

RESEARCH

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John Jay & Homeland Security — Perfect Together:

DHS Funds a Broad Range of Terror Studies

In addition to the crimes they commit to advance their ideological agenda, domestic terrorists on the far right commit a large number of offenses purely for profit or for personal motives, according to new research being conducted at John Jay under two grants from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The research by Professor Josh Freilich is one of two projects on terrorism that will each receive nearly \$300,000 in funding over the next three years. A member of the Department of Sociology and Deputy Executive Officer of the PhD program in Criminal Justice, Freilich is studying all violent and nonviolent crimes committed by right-wing extremists. His research is unusual, he notes,

in that it takes into account any offense perpetrated by a person who subscribes to that particular set of beliefs. Most investigations into domestic terrorism limit themselves to violent crimes that are ideologically motivated, observed Freilich.

"By collecting this information, we can examine whether or not there are patterns," and if "the nonviolent crimes can be used to predict the violent crimes," he said. "By looking at the nonviolent crimes, we've seen that these suspects from the far right commit a large variety of crimes, not just ideological crimes. That raises issues about whether the same theories can be applicable for both ideologically-motivated crimes and the non-ideologically motivated crimes."

These offenses include everything from refusal to pay taxes to the murder of law-enforcement agents. Far-rightists have been involved in 250 homicide incidents since 1990 that have claimed 520 lives, Freilich said. Twenty-eight of those killed were sworn personnel; 22 were extremists killed by law enforcement.



The Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, one week after it was destroyed in a right-wing terrorist bombing on April 19, 1995.

"Even if you take out the Oklahoma City bombing, you still have over 350 lives claimed by the far right," he said.

The other DHS grant will fund four studies. Money for these will be administered by Professor Peter Romaniuk of the Department of Government and an expert on international cooperation against terrorism. This research includes a book being written by Professor Itai Sneh on the history of torture; two studies by Professor Charles Strozier, one on fundamentalism and terrorism, and the other on prisoner radicalization; and Professor Charles Jennings's work on public safety and first responders. Both grants will use most of the money to provide stipends to

undergraduate and graduate students who are hired as research assistants. "It's actually a wonderful thing because there aren't an awful lot of opportunities for funding for master's-level students," said Romaniuk.

The grant includes funding to pay for curriculum development and extracurricular activities. Romaniuk is creating a student homeland-security club and a Web site for students on security issues. In addition, he and Sneh are developing graduate-level courses on homeland security and international relations.

"What the DHS is really trying to do," said Romaniuk, "is build the capacity of John Jay to produce bright young people in a minority-serving institution who go on to careers in homeland security. John Jay is really well placed. Our students come to John Jay because of its special mission, which is directly relevant to the mission of Homeland Security. Part of the reason we've been so successful with the grants is because DHS realizes this is a good place to invest."

Prompted by WTC Attacks, New Center Takes a Hard Look at Emergency Response

The creation of an institute that would study police, fire and EMS response to large-scale disasters — like John Jay's new Christian Regenhard Center for Emergency Response Studies — seemed imperative after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. But the need for one had been evident several years earlier — at least since the World Trade Center bombings in 1993, according to Professor Glenn Corbett, chairman of John Jay's Department of Protection Management.

In the year following the first attack on the Twin Towers, the trade journal *Fire Engineering*, which Corbett was associated with, devoted an entire issue to that disaster. The periodical soon received a call from the U.S. Fire Administration and Federal Emergency Management Agency asking if the agencies could use the set of articles as an official report, he noted.

Corbett recalled: "We said, 'You know what? *Fire Engineering* magazine is not in the business of being an academic center or national center for studying these things,' which obviously need to be examined a lot more broadly and deeply than a magazine could."

After 9/11, he continued, fire-fighting education, the design of buildings and the relationship among fire, police and command posts were all brought to the forefront. In collaboration with Sally Regenhard, who lost her firefighter son in the attacks and for whom the Regenhard Center is named, the College reached out to members of New York's Congressional delegation including then-Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Senator Charles Schumer and Representative Jerrold



With Fire Department officials and the parents of Christian Regenhard looking on, President Jeremy Travis formally launches the Center for Emergency Response Studies that is named for the firefighter who lost his life on 9/11.

Nadler. A Congressional earmark of \$175,000 provided the Center's initial funding.

The Center will create an archive of 9/11-related materials; provide small grants to faculty members and outside scholars for the development of working papers, and award travel grants so Corbett and the Center's Director, Professor Charles Jennings, can attend national meetings of constituent groups.

"By the end of the first year, we want to have in place a procedure for doing actual field investigations,

field documentation of an actual incident where one of our researchers would travel to an incident and collect data firsthand," said Jennings.

The Center will work with the Academy for Critical Incident Analysis (ACIA), another center located at John Jay that promotes and disseminates scholarly research on fires, earthquakes and other disasters.

"We sort of look at things that happen in emergencies with fire and police. ACIA looks more broadly at critical incidents," Jennings said.

In addition, Jennings pointed out, the Web site christianregenhardcenter.org will allow two-way communication. Users will be able to report and upload information to the Center, as well as access its archive. Once a "critical mass" of information is collected, he said, the Center will begin disseminating it through working papers and publications.

"Ultimately, we see ourselves putting on seminars that would kind of bridge academics and practitioners on some of these topics," he said.