit card information) of US military personnel, posts of photos of children waving an ISIS flag, etc. [Lane, 2016]

Yassin has been indicted by a grand jury and a jury trial is scheduled for September. The case highlights the use of social media to spread Islamic extremism, a topic we will get into in more depth in the “What does US terrorism look like and how do we find it?” sub-presentation [Vought, 2016a]. It also involves 1st Amendment issues: where is the legal line between free speech and speech inciting violence? We will get into the standards for Suspicious Activity Reports and the “imminent lawless action” standard in the “Considerations For Suspicious Activity Reporting” sub-presentation[Vought, 2016e]. Thomas Gounley also discusses some of these issues in a News-Leader report[2016].

### **Pulaski County Explosives Cache**

- Found 17 October 2015 by deer hunter in Mark Twain;
- Explosives buried in box in woods;
- Unstable, disposed of in place;
- Commerical-grade, not military or recreational;
- No suspects as of the time of this writing<sup>28</sup>;
- Pulaski County Sheriff: not likely connected with terrorism<sup>29</sup>;

In October a hunter, who is a combat engineer from Fort Leonard Wood [KY3, 2015b] discovered a cache of explosives in the Mark Twain National Forest. The improvised explosives were so dangerous that the bomb squad detonated them in place. In statements, law enforcement officials surmised that the explosives were not recreational in nature, meaning that they were not homemade fireworks[KY3, 2015a]. The hunter regularly used that area as a seasonal campsite, so that creates a potential time-frame for when the items were buried.

Since the original KY3 report was spread in social media, the Pulaski County Sheriff posted a clarification that there was no known connection between the explosives cache and terrorism, that they were commercial-grade, not military, and that the agencies examining the residue did not find it likely that they were intended for terrorist use [KY3, 2015b]. However, we do not have credible information to tell us who made these bombs or why.

There are many posts and articles about this issue, but they primarily rehash the same information from the two KY3 reports. LCSA/LCSO are internally monitoring any further developments.

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<sup>28</sup>KY3, 2015a

<sup>29</sup>KY3, 2015b

## Propane Tank Thefts

- Nov-Dec 2015 multiple thefts, ~50 tanks, multiple locations;
- Lee’s Summit, near Kansas City;
- 2 CVS locations, 1 BP<sup>30</sup>;
- Propane tanks can be incendiary/explosive devices;
- Propane explosives tend to work poorly;

In late November and early December approximately 50 propane tanks were reported stolen in the Lee’s Summit area near Kansas City. Fears quickly rose that these tanks were connected to a number of mass purchases of pre-paid cellular phones across Missouri [KFOR, 2015]. Law enforcement investigations were launched in both instances to determine if there were connections to illicit activity and to terrorism [Canon and Thomas, 2015].

Although propane tanks *can* be used in destructive devices, they often work poorly. Propane bombs at Columbine did not explode [Cullen, 2009]. The Times Square bomb did not explode [Baker and Rashbaum, 2010]. Robert Dear’s propane tanks did not explode [Conlon et al., 2015]. A rumour circulated on Facebook™ that an FBI agent warned a Missouri Sheriff’s Department that the propane tanks would be used to blow up dams and bridges around Christmas [LaCapria, 2015]. There was no such warning, portable propane tanks are not powerful enough to demolish dams or bridges, and clearly, no such attack occurred.

## Bulk Cell Phone Purchases

- Reports of late-night bulk purchases of prepaid phones;
- Macon, Columbia, Jefferson City, Lebanon, Ava, Jackson and Cape Girardeau;
- Ranging from a dozen to 60 phones at a time<sup>31</sup>;
- Cell phones *can* be used as remote detonators<sup>32</sup>;
- **More often** legal, shady, or more mundane criminal uses;

**Fact 1.** *Ziyad Khaleel purchased satellite phone used by bin Ladin in Columbia Missouri*<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup>KFOR, 2015

<sup>31</sup>Rusell and Hartley [2015]

<sup>32</sup>e.g. the 2004 Madrid BombingsAP [2007]

<sup>33</sup>Kohlmann, 2003

There were a substantial number of reports of bulk pre-paid cell-phone purchases in Missouri during the last quarter of 2015. Retailers are typically limited by manufacturer contracts to selling 3 or less at a time. These purchases usually occur late at night when the purchaser is hoping that the clerk on duty will either bend the rules or is not aware of them. Purchasers bought or attempted to buy from a dozen to sixty at a time. In some cases, the purchase was immediately reported and the police were able to question the individuals shortly after. In other cases the reports were turned over to the FBI for investigation [Russell and Hartley, 2015].

Law Enforcement has asked the public in the past to report such activity because cell phones can be used as remote detonators for explosives. Cell phones were used as remote triggers in the 2004 Madrid Bombings, for instance, and the discovery of a phone in a device which failed to detonate led to one of the major breaks in the case [AP, 2007]. However, such use by terrorists is rare. Pre-paid phones are often referred to as 'burner phones' because they can be used to coordinate organized crime (including terrorism and the drug trade) and are difficult to trace. An organization can use one phone for a short period, throw it away, and use another one. Pre-paid phones and pre-paid phone *cards* can also be used in money laundering [Financial Action Task Force, 2010]. They can be used for illicit communications inside prisons [Senate, 2009]. Although Ziyad Khaleel did purchase a phone in Missouri for Osama bin Ladin, it was an ~\$8,500 satellite phone, not a late-night Walmart purchase [Kohlmann, 2003].

On the other hand, there are other uses for the phones which may be legitimate, fraudulent, or merely shady. Individuals will sometimes attempt to bulk purchase phones for legitimate gift, business, or charity uses to get around complicated phone contracts. Manufacturers sell the phones substantially below their market value in hopes of making the money back on selling airtime, accessories, and services. As a result, there are thriving grey and black markets in buying up the phones, unlocking them, or otherwise bundling and reselling them at a profit. The phones are often moved out of state or even out of country where unlocked phones can be sold at a premium. These phones get mixed with the black market in stolen phones or phones bought fraudulently on contract (still owned by the carrier), sometimes in connection with scams involving fake or used airtime cards.

The phone industry attempts to combat this traffic and has an informational website [TracFone, 2016]. The authors of the site are clearly self-interested parties (manufacturers prefer customers buy new rather than used phones), but the general problems described with fraud and crime from illicit phone-trafficking are real and consumers need to be aware of potential scams when buying used, rebundled, or unlocked phones. Industry civil suits against phone traffickers are common and yield multi-million dollar awards [e.g. T-Mobile, 2011].

In the past, Law Enforcement has been too quick to level terrorism charges on purchases like this. When the authorities failed to prove the charges, they had to be dropped [Lagorio, 2006]. Law Enforcement tends to monitor the activity but be more cautious about such arrests since then.

In any case, the majority of these purchases are not indicative of a terrorist threat. Authorities still encourage the public to report them for other reasons and *some of them* may indicate a more serious threat. Certain characteristics to the transactions tend to trigger more careful threat analysis.

### Possible Scouting Incidents

- Suspicious activity around major events or facilities;
- e.g. Tourists asking unusual questions about Bagnell Dam<sup>34</sup>;
- Such activity may be preparatory to attack;
- Often difficult to sort threatening from non-threatening;
- Some of the 4Q activity probably concerning;
- DHS Video;

There have also been reports activities which may indicate pre-plot scouting of sites, events, or facilities, such as individuals taking pictures in unusual locations or asking suspicious questions about facilities. The Bagnell Dam incident has been circulated on Facebook™ where tourists were asking detailed and unusual questions about the Bagnell Dam including information on renting a boat to go to the foot of the dam [Wilson, 2015]. In many cases, Law Enforcement avoids discussing such reports because we do not want the targets of an investigation to know that their activity has been noticed or because there are privacy concerns with discussing the contents of the report: **often the content of the report can help a suspect identify who reported them.**

It can be difficult for authorities to sort threatening from non-threatening activity as well as to determine the protections the Constitution may extend to activities such as photography in specific circumstances [Kenworthy, 2012]. At least some of the activity reported in Missouri in recent months is concerning to the Sheriff's Office, but there is no evidence of an imminent attack, let alone an imminent attack in Lawrence County.

There are a number of instructional videos on suspicious activity reporting: what to look for, when to report it. The linked DHS video is one example. Many of them can be a bit dramatic, but it is worth taking the time to watch to get an idea of what sort of things to keep an eye out for. We will deal with some of the practical and legal issues involved in suspicious activity reporting, including civil liberties issues, in a separate sub-presentation.

### What Can We Expect?

- ISIS/jihadi recruitment will continue to expand over next few years;
- Low possibility of small-scale dispersed violence;

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<sup>34</sup>Wilson, 2015

- Foreign fighter recruitment can happen anywhere;
- Again, preparatory activity;

Although the overall chance of an attack in Lawrence County is near-zero, given the potential for arbitrary low-value target selection possibly indicated by the San Bernardino shooting, the New Year's Eve Plot, and the Philadelphia attack on the police officer, there is a small possibility of small-scale, apparently random Jihadi violence anywhere. This kind of violence happens at unpredictable intervals anyway, for a variety of purposes, such as the 2015 shooting at a Jewish Community Center by Aurora resident Frazier Glenn Miller, Jr. [Reese, 2015].

There is also a possibility in Lawrence County of radicalization through social media and foreign fighter recruitment. The case of Ariel Bradley, a former Chattanooga, Tennessee resident, raised Christian and homeschooled, who joined ISIS and travelled to Syria or of the individual known as 'Alex' in rural Washington state, raised Christian, and radicalized by ISIS, shows that this can happen (though uncommon) practically anywhere [Hall, 2015, Callimachi, 2015].

### Refugee Crisis

- 10,000 Syrian refugees to be resettled in next year;
- Some already settled near St. Louis<sup>35</sup>;
- Chance of threat from any individual very low;
- **But** we know that ISIS is trying to slip people through that pipeline;
- Problems in screening process<sup>36</sup>;

This author has written an in-depth paper on the refugee crisis [Vought, 2016b]; the paper is not an official publication or opinion of the Sheriff's Office or Sheriff's Auxiliary. The Sheriff's Office does have concerns about the level of cooperation with local law enforcement to be expected from the federal government on refugee resettlement and potential security concerns.

The Sheriff's Auxiliary does not expect that the average refugee will be a threat, but ISIS has announced its intention to try to slip operatives through the process and there are potential problems with the screening process, both in general and with respect to Syria specifically. The screening process was adjusted after two known terrorists were allowed into the US through the Iraqi refugee program, but that may or may not be enough with Syrian refugees due to a chronic lack of screening data [Jones, 2015, US House Homeland Security Committee, 2015].

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<sup>35</sup>KY3, 2015c

<sup>36</sup>Jones, 2015

### 3 What Can We Do?

#### Positive Steps

- Understand the problem;
- Continue to pay attention;
- Stronger Communities:
  - Community Policing works and can be effective against terrorism<sup>37</sup>;
  - Lawrence County Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) discussion;
  - Community emergency training and organization to respond to no-notice events<sup>38</sup>;

In the sub-presentation, “What does US terrorism look like and how do we find it?” we get into detail on overall terrorism trends, how it is changing, and what methods have worked to detect it. In short, though, community policing techniques have a high likelihood of making a difference. We also discuss changes in social media recruitment which are new to the ISIS threat [Vought, 2016c].

We need to have an ongoing discussion in Lawrence County (and throughout Region D) on a Suspicious Activity Reporting System. There are practical, legal, and moral concerns which need to be addressed by the community. The Sheriff’s Auxiliary is working on recommendations for county implementation, but it will require community participation and monitoring to be safe, efficient, and effective.

As we cannot prevent or predict every attack, wider community emergency response training is needed and will help us with many different threats, natural and man-made.

#### Community Emergency Training

- Active Shooter/Hostile Events are still rare;
- But we cannot predict when/where they will happen;
- Law Enforcement **cannot** protect every sportsbar in the country from machete attacks;
- Dispersed, trained responders in the community is best defense:

**Definition 2** (Survival Triad). 1. First Aid

2. Communications

3. Self-Defense

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<sup>37</sup>sub-presentation: Vought, 2016c

<sup>38</sup>Article:Vought, 2015

Deputies, police, and other emergency responders cannot always be where they are needed when they are needed. There are simply not enough of them. One of the reasons the Auxiliary exists is to disperse trained responders in the community to maximize the chances that someone will be there to help when disaster strikes. We can initiate a response and call for help. But there is no reason that most citizens cannot have basic skills for emergencies, what the Auxiliary calls the *Survivial Triad*.

### **Community Organizations**

- Lawrence County Sheriff's Auxiliary;
- Lawrence County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and MO-CERT 1;
- Barry/Lawrence Amateur Radio Emergency Services;
- Neighborhood watches;
- Lawrence County Community Organizations Active In Disasters(COAD);

Having skills and training is useful. Supporting or participating in community volunteer organizations is more useful because they can jump-start an *organized* response and coordinate with professional responders. Our volunteer organizations are also instrumental in bringing training and programs into the community. They also develop the relationships and trust which help us recognize, respond to, and prevent problems.

The Sheriff's Auxiliary supports the Sheriff's Office. Because of our mission, we require an investment in training which can be significant. Although we deploy in the field, we do have roles for people with physical limitations (such as myself), including staff positions, teaching, intelligence, and chaplaincy.

The Lawrence County CERT Team is a more generalist emergency response organization, its mission to do "the greatest good for the greatest number" in a disaster response. CERT participation requires the 21-hour CERT training, including light search and rescue, basic fire suppression, and first aid.

Neighborhood watches are a critical part of keeping our communities safe. Find out if you have one in your area or learn how to start one.

There are two planning committees of note in Lawrence County:

- The Local Emergency Preparedness Committee (LEPC) is comprised of elected officials, emergency managers, and business leaders, among others, working with the county emergency manager to assess the dangers that could be posed to the community through industrial hazards such as processing chemicals, and develop plans to mitigate and respond to the hazards.
- The Lawrence County Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) is comprised of emergency management officials, hospital representatives,

businesses, nongovernment organizations such as charities, the Red Cross, and faith based groups such as churches to organize, plan, and prepare plans to respond to disasters in Lawrence County.

We have a strong volunteer ethic in Southwest Missouri. The variety of organizations active in this community providing opportunities for personal service to people of all levels of skill and physical ability.

*Everyone is part of the solution.*

## 4 Conclusion

- Terrorism works through fear, fear of the unknown and uncontrollable;
- Better information and resilient communities reduces threat;
- There is cause for concern, but not panic;
- We have tools to respond;
- Resilience cannot be built top-down: it has to come from the whole community;

This handout and the other briefing materials provides a wide variety of references for further exploration. Go at your own pace. Ask questions. If needed, we can do this presentation again, particularly as the situation changes, and we can do presentations on specific topics.

## A Extra Slides

### Mohammed Cartoon Incidents

- Three related incidents:
  - Charlie Hebdo attack in France, 7-9 January 2015;
    - \* 12 killed<sup>39</sup>;
  - Garland, Texas Shooting 4 May 2015;
    - \* 2 attackers killed, one security guard wounded<sup>40</sup>;
  - Boston Beheading Plot June 2015
    - \* Knife-wielding attacker shot by police plotted to kill Pamela Geller<sup>41</sup>;

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<sup>39</sup>BBC, 2015c

<sup>40</sup>AP, 2015, Conlon and Sgueglia, 2015

<sup>41</sup>Sanchez et al., 2015

## B Changelog

- 0.9 First partial draft 2016-01-22;
- 1.0 First partial draft 2016-01-24;
- 1.01 Updated logo 2015-02-04;
- 1.1 2015-06-20 Updated for presentation in Springfield; Brussels, Orlando updates, editorial changes.
  - 1.1.1 2015-08-06 Added Robert Dear mugshot. Dist for 2016-08-09 presentation in Mount Vernon.
  - 1.1.2 2015-08-08 Made Seahorse default color theme instead of Beetle to be more resilient to room lighting.

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