The author(s) shown below used Federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of Justice and prepared the following final report:

Document Title:	**Terrorist Recruitment in American Correctional Institutions: An Exploratory Study of Non-Traditional Faith Groups Final Report**
Author(s):	**Mark S. Hamm, Ph.D.**
Document No.:	**220957**
Date Received:	**December 2007**
Award Number:	**Commissioned Report**

This report has not been published by the U.S. Department of Justice. To provide better customer service, NCJRS has made this Federally-funded grant final report available electronically in addition to traditional paper copies.

Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Terrorist Recruitment in American Correctional Institutions:

An Exploratory Study of Non-Traditional Faith Groups

Final Report

Principle Investigator:
Mark S. Hamm, Ph.D.
Department of Criminology
Indiana State University
812-935-6631
Mhamm@bluemarble.net

Sponsored by the National Institute of Justice
December 2007

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Terrorist Recruitment in American Correctional Institutions:

An Exploratory Study of Non-Traditional Faith Groups

Table of Contents

Executive Summary……………………………………………………………… 3

Chapter 1: Religious Conversion and Prisoner Radicalization………………………7

Literature Review…………………………………………………………… 11

A Brief History of Terrorist Recruitment in Prison…………………………. 28

Terrorism Kingpins: The Hidden Hand of Terrorist Recruitment………….. 32

Chapter 2: Methods and Context……………………………………………………. 37

The JIS Case Revisited……………………………………………………. 39

Implications of the JIS Case………………………………………………. 49

Chapter 3: A Mighty Precious Thing: Religious Conversion in Prison……………... 54

Crisis Converts……………………………………………………………. 55

Protection-Seekers…………………………………………………………… 62

The Searchers…………………………………………………………………… 67

Manipulating Converts…………………………………………………….. 91

Free-World Recruited Converts…………………………………………… 92

The Influence of Chaplains………………………………………………… 99

Chapter 4: The Terrorist Threat………………………………………………………. 101

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations……………………………………. 107

References……………………………………………………………………………. 122

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Executive Summary

Today, there are thousands of followers of non-Judeo-Christian faith groups in American correctional institutions. Research suggests that many of these prisoners began their incarceration with little or no religious calling, but converted during their imprisonment. According to the FBI, some of these prisoners may be vulnerable to terrorist recruitment. The purpose of this research is three-fold: (1) to collect baseline information on non-traditional religions in United States correctional institutions; (2) to identify the personal and social motivations for prisoners' conversions to these faith groups; and (3) to assess the prisoners' potential for terrorist recruitment. The study creates a starting point for more in-depth research on the relationship between prisoners' conversion to non-traditional religions and extremist violence.

The work is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 presents a comprehensive review of the literature bearing on the research objectives. This includes an historical overview of Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam, American versions of Islam that have played an important role in radicalizing prisoners through religious identity. The review shows that there are currently opposing views about Islam in prison. One side of the debate takes the position that the Muslim faith offers prisoners a viable path to rehabilitation. The opposing view claims that Islamic prisoners are a threat to U.S. security. Criminological evidence shows that the greatest danger to security is found in mutating forms of "Prison Islam." Other evidence indicates that the threat emanates from

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

dozens of high-profile terrorists who are already serving lengthy sentences in American correctional facilities.

Research methods and the social context of the analysis are presented in Chapter 2. Interviews were conducted with 15 prison chaplains, nine gang intelligence officials, and 30 prisoners incarcerated for violent crimes in Florida and California. Interviews with administrative chaplains focused on the number and types of non-traditional faith groups in their State, as well as the policies used to administer services. At the institutions, chaplains and prisoners were questioned on the process of religious conversion, including motivations for conversion. Risk assessments of terrorist recruitment were provided by gang intelligence officials. Special attention is given to an operational terrorist plot waged by a gang active at the California State Prison-Sacramento in 2004 and 2005 known as JIS (Jam'iyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheed). The JIS case is important because it represents an international post-9/11 trend toward homegrown terrorist cells whose members seek al-Qaeda's blessing for an attack. Central to JIS's transition to terrorism was its charismatic leader who successfully cemented the group's spiritual identity onto its gang history. The case demonstrates that under certain conditions American correctional institutions are indeed vulnerable to prisoner radicalization and terrorist groups that infiltrate, recruit, and operate inside the walls.

Chapter 3 presents results of the interviews with chaplains and prisoners. These prisoners had undergone religious conversions to the following faiths during their incarceration: traditional Islam, Nation of Islam, Moorish Science Temple, and Prison Islam; Hinduism and Buddhism; Native-American; Black Hebrew Israelism; Wicca; and white supremacy religions (Odin/Asatru and Christian Identity). While some conversions

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

are motivated by personal crisis and others by the need for protection, the primary motivation for conversion is spiritual *searching*. The study shows that friendship and kinship networks are important in explaining how people are recruited into new religious movements. For the vast majority of inmates who convert to Islam and other non-Judeo-Christian faiths, the experience is a positive one. However, from the crucible of good behavior comes the potential for ideologically-inspired criminality, especially in overcrowded maximum security prisons where there are few rehabilitation programs; a shortage of chaplains to provide religious guidance to searchers; serious gang problems; and more politically charged living areas than in lesser-custody institutions.

Chapter 4 examines the extent to which converted inmates may be vulnerable to radicalization and terrorist recruitment. Intelligence officers agree that most inmates are radicalized by other radical inmates, and not by outside influences. Radicalization occurs through a process of one-on-one proselytizing by charismatic leaders. Consistent with the JIS case, the most significant threat stems from fringe elements of Prison Islam. Gang dynamics have become extremely complex in recent years as members are now crossing racial lines to increase their numbers for protection. Former rivals, like the Crips and Bloods, are joining forces under Islamic banners. Neo-Nazis are becoming Sunni Muslims. Meanwhile, there is growing conflict within inmate Islam as various factions of the faith compete for followers, thereby pitting the Nation of Islam against Sunnis, Sunnis against Shiites, and Prison Islam against them all. Moreover, radicalization is developed on a prison gang model.

Conclusions and recommendations for criminal justice policy are offered in Chapter 5. The study's main conclusion is that the danger to U.S. security is not the

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

number of adherents to Islam, or to white supremacy religions, but in the potential for small groups of true believers to instigate terrorist acts upon their release from custody. Although terrorist recruitment in prison is a problem unlike any other faced by correctional administrators today, the study recommends that certain steps be taken to address the problem. Foremost among them is the hiring of chaplains in overcrowded maximum security prisons. Without them, radicalized prisoners are free to operate on their own, independent of religious authority to ensure moderation and tolerance.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

CHAPTER ONE

Religious Conversion and Prisoner Radicalization

.

Criminologists generally agree that religion offers prisoners a way to adjust to institutional life by providing natural means to cope with unnatural surroundings (Clear et al., 1992; Dammer, 2000; Johnson, 2004; Thomas and Zaitzow, 2004). In this way, religious involvement is viewed as an alternative to such common prisoner adaptations as passivity, withdrawal, conning, aggression, and predatory violence (Sykes, 1958). Because prisons are isolated and closed communities, non-traditional religions may appear more prominent in prison populations than they do in society; therefore, these faith groups represent greater membership options for prisoners than do traditional religions.

Those who know the most about the religious lives of prisoners—prison chaplains—agree that inmate conversions take place through friendship and kinship networks. This is especially so for non-traditional groups. Research shows that social networks are very important in explaining how people are recruited into new religious movements and organizations (Lofland and Stark, 1965). Chaplains also agree on another thing: That membership in a religious group does not necessarily equate with conversion. Individuals can be members of the same group in different ways and with varying degrees of commitment. Moreover, it is possible to participate in religious groups and rituals either with, or without, assuming a new way of life. Religious involvement among prisoners is a complex phenomenon, motivated by a host of social and psychological factors. These may be summarized as follows.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

1. The Crisis Convert. Some prisoners turn to religion for the same reason that many people do: To cope with personal crisis brought on by the loss of a loved one, divorce, illness, drug and alcohol addiction, or (and this is unique to prisoners) emotional trauma caused by the loss of liberty due to incarceration.

2. The Protection- Seeking Convert. Membership in a faith group may be motivated by an inmate's need for protection from theft and physical assault (the basis of "wheeling and dealing") through the establishment of a strong cultural identity within the prisoner subculture (Irwin, 1980).

3. The Searching Convert. Men and women who come to prison with little or no religious background are suddenly thrown into an environment where religious options abound, and where an estimated one in three inmates participate in some form of religious programming (Dammer, 2002). Due to their inexperience with sacred texts, rituals, and the disciplinary practices of religion, some prisoners will stumble in their attempts to find a faith group. They become searchers. Some join a religion out of haste, some affiliate with a group out of peer group pressure, and still others become serial joiners, jumping from one religion to another. The searcher is similar to Richardson and Stewart's (1977) notion of "conversion careers," a process whereby certain people on spiritual quests are able to assume and subsequently abandon a succession of convert roles.

4. The Manipulating Convert. Prisoners may "get religion" for manipulative purposes, such as the right to special diets, access to books, musical instruments, and religious gatherings (including contact with the opposite sex), or the privilege of wearing religious emblems, beads, beards, and/or various articles of clothing if one's religious

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

beliefs require it. Also, some inmates may hope that prison and parole authorities will view their religious involvement as an attempt to become moral, pro-social, and law-abiding (Dammer, 2002).

5. The Free-World Recruited Convert. Membership in a faith group may involve the influence of free-world religious leaders. Typically, prisoners engage in intensive interaction with these leaders, whose recruitment efforts involve prison visits, along with their distribution of newsletters and religious materials to prisoners, and the promise of after-care resources for them (jobs, housing, education, etc.).

Researchers have historically been interested in the authenticity of religious conversions. Studies suggest that the authenticity of prison conversions will vary. Some inmates will minimally involve themselves in the chosen faith; others' commitment will wax and wane; and still others undergo an authentic conversion. Authentic conversions involve radical personal change—a deep religious experience, one in which the prisoner is "slain in the spirit" through reflection, study, and ritual. As a result, prisoners acknowledge their criminal histories. They become penitent and attempt to redirect the focus of their lives. Authentic conversions are, as the term implies, genuine transformations of the soul. They entail "the displacement of one universe of discourse by another or the ascendance of a formerly peripheral universe of discourse to the status of a primary authority" (Snow and Machalek, 1984:170). Authentic conversions are thought to occur more often in maximum security prisons—with their stringent control mechanisms, scarce resources and programs, and a greater number of serious felons—than in lower-custody institutions with fewer controls, more leisure time activities, and fewer violent offenders (Thomas and Zaitzow, 2004).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

These presumptions form the basis of the first research question: Which of the aforementioned motivations are most often cited by chaplains, and by prisoners themselves, as the reason for joining a faith group? Most of the research attempting to explain religious conversion has relied primarily on such verbal accounts for data on the underlying cause of conversion (Snow and Machalek, 1984). This research tests the hypothesis that, no matter the motivation, joining a non-traditional religion provides a means for prisoners to take advantage of available resources to use their time in a more productive manner than prisoners who identify with, and internalize, more debilitating and aggressive forms of prison culture. Stated more sociologically, membership in non-traditional faith groups can have a humanizing effect on prison culture by reducing the salience of predatory, exploitative, and fatalistic behaviors normally required to survive.

There is also reason to believe the opposite: That religious conversion among prisoners leads to terrorism. In 2006, then-Attorney General Alberto Gonzales stated that "The threat of homegrown terrorist cells—radicalized online, in prisons and in other groups of socially isolated souls—may be as dangerous as groups like al-Qaeda, if not more so" (Gonzales, 2006). Yet there is no consensus on this issue; in fact, prison chaplains, along with a growing number of wardens and FBI agents, claim that there are few documented cases of U.S. inmates joining a terrorist group while in prison (Zoll, 2005). This position has been succinctly summarized in Congressional testimony by Paul Rogers, Past-President of the American Correctional Chaplains Association. "Regarding reports of prisons being infiltrated by terrorists or terrorist organizations via prison religious programs," he said, "these have been blown way out of proportion" (Rogers, 2003:3).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

These polar arguments set the stage for the second research question: What do correctional intelligence officials have to say about the potential for religiously-converted prisoners to become terrorists? A testable hypothesis is, therefore, that prisons may be fertile recruiting grounds for extremists who exploit prisoners' conversions to non-traditional faith groups.

Literature Review

While the research on religion in prison is vast and varied, few studies bear on the questions posed in this project. And with few rare exceptions—such as Lozoff's (1985) classic study of Hinduism in prison—research on non-Judea-Christian religions focus almost exclusively on Islam. The majority of these studies provide information on the rights, duties, and customs of Muslim prisoners (e.g., el-Hassan, 2002; Hill, 2002), or they deal with the Nation of Islam.

Islam in Prison: The Theology of Correction

That history begins with the religion known as Moorish Science Temple. Established by Nobel Drew Ali in Chicago in 1925, Moorish Science is a uniquely American form of Islam based on the idea that African Americans are descended from the Moors, a North African tribe whose practice of Islam dates to their invasion of Spain in 711 (Muhammad, 2005).[1] Their ancestors inhabited West Africa, where they established the Moorish Empire that ultimately ruled most of Europe and Asia. Many blacks who were later brought to America as slaves were Muslims; therefore, Nobel

[1] Noble Drew Ali (born Timothy Drew in 1886 on a Cherokee reservation in Sampson, North Carolina), first established the Canaanite Temple in Newark, New Jersey, in 1913. In 1916, a dispute led to a division within the Canaanite community. One faction stayed in Newark, while Ali and his followers moved to Chicago, where they founded the first Moorish Science Temple in 1925 (*Ibid*.).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Drew Ali argued that the original religion of African Americans is Islam, not Christianity. Slavery would erase that cultural memory, however, and blacks came to accept the label of "Negro" and, as a result, the conditions of slavery (Berg, 2005). This never would have happened to black people, Nobel Drew Ali argued, had they remembered their identity as Moors.

For historical evidence, Nobel Drew Ali cited the "Black Laws of Virginia," which exempted, among others, Moroccan nationals (or Moors) from slavery. In 1774, the founding fathers declared only "Negros" subject to slavery; legally, then, Moors could not be slaves. According to legend, George Washington, a slave owner, was aware of the precedent established by the Black Laws and cut down the Moorish red flag flown by his slaves, so as to hide their identity (*Ibid.*). This story provided Nobel Drew Ali with the basis of his theodicy—a theology of correction. The Moroccan star and crescent, fezzes, the Moorish flag, and the correction of "El" or "Bey" to the surname (meant to signify Moorish descent)—all came to symbolize the Moorish identity in America and membership in the Moorish Science Temple.

The Nation of Islam evolved from Moorish Science mythology, yet with a stronger emphasis on race. Founded in Detroit, Michigan, by an enigmatic figure named Wali Fard Muhammad (also known as Wallace Dodd Ford) in 1930, the Nation of Islam was built on the idea that African Americans are descendents of the original Black Humanity, who later produced the wicked white race. Fard, who claimed he was born in Mecca in 1877 (though some scholars place his birth in Southern California in 1896), was probably a white man of Lebanese descent. Fard arrived in Detroit in 1929 after serving a three-year sentence in San Quentin for selling narcotics to an undercover policeman. Fard

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

began to attract the attention of poor blacks as he walked the streets selling fabrics and expounding a novel religious and political message which blended tenants of traditional Islam with anti-white assertions (Lee, 1996). Fard presented himself as "The Prophet" and the reincarnation of Nobel Drew Ali, preaching that American Negroes were actually Asiatic-African descendents of the lost tribe of Shabazz from Mecca. According to Fard, these Negroes were "the cream of the planet," which had been captured, exploited, dehumanized, and enslaved (Muhammad, 2005). Fard had come to the black neighborhoods of Detroit to resurrect what he called "The Lost-Found Nation of Islam in the Wilderness of North America" (Berg, 2005). Like Nobel Drew Ali, Fard's theology was one of correction: For Negroes to struggle against the white racism they encountered in everyday life, they must have a history that reversed the traditional account of African contributions to civilization. They must also have independence and a culture that stresses preparedness for protection of self and honor. But most importantly, they must return to their ancestral faith: Islam.

When Wali Fard Muhammad disappeared in 1934, the Nation of Islam was inherited by his tireless and loyal lieutenant, Elijah Muhammad (formerly known as Robert Pool). The Detroit temple now counted some eight-thousand members; and when Elijah Muhammad moved to Washington, D.C., in 1935, he opened a second one there. Muhammad moved to the south side of Chicago in 1940 where he opened a third temple; a fourth was opened in Milwaukee the same year. Then in 1942, the Nation of Islam began its first prison ministry in Petersburg, Virginia (Evanzz, 1999).

By this time Elijah Muhammad was a prisoner himself. In 1942 he was sentenced to a four-year term at the federal penitentiary in Milan, Michigan, for refusing induction

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

into World War II. While in prison, Elijah Muhammad engaged in a deep study of Islam's history and culture. He also observed that through prisoner labor and cooperation, the Milan facility was able to produce food to meet the needs of the inmate population. Upon his release in 1946, Muhammad returned to Chicago where he set out to redress the complex social problems arising from the Great Migration and the rise of the urban ghetto. Demonstrating an enhanced personal authority since his incarceration, Muhammad pushed the Nation's goal of racial self-reliance. This led to the establishment of Muslim-owned farms, dairies, grocery stores, transportation businesses, and an expanded prison outreach program (Muhammad, 2005).

In 1948, that campaign reached a 23-year-old prisoner at Massachusetts' Concord Reformatory named Malcolm Little—later, Malcolm X—whose contribution to the self-awareness of African Americans, both in prison and out, would become enormous. Malcolm X experienced an authentic prison conversion to the Nation of Islam through his kinship network. As Malcolm told his biographer, Alex Haley:

> My brothers and sisters in Detroit and Chicago had all become converted to what they were being taught was the "natural religion for the black man"…They all prayed for me to become converted while I was in prison. They had decided that [Malcolm's younger brother] Reginald, the latest convert, the one to whom I felt closest, would best know how to approach me, since he knew me so well in the street life….And [after the conversion] anytime I got a chance to exchange words with a black brother in stripes, I'd say, "My man! You ever heard about somebody named Mr. Elijah Muhammad?" (Haley and Malcolm X, 1975: 168, 171)

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Along with Moorish Science Temple, the Nation of Islam experienced a slow but steady growth in prisons throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, yet because of their unique cultural and religious customs, Muslims represented a minority among black inmates (Dannin, 2002).[2] During these years Muslims were often denied the right to openly practice their faith on the ground that it threatened prison security. At issue were the Nation's belief in black supremacy and its distribution of publications urging defiance of prison authorities. In the mid-1960s that threat was exacerbated by something seen as far more menacing—the black liberation movement.

By then, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad had transformed the Nation of Islam into a broad-based movement with temples in every major city in North America. When Malcolm X convinced the great heavyweight boxing champion Cassius Clay to convert to the Nation in 1964—and when Clay was given the name Mohammad Ali by the Honorable Elijah Mohammad—"Black Muslim" became a household term in America. Then in August 1965, the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles erupted in a momentous riot. According to L.A. Police Chief William Parker, the Watts riot was instigated by Black Muslims who "fomented general insurrection" (quoted in Branch, 2006: 295).

That autumn, seven months after Malcolm's assassination at the Audubon Ballroom in New York, Grove Press released *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, introducing a generation of young readers to Malcolm's tortured journey from pimp to martyr, and his

---

[2] Neither Moorish Science nor the Nation of Islam follows conventional Islamic practices. Followers of Moorish Science celebrate Friday as their Sabbath and pray facing east with hands raised, not prostrated. Members of the Nation pray the same way, though at one point Elijah Mohammed, angry with Arab Muslims, ordered his followers to pray toward Chicago. Neither group recites the Kalima Shahada, nor do they practice the Five Pillars of Islam. Both groups fast during Christmas, rather than during Ramadan. Other celebrations, such as the Prophet's birthday, are also replaced with rituals specific to black history (see El-Amin, 1990; Hasan, 2000).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

invective "that only one force could dissolve racial hatred at its root—purified, nonsectarian Islam" (*Ibid*.: 374). James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* (1963), in which he appraised the Nation of Islam and warned that violence would result if white America did not change its attitudes toward blacks, had become a bestseller; while James Brown rode the top of the R&B charts with "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag." All of this was the stuff of legend—historic events that would come to crystallize black pride, nationalism, and radicalism.

Quite naturally, these events gave the Nation of Islam a formidable recruiting presence behind bars. Scholars of the period argue that black prisoners were attracted to the Nation as part of a shifting pattern of deviant social exchanges that provided inmates an explanation for their criminal behavior by removing individual guilt and shifting it to the oppression caused by white racism (e.g., Jacobs, 1977). Less cynical critics contend that the Black Muslim faith provided prisoners with a rationale for their status and, through prisoner-to-prisoner effort to break the vicious drug/crime cycle in which many had been trapped, gave them a positive self-identity (Lincoln, 1996). In any event, thanks to Elijah Mohammad's leadership, by the late 1960s Black Muslims represented the best organized and the most articulate group to emerge from the nascent prisoners' rights movement.[3] As Irwin (1980) notes: "During the 1960s, Black Muslims became a sizable faction in many prisons, organizing themselves into distinctive groups characterized by a

[3] Among the converts of this era was Eldridge Cleaver, who was brought into the fold via a friendship network. In his famous 1968 prison memoir, *Soul on Ice*, Cleaver writes: "Butterfly [another San Quentin prisoner] had become a Black Muslim and was chiefly responsible for teaching me the Black Muslim philosophy." Not all prison conversions to Islam have positive outcomes. Several pages later, after describing a "nervous breakdown," Cleaver writes: "I became a rapist." (Cleaver, 1975:179,182).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

high degree of commitment and discipline among their members" (1980:14). Important advances were also being made on the legal front.

After a long string of cases in the 1960s, the federal courts finally held that black supremacy alone was not sufficient to justify suppression of the Black Muslim faith. The courts ruled that the Nation of Islam and Moorish Science Temple constituted established religions; therefore, Nation and Moorish prisoners were entitled to follow the practices that their faiths prescribed (Allen and Simonsen, 1992). The resolution of the Black Muslim case meant that the standards applied there must apply to any duly recognized religion, thereby forcing prison officials to provide equal protection for all inmates.

By the early 1970s, then, Black Muslims had established a vital presence within the nation's penal system. With their emphasis on hard work and sobriety, Muslims also represented the prevailing correctional philosophy of rehabilitation. Yet 1971 would be their heyday, making Black Muslims one of the most positive elements ever seen in American corrections.

Beginning on September 9, Muslim prisoners swiftly organized themselves to protect the forty-three guards taken as hostages during the historic Attica uprisings. Five grueling days later, during which time three prisoners were stabbed to death after being marked as snitches, the agreement to end the siege was mediated by two Moorish Science prisoners (Carl Jones-El and Donald Noble) and a Nation inmate (Herbert Blyden X.) (Wicker, 1975).[4] On September 15, the brother of a slain guard appeared on the CBS

---

[4] On September 13, the final day of the Attica siege, twenty-nine prisoners and ten guards were killed—not by prisoners, but by the crossfire of some two-hundred attacking New York State troopers with shotguns and deer rifles in a bungled attempt to retake hostages. Once the prison was retaken, inmates were stripped, beaten, and threatened with castration (*Ibid*.).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Evening News, telling Walter Cronkite that he “no longer [considered] inmates animals” after hearing that Black Muslims had helped save the hostages (Vanderbilt University, 1971). On October 3, *The New York Times* weighed in with a stinging indictment of the all-but-moribund state of academic criminology. “The inmates at Attica considered their conditions so intolerable,” wrote a reviewer of Leon Radzinowicz and Marvin Wolfgang’s *The Criminal in Society* (1971), “that they were willing to die to dramatize them. This seems a far cry from the analysis of prison conditions in this study (by Gresham M. Sykes)….The criminologists’ studies seem to miss the strong racial and political elements of convicts’ discontent” (Graham, 1971:6).

At a time when legions of sixties activists were deserting politics to chant the mantras of new religious movements (Kent, 1992), Black Muslim prisoners had asserted a profoundly constructive political stance by drawing upon African American people’s age-old resistance to racism and oppression. No longer was the Black Muslim faith seen as an individual means of adapting to prison culture, it was now considered an instrument of criminal justice peacemaking—peacemaking, it must be said, carried out under the brutal conditions of a maximum-security prison riot involving more than a thousand felons. After Attica, officials relaxed existing restrictions against practicing Islam and Black Muslims came to be seen as a stabilizing force in prison (Irwin, 1980). As these Muslim identities intensified among black prison inmates, they began to spill over into the great urban slums of Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. And by 1972 Muslim identities were widely adopted by Black and Latino gang members in their attempts to mirror Malcolm X’s prison transformation to Islam. From this point on, American gangs have embraced radicalized, and often religious, identities (Hagedorn, 2006).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The Studies

The first study of Islam in prison was Butler's (1978) review of reform policies resulting from the judicial cases of the 1960s. Butler studied reforms at prisons in Washington, D.C., New York (Attica), Pennsylvania (Graterford), and New Jersey (Trenton State), and found that the Nation of Islam contributed positively to inmate morale, discipline, and rehabilitation. Butler did not examine conversions to Islam. Yet interviews with chaplains and wardens at Louisiana's Angola Prison led the award-winning prisoner/author Wilbert Rideau to conclude that conversions to Islam could be chalked up to "insincere inmates who are hunting ways to secure their needs or to obtain help in regaining their freedom" (Rideau and Snider, 1981:31). However, in a study of prisoners who adopted the Muslim faith while incarcerated in an Illinois prison, Barringer (1998) found that conversions to Islam created the conditions necessary for increased prison adjustment, reduced stress, increased feelings of self-esteem, and the sense that one has control over one's life and ability to change the self and the environment. There would not be another study of Islam in American prisons until after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

By that time Islam was already the fastest growing religion among prisoners in Canada, the United States, and Europe (Guessous, et al., 2001; Spalek and Wilson, 2001; Zoll, 2005). France is especially instructive. Roughly eight percent of the overall French population is Muslim, yet Muslims make up an astounding 80 percent of the nation's prison population (Khosrokhavar, 2004). Experts estimate that among those who seek faith while imprisoned in the U.S., an equally astounding 80 percent turn to Islam (Ammar et al., 2004; Waller, 2003). Although black prisoners still predominate, more

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Hispanics and whites are converting to the religion as well. Meanwhile, the Nation of Islam (which moderated its racial views following the death of Elijah Mohammad in 1975) and Moorish Science have begun to compete for followers with orthodox Islam, as well as Sunni, Shiite, and Sufi strains of the religion. Other American variations of Islam, referred to by chaplains as "Prison Islam," are known for using "cut-and-paste" versions of the Koran to recruit new members. As tensions have grown between the various factions, Prison Islam groups have increasingly become known for encompassing gang values and fierce intra-group loyalties. For prisoners who embrace Islam under these conditions, they discover only a gang's version of Islam, which has little relationship to the true faith.

In the United States, the yearly number of conversions to Islam in municipal, state, and federal correctional institutions is estimated at 30,000 (Dix-Richardson, 2002), or perhaps as many as 40,000 (Waller, 2003). Based on these estimates, some 175,000 American prisoners have converted to Islam since the 9/11 attacks. Muslims comprise about six percent of the 173,000 prisoners incarcerated in the Federal Bureau of Prisons (this figure does not include inmates who belong to the Nation of Islam or Moorish Science Temple) (Lappin, 2003). Muslims make up about 18 percent of the 63,700 inmates in New York state prisons; 18 percent of the 41,000 state prisoners in Pennsylvania; and in California, where religious affiliation is not tracked, officials estimate that there could be thousands of Muslim prisoners in the system (Zoll, 2005).

Among the post-9/11 studies are Dix-Richardson and Close's (2002) review of the reform possibilities of Islam. Here, prisoner conversions to Islam are attributed to broad social forces including court intervention, the impact of race in America, the role of

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

religion in the African American community, and the volatility of contemporary prisoner subcultures. In a study of chaplains in the Ohio Department of Corrections, Ammar and colleagues (2004) found that most Muslim inmates convert to Islam while incarcerated, and that there is no relationship between conversion and subsequent criminal behavior. In a study of chaplains in the Florida Department of Corrections, Dix-Richardson (2002) found that Islamic conversion among African American female prisoners is uncommon due to their lack of familiarity with Islam, coupled with the fact that proselytizing is prohibited in Florida prisons.

Standing in stark contrast to these findings is an undated report—released to great media fanfare in 2006—by the Homeland Security Policy Institute and Critical Incident Analysis Prisoner Radicalization Task Force entitled *Out of the Shadows*: *Getting Ahead of Prisoner Radicalization* (hereafter referred to as simply the Homeland Report). Based largely on the testimony of a select panel of law enforcement experts, the researchers concede that "there is insufficient information about prisoner radicalization to qualify the threat" of Islam in prison. Nevertheless, the Homeland Report concludes that, because Islam feeds on resentment and anger all too prevalent in prisons, Islam therefore "poses a threat of unknown magnitude to the national security of the U.S." (i and iv).

Moreover, 9/11 has brought new scrutiny to Muslim prisoners in America. Rachel Zoll's (2005) ambitious nation-wide investigation of chaplains, prison volunteers, correctional officials, inmates, and former inmates affirms that there are opposing views about Islam in prison today. One side of the debate takes the position that Islam offers prisoners a viable path to rehabilitation. There is considerable social psychological evidence to confirm this position. Research shows that involvement in religion

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

contributes to feelings of well-being, reduces stress, and increases general health (e.g., Ellison et al., 2001; Idler, 1995).

Indeed, the majority of those interviewed by Zoll, including administrators, insist there is no evidence of terrorist recruitment by Muslims in their prisons. This squares with other media reporting, including Thompson's (2005) investigation which shows that prison officials in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio—states with large Muslim inmate populations—have seen no signs of terrorist recruiting. According to these reports, the typical prison convert to Islam is a poor, black American upset about racism, not Middle East politics; someone who became a Muslim to cope with the pains of imprisonment, not to fulfill a religious obligation to Islamic law, Osama bin Laden, or al-Qaeda. Although some prisoners become Muslim in name only, either to seek protection from gangs or to take advantage of dietary or meeting privileges, others undergo an authentic conversion which helps them interact with other inmates in a positive manner. Whatever the motivation for converting to the religion, Islam provides a self-imposed discipline on inmates which, in turn, gives prison authorities a convenient force to help them maintain order. Islam in prison is not without its problems, so goes the argument, but they pale in comparison to the dangers posed by such prison gangs as the Crips, the Gangster Disciples, Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), and the notorious Aryan Brotherhood.

The opposing side of the argument claims that Islamic prisoners represent a clear and present danger to the United States. Central to this concern is the fact that al-Qaeda training manuals identify America's prisoners as candidates for conversion because they

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

may harbor hostility toward their government (Gunaratna, 2002; Pistole, 2003).[5] According to numerous sources, this problem can be traced to the government of Saudi Arabia, which is spending billions of dollars promoting Wahhabi Islam (a narrow, strict, puritanical form of Sunni Islam upon which the ideology of al-Qaeda is based). One researcher claims that the Saudis have supplied "money that has been spent on funding leading terrorist and other extremist organizations that disseminate hatred in 'education centers,' charities, mosques, and even prisons—including many here in the United States" (Baran, 2005:4). Another expert contends that nearly ten-thousand copies of the Wahhabi Koran have been distributed to American prisoners (Gartenstein-Ross, 2005). The Washington-based Center for Security Policy has gone so far as to charge the Saudi government with "efforts to recruit convicted felons in the U.S. prison system as cannon-fodder for the Wahhabist jihad" (quoted in Gaffney, 2005:1).

According to the Homeland Report, a key factor in the spread of Wahhabi Islam is a shortage of "suitable" qualified Muslim clerics available to work in prisons, combined with an inability on the part of correctional authorities to differentiate radical Islam from more moderate streams of the religion. The real goal here, so goes the argument, is the conversion of large numbers of African American prisoners to Wahhabism and its radical Islamist agenda (Silverberg, 2006). "By converting to Islam," argues still another expert, "the prisoner is expressing his enmity toward society in which he lives and by which he believes himself to have been grossly maltreated" (Dalrymple,

[5] Compounding this problem is the case of a Black Muslim from New York named Clement Rodney Hampton-El, a convert to Moorish Science who provided firearms training to the 1993 World Trade Center bombers. Following the 9/11 attacks, Hampton-El gained notoriety when it was discovered that he had become an al-Qaeda-linked terrorist known as Dr. Rashid (Benjamin and Simon, 2002).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

2001:1). In short, these analysts believe that the Black Muslim prisoner movement is being hijacked by Saudi Arabia (see also Lopez and Schwartz, 2003). When released, these black offenders will support terrorist goals, "murdering their own countrymen in a kind of 'payback' for perceived injustices done to them by 'white America.'" (Silverberg, 2006:1)

This threat currently reverberates at the highest level of the American political order. Testifying before a Senate committee on the influence of Saudi-backed Wahhabi groups on U.S. prison populations in 2003, Senator Charles Schumer (D.-N.Y.) declared that "these organizations have succeeded in ensuring that militant Wahhabism is the only form of Islam that is preached to the 12,000 Muslims in federal prisons. The imams flood the prisons with anti-government, pro-bin Laden videos, literature and sermon tapes" (quoted in *Human Events*, 2003:1). Echoing former Attorney General Gonzales on the matter, FBI Director Robert Mueller III recently proclaimed that, "Prisons are…fertile ground for extremists. Inmates may be drawn to an extreme form of Islam because it may help justify their *violent* tendencies. These persons represent a heightened threat because of their criminal histories, their propensity for *violence*, and their contacts with fellow criminals" (Mueller, 2006:3, emphasis added). Complicating this threat is wholly contradictory "fact that radical inmates, wishing to avoid attention, act as *model prisoners*, leading prison officials to focus on violent prisoners while overlooking radicalization" (Homeland Report: 9, emphasis added).

Summary of the Studies

The literature on Islam in prison is divided into two camps that couldn't be farther apart. One side takes an alarmist stance: That Muslim groups in prison are a breeding

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

ground for terrorists. As the Reverend Charles Colson, former Nixon aide and founder of the Prison Fellowship Ministries put it: "I agree that Islam is a religion, which, if taken seriously, promotes violence" (quoted in Abdelkarin, 2002:68). Yet the alarmist position is based on research that is not only contradictory in places, but it lacks any real depth of understanding about the nature of prisoner subcultures, the social processes of religious conversion, and the vulnerability of individuals to recruitment by terrorists groups. The studies are also devoid of social scientific methodologies; there are no interviews with or observations of prisoners, and they offer only scant evidence on the perceptions of wardens, guards, chaplains, and security threat group administrators. Beyond that, they are riddled with errors.[6]

The other side of the debate is more reassuring; it is also based on ostensibly verifiable data. The criminological evidence indicates that there is no relationship

---

[6] For example, in tracing the history of prisoner conversions to Islam, the authors of the Homeland Report write: "*Recently*, the spiritual philosopher of al-Qaeda, Sayyid, Qutb, wrote the radical Islamist manifesto…Milestones along the road [sic] while in an Egyptian prison" (pg. 1, emphasis added). Yet there is nothing recent about Qutb's book. *Milestones* was published in 1964. Shortly thereafter, Qutb was arrested for sedition. He was executed in a Cairo prison on August 29, 1966 (Sageman, 2004). The authors contend that "Jeff Fort, a gang leader in Chicago, converted to Islam while incarcerated in 1965" (pg. 2). Fort did not convert to Islam in prison in 1965. In 1976, while on parole, Fort tried to join the Moorish Science Temple in Milwaukee but Temple elders refused to have him (Ruchala, 2005). The authors then claim that "James Ellison, the founder of the extremist Christian group Covenant, Sword and Arm of the Lord (CSA), met Robert G. Millar while incarcerated. Millar, a leader in the radical 'Christian Identity' movement, became Ellison's spiritual advisor in prison" (pg. 2). Nearly every word of this is wrong. Ellison was introduced to Christian Identity, not by Millar, but by Dan Gayman, pastor of the Church of Israel near Schell City, Missouri, while Ellison was in the area building Minuteman missile silos for the military in the summer of 1979. Ellison met Millar several years later, long before Ellison's imprisonment for terrorism-related charges. Millar preached a mild, Pentecostal-influenced brand of Identity focusing on family, heritage, and community; he eschewed the overt racism that characterized Ellison's sermons. Millar became Ellison's spiritual advisor, not in prison, but during Ellison's negotiations with the FBI during the siege at the CSA compound in April, 1985 (Hamm, 2002/ 2007).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

between prisoner conversions to Islam and terrorism. If anything, just the opposite is true. Research shows that Islam has a moderating effect on prisoners which plays an important role in prison security and rehabilitation. Once on the path to restructuring their lives—down to the way they eat, dress, form support systems, and divide their day into study, prayer, and reflection—Muslim prisoners have begun the rehabilitation process, making them *less* of a recruiting target for terrorists than other prisoners, and certainly less of a target than alienated street corner youths of the urban ghetto. In his review of the literature, the religious historian Philip Jenkins writes, "Islam is a major presence in American prisons, and many would say that this is a good thing because the Muslim influence can encourage people to get their lives together, to get off drink or drugs, to learn self discipline" (Jenkins, 2003:5). Such a conclusion is consistent with research on prisoners' involvement with traditional religious callings.

For instance, O'Connor and Perreyclear (2002) found an inverse relationship between intensity of religious involvement among state prisoners in South Carolina and the presence of in-prison infractions. That is, as involvement in religion intensified, prison disciplinary infractions declined. In a study of parolees from the New York state prison at Sing-Sing, Erickson (2002) found that prisoners' encounters with sacred texts are transforming experiences that result in low recidivism rates. In the most exhaustive study of the effects of religion on prisoners, Clear and Sumter (2002) administered a self-report questionnaire to 769 prisoners in twenty prisons from twelve states and found a strong correlation between inmate religious involvement and adjustment to the prison environment.

Enter Prison Islam

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

It would be precipitous, however, to close the book on a connection between prisoner conversions to non-traditional religions and terrorism. This point is made abundantly clear in Knox's (2002) study of a Michigan prison gang called the Melanic Islamic Palace of the Rising Sun. After interviewing Melanic members, other prisoners, and correctional officers, Knox found that the Melanics—who were influenced by the legal battles fought by Nation of Islam in the 1960s—used their own brand of Islam to wage a holy war against other prisoners, culminating in the 1999 riot at the Chippewa Correctional Facility. The Melanics killed one guard and one prisoner in the riot, injuring dozens of inmates. More than anything, the Melanics represent a mutating form of Prison Islam similar to other recent cases, both foreign and domestic in nature. In early 2006, for instance, a gang known as the Muslim Boys began terrorizing other inmates at London's Belmarsh prison, with beatings and stabbings (NewsTrack, 2006). Contrary to the notion that radicalized inmates "act as model prisoners" (Homeland Report), the Melanics and the Muslim Boys indicate that some mutating Islamic groups are adopting gang techniques of intimidation to exert control over the institutions in which they are incarcerated. Other forms of Prison Islam have had a broader agenda.

In 2003, Kevin James and Peter Martinez, both incarcerated at the California State Prison-Sacramento, recruited more than a dozen fellow prisoners into a group called the JIS (Jamiyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheed, roughly translated as the Assembly of Authentic Islam). Among them was a 25-year-old inmate named Levar Washington. Instead of trying to take over the prison, though, JIS launched a conspiracy to "kill infidels" in a guerilla war against the United States. Their targets included National Guard recruiting stations, synagogues, and the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles; the group planned to

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

carry out the attacks on September 11, 2005. Following his release from prison in November 2004, however, Levar Washington was arrested for a gas station hold up (one of more than a dozen robberies committed by JIS to fund the attacks). Alarmists were quick to charge that Saudi-trained imams had been "granted an exclusive franchise for Muslim religious instruction" at the prison (Gaffney, 2005:2). FBI Director Mueller told reporters that the attacks "were well on their way" to being carried out, thereby underscoring the threat of "homegrown extremists" in prisons across the country (Kaplan, 2005:37). As a result, FBI agents nationwide were ordered to conduct risk assessments of prisoners who may have become radicalized and could commit extremist violence upon their release (Thompson, 2005). "We are working with prison officials and academic leaders across the country," said the FBI Director a year later, "to identify these potential recruiting venues" (Mueller, 2006:4).

A Brief History of Terrorist Recruitment in Prisons

The fact of the matter is that extremist groups have long viewed the prison as fertile grounds for recruitment. Yet this appears to happen *only in the rarest of cases*; indeed, terrorist recruitment methods are not designed to yield a large number of recruits (Sageman, 2004). Furthermore, radicalization is not unique to Islam.

In the late 1970s, Aryan Nations founder Richard Butler began a "Christian Outreach" campaign to recruit prisoners from Western states into his Church of Jesus Christ Christian, a racist Christian Identity sect.[7] Through prison visits and the mailing of extremist literature to prisoners, Butler's outreach was successful in only one known

[7] Christian Identity asserts that Jews are the children of Satan, while white Aryans are the descendents of the biblical tribes of ancient Israel and thus are God's chosen people (Barkun, 1994).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

case—that of an Arizona convict named Gary Lee Yarbrough. Upon his parole from the Arizona State Prison in 1983, Yarbrough moved to Hayden Lake, Idaho, where he played a role in creating the Order (also known as The Silent Brotherhood)—the most sophisticated domestic terrorist group the United States has ever seen. Along with other Order members, Yarbrough went on to commit counterfeiting, bombings, assassinations, bank robberies, and a spectacular armored truck heist that netted the Order $3.6 million (Hamm, 2007).

Evidence of this trend has become more apparent in recent years:

* Peter Langan, founder of the Aryan Republican Army (a white supremacy gang responsible for 22 Midwestern bank robberies in the mid-1990s), converted to Christian Identity at Florida's Raiford prison in 1978. Langan's conversion occurred after he had been gang-raped by black convicts (Hamm, 2002).

* John William King, convicted ringleader in the 1998 truck-dragging murder of James Byrd, Jr. in Jasper, Texas, converted to Odinism at the Beto I Unit of the Texas Prison System in 1995.[8] King's conversion occurred in conjunction with his swearing of allegiance to the North Carolina-based Ku Klux Klan faction, the Confederate Knights of America (Pitcavage, 2002).

* Jose Padilla, a former member of the Chicago street gang, the Latin Kings, was arrested in 2002 for plotting to attack the United States with a radioactive dirty bomb. Padilla converted to Islam following a stint in South Florida's Broward

[8] Odinism—and its Icelandic counterpart, Asatru—is a reconstruction of Viking-era Norse mythology. It links the racist appeals of the radical right to the occult (see Kaplan, 1997 for a full description).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

County jail in 1992 where he had been influenced by a free-world imam (Rotella, 2003).

* Richard Reid, the Qaeda "shoe bomber" who attempted to blow up an American Airlines flight between Paris and Miami in late 2001, converted to Islam in a British young offenders' institution while doing time for a string of muggings during the mid-1990s (BBC News, 2001). Officials suspect he was radicalized by an imam, Abdul Ghani Qureshi, who preached at the prison (Seper, 2004). Others believe that Querishi was sent to the prison at the suggestion of Reid's father, a career criminal who had converted to Islam in prison years earlier (Gaffney, 2005).

* Youseff Fikri, mastermind of the 2003 suicide bombings in Casablanca, was a former prisoner in Morocco. Upon his release, Fikri came under the influence of a radical imam of the Qaeda-affiliated Moroccan Combat Group, and began a series of "Islamic" executions, leading to the Casablanca attacks (Pargeter, 2005)

* Jamal "el Chino" Ahmidan (1969-2004), the brains behind the 2004 Madrid train bombings, embraced the jihadist principles of radical Islam while serving time for immigration fraud in a Spanish detention center in 2002 (Rotella, 2004).

* Muktar Ibrahim, a British citizen born into a secular family in Eritrea, was the leader of the July 21 cell that attempted to bomb the London underground in a follow-on to the 7/7 attacks of 2005. Ibrahim converted to Islam in a British young offenders' institution while serving time for a series of muggings in the late 1990s (Lyall, 2005).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

* Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (1966-2006) of al-Qaeda in Iraq, did not convert to Islam in prison, but according to the terrorist's biographer, "it was in prison that his magnetism and strength appeared in a new light" (Brisard, 2005:43). Prior to his incarceration at Jordan's high-security Suwaqah prison for terrorist-related offenses in 1996, Zarqawi's "reputation was that of a hoodlum with vague religious learning" (*Ibid*: 40). Zarqawi thrived under the harsh conditions of the desert prison, where he memorized large portions of the Koran, developed the body of a fighter, and the proselytizing techniques of a zealot. This allowed Zarqawi to recruit a band of ordinary criminals, drug addicts, and Islamicists that would later prove vital to his terrorist campaign in Iraq. So enamored was Zarqawi of prison life, that when his release date came Zarqawi successfully petitioned the warden to allow him to remain in prison where he continued his recruiting activities. Rather than undergoing a conversion, Zarqawi's experience resembles what Nock (1933) referred to as a religious *regeneration*—or the enthusiastic adoption of a belief system (in this case, Wahhabism) that had not been taken seriously before, or that had been abandoned out of skepticism or indifference.

* The saga of Aqil Collins (aka Ansar Aqil) indicates that prison conversions to Islam may have important implications for national security. Collins, a blonde-haired, blue-eyed American from Phoenix, Arizona, converted to Islam in the early 1990s while doing time in a California boot camp for stealing cars and joyriding. Inspired by his religious transformation, Collins went to Afghanistan in 1994 to train in guerrilla warfare tactics at a camp alongside some future leaders

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

of al-Qaeda, including one of the men who would be accused of kidnapping and beheading *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl. Later Collins fought alongside the mujahidin in Chechnya, where he lost his leg to a Claymore mine. On his way out of Chechnya in 1996, Collins entered the United States embassy in nearby Azerbaijan, to volunteer for service in the CIA. The agency turned him down, but not before advising Collins to seek employment with the FBI, which he successfully did upon his return to the States in 1997. In 1998, while in London, Collins (now a one-legged jihadist turned FBI informant on radical Muslim groups) met a young Arab man with ties to Osama bin Laden's inner circle. But when Collins presented this information to his FBI handlers, and volunteered to infiltrate al-Qaeda and kill bin Laden, he was denied the assignment on the grounds that Collins could be "a loose cannon" (CNN.com, 2002).

Terrorism Kingpins: The Hidden Hand of Prison Recruitment

It is dangerous to overstate a case. Doing so may lead to what police call a "tunnel investigation" syndrome by steering analysts toward a predetermined conclusion. The alarmists' obsession with an impending peril posed by Saudi-backed Muslim clerics in American prisons represents such a danger. For in developing and perpetuating the impression that terrorist recruiting by outsiders is omnipresent in prisons, the alarmists obscure a silent, more narrowly defined, and potentially far more lethal threat that operates outside of public scrutiny.

Today, some of the world's most dangerous terrorists are serving lengthy sentences in U.S. prisons. Some of these prisoners are conducting extensive outreach not only to other prisoners, but to free-world extremists as well, inciting them by claiming

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

that anti-American terrorists, including the 9/11 hijackers, should be remembered as martyrs and heroes (Pistole, 2003).

More than a dozen members of the Order are in federal custody. Several have become prolific writers, contributing to a variety of extremist publications. For years, David Lane (1940-2007), former minister of propaganda for the Order, ran his own publishing company from his cell at Leavenworth Penitentiary, supported by an outside website. The Blind Sheikh, Omar Abdel Rahman, has been in federal custody since 1994. Years ago the Sheikh issued a fatwa, calling on al-Qaeda to attack the United States should he die in an American prison, which is most certainly going to happen. (At this writing Abdel Rahman is gravely ill.) And this call to arms—thanks to the Internet and Cable television—has reached worldwide audiences.

Terrorist kingpins may pose a greater problem overseas. Zarqawi's intellectual mentor, Abu Mohammed al-Maqdisi, is locked up in a Jordanian prison where he operates a website, reaching deep into global communication systems that thrive on Islamic militancy (Brisard, 2005).[9] Nor is the problem limited to high technology methods of recruitment. While serving a ten-year sentence in a French prison for bombing the Paris metro system in 1995, Algerian Safe Bourada reconstituted a terrorist network with juvenile delinquents he met while incarcerated (Siegel, 2006). (Upon his release Bourada was arrested for planning a terrorist attack against the French government.) But when it comes to the mythopoeia of modern terrorism—an essential ingredient for prisoners from different prisons in different cultures to create violence in

[9] In 2006 *The New York Times* reported that nearly every prison in Jordan is now controlled by an informal emir (or leader) among Islamist prisoners. These leaders include suspected members of al-Qaeda (Fattah, 2006).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

similar ways—no one is more important than Illich Ramirez Sanchez, better known as Carlos the Jackal. The first terrorist to achieve worldwide media fame, Carlos helped to shape the representation of the terrorist as an incandescent celebrity. Without the Jackal, Osama bin Laden would have never become a living myth of international terrorism. And today, Carlos the Jackal is serving a life sentence in France's Le Sante prison where he has issued press releases praising bin Laden and al-Qaeda.

In the United Sates, the Bureau of Prisons incarcerates dozens of al-Qaeda terrorists, many of whom were trained in bin Laden's camps. They include inmates involved in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1998 East African embassy bombings, the 2000 bombing of the USS *Cole*, and the millennial bomb plot on the Los Angeles International Airport. New York's BOP detention centers in Manhattan and Brooklyn, alone, incarcerates fifteen al-Qaeda members, including one high-ranking soldier who was bin Laden's bodyguard. Yet these institutions are experiencing what an official report calls "a constant population of new inmates arrested on terrorism-related charges" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2006:49).

Die-hard extremists, these imprisoned terrorists need little proselytizing from Wahhabi clerics. They are already true believers. The danger to America's security is, therefore, not the number of adherents to Islam in prison, but in the potential for small groups of true believers to instigate terrorist acts, either by other prisoners once they are released, or by existing cells in the community.

This threat came into full relief in March 2005, when MSNBC news correspondent Lisa Myers reported that three federal prisoners—Mohammed Salameh, Mahmud Abouhalima, and Nidal Ayyad—incarcerated at the BOPs' Administrative

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Maximum security facility (ADMAX) in Florence, Colorado, for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, wrote over 90 letters to Islamic extremists outside the prison between 2002 and 2004. Fourteen of these letters were sent to prisoners in Spain who had connections to the terrorist cell responsible for the Madrid train bombings. Salameh had also written several letters to Arabic newspapers, praising bin Laden as a hero. The government's after-action report concluded that the BOP, due to staff shortages, is failing to monitor terrorists' communications, including mail, phone calls, visits with family and friends, and cellblock conversations. As a result, FBI agents are currently producing "little or no proactive" intelligence on the activities of terrorist inmates in the BOP. "Consequently," says the report, "the threat remains that terrorist…inmates can use mail and verbal communications to conduct terrorist…activities while incarcerated" (*Ibid*.:ii).

This official report implies that the terrorist threat emanating from American prisons is best understood in terms of prisoner recruitment methods involving mail and telephone calls, as well as intense discussions between small groups of inmates on prison yards, at weight-lifting pods; and in cellblocks, chow halls, and chapels. These are the prison spaces where small-world networks are formed. A miniscule percentage of converts to Islam will turn to radical activism. An even smaller percentage will join terrorist networks, and they are likely to be fresh converts, the newly pious—those with an abundance of emotion and feeling. But for this select group of inmates, the social bonds established between one another will ultimately become so powerful that they will trump everything else, including their ideological commitment to a cause (Sageman, 2004). And in this way, American prison culture—despite the best intentions of

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

administrators to do otherwise—will have created the means by which a new terrorist attack against the United States may be mounted.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

CHAPTER TWO

Methods and Context

There are two populations of interest in this study. The first are officials at the central office level of various correctional agencies responsible for chaplaincy services and gang intelligence. The second population is composed of institutional chaplains, gang intelligence officers, and prisoners. Five jurisdictions were selected for study: The New York City Department of Corrections, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the Michigan Department of Corrections, the Florida Department of Corrections, and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Each correctional system received a proposal approved by an Institutional Review Board and written in accordance with its specific policies on outside research activities. Reactions varied.

The New York system denied the research outright, claiming that it did not have resources to support the project. After review, the BOP approved only that part of the proposal that dealt with interviewing the central office administrator of chaplaincy services, also claiming that it did not have resources to support the study (though at one point the research was described as "too political" for the BOP). After allowing access to its chaplains, the Michigan Department of Corrections denied all contact with prisoners on the grounds that the study did not include Christian faith groups, and therefore could not be representative of the prisoner conversion process. The Florida Department of Corrections approved the entire project, as did the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. In both states, cooperation was outstanding. From high officials in central office to the lowliest inmates in protective custody, I was treated with utmost

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

respect. These sources were then augmented by research conducted at the 2007 American Correctional Association Conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

From these sources, then, the research proceeded. In all, interviews were conducted with fifteen chaplains and nine intelligence officials. The interviews lasted from one hour to five hours in length, and took place at central offices in Lansing, Michigan; Tallahassee, Florida, Sacramento, California; the institutions visited; or the ACA Conference in Kansas City. A total of thirty interviews were conducted with prisoners; each was approximately 90 minutes long. Prisoners were selected for the interviews by the institutional chaplains, based on a single criterion: That they had undergone a conversion to a non-Judea-Christian religion during their incarceration.

These interviews took place during open yard hours inside the chapels at three prisons: the Franklin Correctional Institution in Carrabelle, Florida, a medium security faith-based institution; the California State Prison-Sacramento, also known as New Folsom Prison (hereafter referred to as such), the same maximum security facility where the JIS terrorist plot was hatched; and historic Folsom Prison, also a maximum security institution. Inmates ranged in ages from 19 to 63 years old. Ethnicities included African American, Latino, Native American, and Caucasian. All of the prisoners were incarcerated for violent crimes, serving sentences from ten years to life. Fully two-thirds of the inmates belonged to a prison gang, and many had been in street gangs prior to their incarceration. These inmates had experienced prison conversions to the following religions: Native American, Islam (traditional and American versions), Black Hebrew Israelism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christian Identity, Odinism, Wicca, and something we

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

might call secular humanism, based on the teachings and methods of men's consciousness raising.

The specific questions used in the interviews were designed to elicit open-ended responses pertaining to the research hypotheses. For central office chaplains, these questions focused on the number and types of non-traditional faith groups within their system, as well as the policies used to administer chaplaincy services. At the institutions, chaplains and prisoners were asked questions concerning the process of conversion, including motivations for conversion. Risk assessments of terrorist recruitment were gathered from the interviews with gang intelligence officials. The social context for interpreting findings from the study is presented next.

The JIS Case Revisited

Those findings are best understood through the prism of the JIS case, for three good reasons. First, the case is the only *operational* terrorist plot to occur within the continental United States since the 9/11 attacks. In a 2006 press interview, John Miller, the FBI's Assistant Director of Public Affairs, remarked, "I think if you look at the JIS case, of all the terrorist plots since 9/11, it is probably the one that operationally was closest to actually occurring" (quoted in Harris, 2006). Second, the JIS plot—to be activated on September 11, 2005—was part of an international post-9/11 trend toward homegrown terrorist cells whose members tend to seek al-Qaeda's blessing for an attack. Such self-starting terrorist cells pose a special challenge for intelligence and law enforcement agencies because they are likely to be smaller, comparatively self-contained, and more difficult to penetrate than the larger terrorist groups

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Finally, the interviews conducted for this study indicate that the JIS case was not an isolated event; rather, other prisoners may be trying to emulate the group. In early 2007, gang intelligence officers in the Florida Department of Corrections uncovered a potential Islamic terrorist plot inside one of its adult institutions. In California, gang investigators discovered an August 2005 plan by inmates at Pelican Bay State Prison to clandestinely forge ties with Islamic education centers both in California and nationwide. Pelican Bay officials also discovered that inmates were learning Arabic and using Muslim edicts received through the mail to facilitate criminal objectives while in prison. Similar activities have occurred within California's juvenile correctional system. In March 2006, a juvenile parole agent confiscated numerous items related to a terrorist plot during a search of a group home. Included in the evidence were plans, plot drawings, timelines, pictures, and identifiable financial resources needed to carry out a terrorist attack. Further investigation revealed that a parolee was sharing the information with inmates who remained incarcerated in the California juvenile system. Moreover, American correctional institutions—at least those in California and Florida—are indeed vulnerable to prisoner radicalization and terrorist groups that infiltrate, recruit, and operate behind the walls.

The JIS story starts in 1997, when 21-year-old Kevin James began serving a ten-year sentence for robbery at the California State Prison-Tehachapi. James's radicalization may be traced to his father, a former Black Panther, but it was no doubt accelerated during James's teenage years when he joined the 76th Street Crips in Gardena, a city in South Central Los Angeles bordering Compton, and his subsequent stints in juvenile hall. Upon his arrival at Tehachapi, James came under the influence of the Nation of Islam, yet

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

soon found the Nation's teachings to be insipid. He drifted toward the Sunni Muslims. According to the government's indictment, James founded JIS based on his radical interpretation of Islam. Yet in a letter to reporters for the PBS series FRONTLINE, James claims, "I didn't found any radical Islamic group, J.I.S. is a name used by prison Sunni's to distinguish themselves from the N.O.I. [Nation of Islam], Shiites and other sects " (*Ibid*.).

Not in dispute is the fact that James (under a variety of aliases, including "Shahaab James" and "Ash Shakyh Sudani") began proselytizing recently-arrived inmates at Tehachapi, preaching that it was the duty of Muslims to target for violent attack enemies of Islam, including the United States Government and supporters of Israel. Claiming to have spent time with Islamic extremists in Sudan, James recruited fellow prisoners by secretly distributing a hand-written document entitled "JIS Protocol," which described James' religious beliefs, including the justification for killing infidels. The Protocol required that prospective JIS members take an oath of obedience to James, swear not to disclose the existence of JIS, and swear to obey a "90 day rule," wherein members would communicate with James at least once during every ninety day period.

Throughout the late 1990s and into the early 2000s, up to and beyond 9/11, James spread his JIS Protocol (updated in 2002 to over 100 pages) throughout the California prison system using kites (smuggled letters), as well as mail and phones calls initiated by third parties in the free world. Prisoner radicalization was not a security issue in the California State prison system at the time, nor was it an issue for the FBI, and these communications went unmonitored. It was not until late 2002 that officials caught wind of James's recruitment activities and began to develop intelligence on JIS. In early 2003,

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

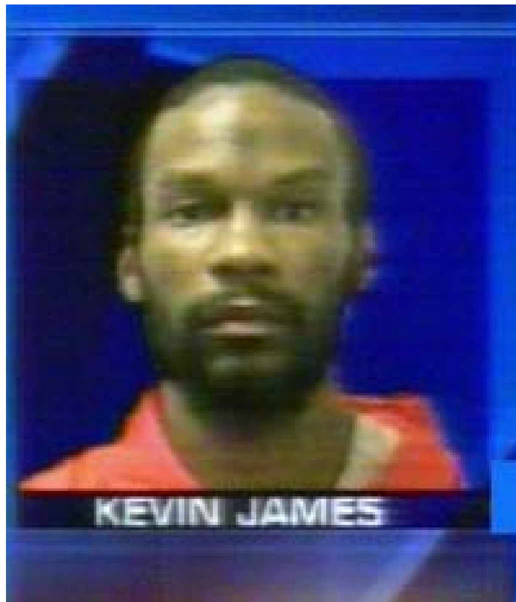
officials identified some two dozen JIS members, who were subsequently transferred to other institutions. In short, the JIS membership was spread around the California prison system in an attempt to squelch the movement.

New Folsom Prison was built specifically for such purposes. The institution houses maximum security inmates serving long sentences or those who are considered management problems at other prisons. It is a huge complex, situated on 1,200 acres adjacent to Old Folsom Prison, designed to house 2,031 offenders. It is also severely overcrowded with an inmate population of about 3,300, some 500 of whom are double-bunked in the institution's gymnasium. Cellblocks teem with violence. Suicide and drug abuse are rampant. Four out of every ten prisoners suffer from Hepatitis C. There is a critical staff shortage. Most of the rehabilitation programs have been eliminated so prisoners spend most of their time pacing the sun-baked yard, pumping pig iron, and bangin' Crip, Blood, Mexican Mafia, Nazi Low Rider. Seven out of ten inmates released from the prison return, one of the highest recidivism rates in the country. Even the State prison commissioner described the system as a "powder keg" at risk of exploding (Steinhauer, 2006). Into this perilous environment came inmate Kevin James with his JIS Protocol.

James was celled with 34-year-old Peter Martinez, who was serving a 40-year sentence for attempted second-degree murder. James brought Martinez into the fold and Martinez began his own recruitment campaign. By this time, James had become a prisoner of considerable charismatic bearing. "The only thing I can say about Kevin James" said a New Folsom employee who knew him "is that he's all man. Guys in prison are under a lot of pressure and he never appeared to buckle" (quoted in Harris, 2006.).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

James is remembered as a slight, soft-spoken man with large cornrows running down from his forehead, an untrimmed goatee, and tattoos of crescents and “Allah” (in Arabic) covering “7” and “6” tattoos on his forearms (for 76th Street Crips). Yet what was most striking about James’s appearance was a prominent “raisin” in the middle of his forehead, the mark of a pious Muslim who grinds his forehead into the ground during prayer.



By 2004, James had begun writing a second call to jihad called “Blue Print 2005.” The Blue Print was modeled after the Qaeda training manual (publicly available on the Internet, though James did not have Internet access himself), which instructs al-Qaeda operatives to set up “Islamic programs” if they are incarcerated and try to recruit “candidates” who are “disenchanted with their country’s policies.” “Al-Qaeda can’t get their militants to the places they want to hit,” observes terrorism expert Brian Levin of the recruitment strategy, “so they rely on an ideology to gain converts who do it for them” (quoted in Marquez, 2005). James’s Blue Print called for developing expertise in bomb building, producing and distributing propaganda (especially CDs and videos to

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

facilitate recruiting), and instructions on how parolees could “blend into society” so that they could establish JIS cells once released to the community.

Meanwhile, James expanded his prison recruiting activity to include training for a terrorist attack. James’s violent discourse was, in part, conducted under the guise of religious worship. A New Folsom gang intelligence officer, who used to shake down James and his JIS companions for weapons as they entered the prison chapel for Jumna services, recalled walking into the chapel during these services one day to discover JIS engaged in martial arts practice. “At that time, the JIS was about 15 large. They would do all this radical stuff,” said the officer in 2007, “even while the imam was there. Once he [the imam] even brought in razor blades and handed them out to inmates. He’s *still* working here.”

In early November 2004, James met an inmate who perfectly fit al-Qaeda’s profile for terrorist recruitment. Levar Washington was a twenty-five-year-old African American from South Central Los Angeles doing a three-year bit for robbery. “I met him 4 weeks before he paroled in the yard,” James wrote to FRONTLINE, describing Washington as a member of an “enemy” gang who had recently converted to Islam (quoted in Harris, 2006). Washington had done time in four California prisons and was a known member of the Rollin’ Sixties Crips; the Rollin’ Sixties tattoo even covered part of his forehead. Shortly before Washington’s parole on November 29, James instructed him to recruit five people from the community without felony records to train in covert operations, acquire firearms with silencers, and find contacts with explosives expertise or learn to make bombs that could be detonated from a distance. In response, Washington pledged his loyalty to James “until death by martyrdom.”

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The 9/ll Plot of 2005

Six months later, in May 2005, Washington walked into the Jamat-e-Masjidul mosque in Inglewood, California, wearing an improvised headdress intended to conceal the Crips tattoo on his forehead (*Los Angeles Times*, 2005). There he met a 21-year-old African American from Gardena named Gregory Patterson, the son of two educators—his father a college professor, his mother a university administrator. Patterson, who had no criminal background, was described by a former teacher as "an overachieving nerd." He attended classes at both El Camino College in Torrance and Cal State in Northridge. Patterson also worked at a duty-free shop at Los Angeles International Airport. But more important for the moment, like Washington, Patterson was freshly converted to Islam (*Ibid.*). He had begun attending the Inglewood mosque the previous March, enrolling in a one-on-one Arabic class taught by 21-year-old Hammad Samana, a Muslim born and raised near Karachi, Pakistan, but now living as a permanent U.S. resident with his parents in an apartment across the street from the Inglewood mosque. Also something of a nerd, Samana worked at a Barnes & Noble bookstore to support his family, and attended Santa Monica College where he was on the dean's list. Described by the president of the Inglewood mosque as "gracious and respectful toward others," Samana had no known criminal history or connections to overseas extremists (Associated Press, 2005).

Like nearly every other major terrorist attack since 9/11—Casablanca in 2003, Madrid in 2004, and London in 2005—the JIS plot was inspired by George Bush's military adventure in Iraq (Richardson, 2006). In late May, Patterson and Washington began sharing an apartment on West 27th Street in South Central Los Angeles; where

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

together with Samana, they held long discussions about the Iraq War and the treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. According to an FBI affidavit, Washington believed that something had to "be done to punish the United States" and "Samana agreed" (*U.S. v. Samana*). "Washington really believed that the Muslim world is majorly [sic] oppressed right now," said an individual Washington attempted to recruit into the plot, "and their only way out is to fight jihad by harming innocent people" (ABC News, 2005). Accordingly, Samana and Patterson swore allegiance to Washington and his jihad mission, vowing to serve as mujahaddin in the greater Los Angeles area—information that Washington passed on to Kevin James in a kite. James, in turn, gave Washington advice about his recruiting efforts, and told Washington that he had added Gregory Patterson's name to his list of approved visitors at New Folsom. Though incarcerated, James was still the shot-caller.

Also like the other major terrorist events since 9/11—and before, for that matter—the JIS case reveals the need for terrorists to commit precursor crimes to finance their attacks. The Casablanca bombers sold hashish to fund their operation; the Madrid bombers stole explosives and pedaled hashish and Ecstasy; the Bali bombers robbed a jewelry store; the Millennium plot to bomb the L.A. airport was supported by credit card fraud, identity theft, and document forgery. The list goes on: Carlos the Jackal raised an astounding $50 million by taking hostages in his violent 1975 raid on the OPEC conference in Vienna; the Irish Republican Army raised millions of dollars by robbing banks and running underground brothels, protection and extortion rackets, among other crimes; the Order generated $3.8 million from armored truck heists; and the Aryan Republican Army robbed more banks than Jesse James, netting over $500,000 in the

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

process (Hamm, 2007). JIS was in a different league, and it was a minor league to be sure: They would rob gas stations, stealing no more than $3,000.

Acquiring firearms was their first order of business. Investigators believe that Levar Washington accomplished this by relying on either his prior contacts with the Rollin' Sixties Crips, or his newly-established relationship with the 76th Street Crips forged through Kevin James. Then, on May 30, 2005, Gregory Patterson—who had never committed a crime in his life—donned a black ski mask, armed himself a shotgun, and robbed a Los Angeles gas station. Thus began an armed robbery spree Patterson would later describe as "part of a jihad against the U.S., particularly against American oil companies who are stealing from our countries [i.e., Muslim countries]" (*U.S. v. Samana*).

On June 6, Patterson robbed a gas station in Torrance. A week later, Patterson and Samana stuck up a station in Playa Del Ray. Patterson hit a second gas station in Torrance on June 16; then another in Bellflower on June 18. On June 20, Patterson was back in L.A. where he attempted another robbery, but failed. JIS had better luck the next day, June 21, when Patterson robbed stations in Pico Rivera and Walnut, while Samana robbed one in Orange County. The next day, June 22, Patterson sent James an update on the gang's activities.

The missive to James was followed a flurry of activity. On June 29, Patterson bought a .223 caliber rifle and ordered an AR-15 rifle from a sporting goods store. On July 2, Samana conducted Internet searches on the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles, including the identity of specific Israeli officials, and three U.S. Army recruiting centers (in Long Beach, Torrance, and Harbor City)—thereby identifying the first set of targets

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

for the upcoming terrorist strike. On July 3, Patterson used the .223 rifle to rob a gas station in Playa Vista, and then returned to the apartment to run an Internet search on Jewish holiday events in Los Angeles, thereby identifying another potential set of targets. On July 4, Samana took part in firearms training and martial arts practice in a Los Angeles park.

By this time, Washington and Patterson's apartment in the ghetto of South Central Los Angeles was, for all intents and purposes, a full-blown al-Qaeda sleeper cell. Shotguns and shotgun shells were stored there, along with reloading equipment, knives, bullet proof vests, camouflaged battle fatigues, ski masks, and jihadist literature (printed in English). On the wall was a poster of Osama bin Laden. Washington was the undisputed cell leader; or what he would later describe as his "council of Muslims who had planned to carry out two operations in the Los Angeles area as part of jihad against the Untied States" (*Ibid.*). The date of the attack was to be September 11, 2005

The first operation involved one of the Army recruiting offices. The plan called for two cell members to enter the office, armed and masked, and open fire on office personnel. They would flee in a getaway car driven by the third man, and then return to the apartment where they would plan a second attack. Ultimately, the cell's goal was "to die for Allah in a jihad," as Patterson later put it. But the law enforcement whip was about to come down. Though long on ideology, the JIS was short on criminal skill. In fact, the gang was comprised of rank amateurs.

On July 5, James sent word to Washington about various details of the terrorist plot, and Washington informed James of Samana's suitability for the task ahead. The same day, Patterson conducted an Internet search on El Al (the national airline of Israel)

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

at L.A. International, thus identifying still another target for terrorism; while Samana drafted a document listing the addresses of the Army recruiting offices and Israeli Consulate.

That evening, robbery investigators from the Torrance Police Department spotted two black men parked near a gas station, observing the flow of customer traffic. The investigators had recently received a tip concerning a string of gas station robberies in the area. That tip dealt with an outstanding case of criminal stupidity: In a previous robbery, Gregory Patterson had left his cell phone at the scene. And so, on the evening of June 5 investigators put a tail on the two men believing one may be Patterson. At 11:00 p.m., the same two men, wearing ski masks and armed with shotguns, robbed a Chevron station on Crenshaw Boulevard in Fullerton, making off with a paltry $252. As they were leaving the station, Torrance police pulled the car over and placed the two men under arrest without incident.

Implications of the JIS Case

When police searched the apartment on West 27th Street, they found the documents and plans detailing the JIS conspiracy, including the bin Laden poster and a list of potential targets. The documents implicated Samana, who was arrested at his parents' home on June 7 after confessing to two of the robberies. By then, some 500 law enforcement officers from the federal, state, and local levels had joined the investigation, dubbed "Torrential Rain" due to the Torrance connection. Over 100 officers came from the L.A. Police Department alone. Eventually, the evidence led investigators to New Folsom Prison and Kevin James. In early September, all four men were indicted on federal

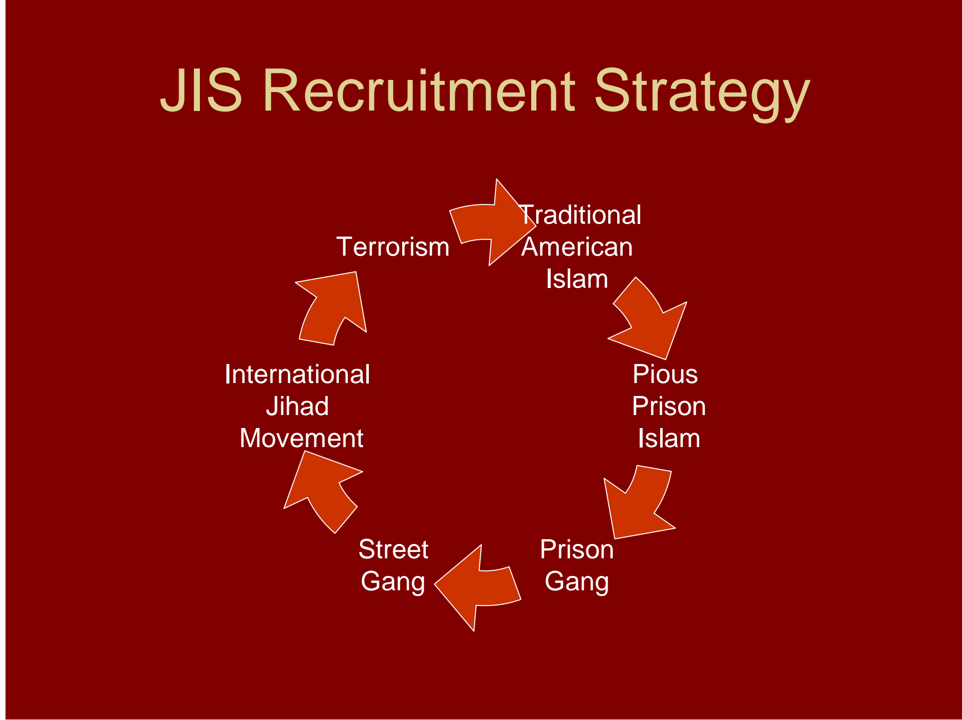
This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

charges of conspiring to wage war against the U.S. Government through terrorism, kill armed service members, and murder foreign officials.

The indictments led to a combined state and federal investigation of radical Islamist prison gangs in California, which eventually determined that JIS still had about a dozen hard-core members inside the state's correctional system. And this discovery created grave concerns at the FBI and Department of Homeland Security that disaffected inmates were being drawn to radical Islam as a source of terrorist activity across the country. "Gangs have long recruited in prisons for people to act as their supplicants once they got out," said a high-ranking FBI official. "What is new here is the focus on radicalizing people in prisons" (quoted in Warren and Krikorian, 2005).

What, then, are the implications of the JIS case for this new terrorist threat to America? The following diagram presents a way to begin thinking about the problem.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.



It is important to understand where criminological problems originate. The JIS recruitment strategy began with Kevin James's conversion to the Nation of Islam. This traditional form of American Islam was then used as a foundation for creating an alternative religious orientation: Jam'iyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheed, JIS (the "Authentic Assembly of Islam"), and a mutating form of Sunni-inspired Prison Islam. Like a prison gang, JIS not only had its own hierarchical structure, code of conduct, and clandestine communication system—including built-in mechanisms to maintain fealty and secrecy—but it also had its own collective identity. This identity provided JIS members with sources of meaning that became internalized, leading to a form of collective resistance against the otherwise unbearable conditions of their incarceration. Because their numbers paled in comparison to other prison gangs, JIS operated below the radar, often under the pretext of constitutionally-protected rights to religious worship. But more than anything, JIS was distinguished by the piousness of its leader: James's "raisin" creating a powerful

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

mode of symbolic interaction between leader and potential converts. If Islam is the language of collective resistance for modern black prisoner subcultures, then pious forms of Prison Islam achieve their identity by offering inmates a more radical form of resistance: Devotion to Osama bin Laden and the Salafi tradition of Sunni Islam.

This radical resistance was then encapsulated in prison gang culture. So powerful was the emotional attachment to a pious Prison Islam that JIS devotees (one deeply devout and the other newly converted) were able to overcome past grievances against one another. In the violent world of radical extremists, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." That precept played out in the bonding between two fierce prison rivals: the 76th Street Crips and the Rollin' Sixties Crips. This approach to cementing JIS's spiritual identity onto its gang history played an important role in creating a support system that would foster JIS's transition to political violence. The spiritual and strategic basis for launching a violent attack against "infidels," including the United States Government, was now in place.

The plan was then taken to the community by a parolee, Levar Washington. Faced with the problem of providing logistical support for the planned attack, Washington turned to a violent street gang to provide firearms for a series of precursor crimes intended to raise funds for the operation. For foot soldiers, Washington relied on the impulse of the international jihad movement inspired by the U.S.-led war in Iraq. Those foot soldiers were found at a neighborhood mosque in the persons of a brand new convert to Islam and his teacher, neither of whom had a criminal background. All the while, the cell continued to take its marching orders from a charismatic convict walking the Folsom

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

mainline more than 300 miles away. The cell was now complete—ideologically, tactically, and logistically: It was complete. The next step was terrorism.

And that is where the conspiracy went off the rails. Armed robbery and mass murder are profoundly criminal acts, and JIS was comprised of criminals who were utterly inept at their trade. The JIS case therefore implies that the most successful way to understand, detect, and deter these criminal acts is to use conventional criminal investigation methods. Criminal activity is the lifeblood of terrorist groups and there are simple common denominators at work that can remove the mystery surrounding terrorist groups. Once understood the vulnerabilities of these organizations can be exposed.

Unfortunately, the story does not end there. The final link in the above diagram indicates that terrorist groups—whether they are successful or not—can inspire similar conspiracies in the future. Recent cases in California and Florida suggest that the JIS plot may have influenced the consciousness of other prisoners. Such a conclusion is confirmed by a key finding of the July 2007 National Intelligence Estimate on "The Terrorist Threat to the U.S. Homeland." The Estimate says:

> The arrest and prosecution by U.S. law enforcement of a small number of violent Islamic extremists inside the United States—who are becoming more connected ideologically, virtually and/or in a physical sense to the global extremist movement—points to the possibility that others may become sufficiently radicalized that they will view the use of violence here as legitimate.

How, then, do we begin to understand the social and political processes by which prisoner audiences receive statements about religious extremism that can potentially lead to terrorism?

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

CHAPTER THREE

A Mighty Precious Thing:

Religious Conversion in Prison

This chapter seeks to answer the first research question: Which of the various motivations for conversion are most often cited by chaplains and prisoners as the reason for joining a particular faith group? Previous research suggests that conversions may be motivated by one of five factors, summarized as follows:

1) The Crisis Convert
2) The Protection-Seeking Convert
3) The Searching Convert
4) The Manipulating Convert, and
5) The Free-World Recruited Convert

A caveat is in order before presenting the data. Because inmates self-selected themselves for the study, the interviews tend to focus on authentic conversions—true believers, if you will, who engaged in genuine spiritual reflection, study, and sacrifice. The process is succinctly described by a chaplain at Folsom Prison:

> After they are here for awhile, some inmates come to understand the need for a higher power. Some start studying and eventually they convert to a religion. You can see the difference almost immediately. You see the difference in their comportment, in their tolerance of others. The only place you can forget prison is the chapel. Those in administration don't understand how important religion is to

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

rehabilitation. The recidivism rate for true conversions is 15 percent, compared to 70 percent for the general population.

Yet as we shall see, along with these important personal transformations come some weighty ideological changes as well. Far from being a shortcoming of the study, then, the selection process allows the research to concentrate on radicalized inmates which is, of course, the goal of any study concerned with prisoner radicalization. Below are selected cases examining the various motivations for conversion.

Crisis Converts

Chaplains generally agree that crisis conversions are rare among inmates. "There are not a lot of crisis converts," said one chaplain. "The inmate culture frowns on weakness and any personal crisis is seen as a weakness." Crisis conversions may have something to do with race. Each of the following cases involves a white prisoner.

The Medical Model

The first is an inmate named David. Born in Philadelphia in 1969 David was raised in the Catholic Church. Yet Catholicism "never suited me," he said. Neither did education and when he was seventeen David dropped out of high school and began working a series of construction jobs. In his mid-twenties David joined an outlaw motorcycle gang and started drinking heavily. By thirty he had developed a heroin addiction as well.

David moved to Florida in the late 1990s where he continued his construction work. He tried with varying degrees of success to put his heroin habit behind him but continued to drink heavily and at length he fell in with another motorcycle gang. His life changed drastically at the end of a drinking binge in 1999. It was then that David got into

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

a bar-room fight and killed a rival biker with a gun. David fled the scene on his Harley and later that night crashed his bike on the interstate. As was his custom, David was not wearing a helmet.

He woke up in intensive care with a brain injury. During his prolonged hospital recovery David began to "meditate on what the murder taught me," he said. "I began to think about my parents, especially my father. He was part Indian." After his recovery David was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison without parole.

During the first years of his incarceration David associated with Native American prisoners on the yard. He took part in their sweat lodge and sweet grass ceremonies, read their books and watched their videos, including repeated viewings of *Dances with Wolves,* and talked for hours with them about the Great Spirit. And in time David converted to the Native American faith. For David, the religious conversion began with a remembrance of spiritual heritage brought on by the dual crises of killing another man and brain injury. It was completed on the prison yard through a sympathetic friendship network.

Today David claims that the conversion has changed him in significant ways. For the first time in his life he has begun to take seriously his education. He now studies Native American cultures and keeps a diary on what he has learned. David says that he is in the best physical shape of his life. He also claims to feel spiritually alive. "I'm calmer [now] and don't get mad. Religion helped with my anger," he said. "I stopped drinking."

The conversion also awakened a political consciousness in David which appears not so much to have quelled his anger as it has redirected the anger into a traditional

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Native American ideology that values Mother Earth above all else. David's political focus is on the land. "I'm anti-building, anti-construction," said the former construction worker. "I hate buildings."

The Fear Factor

Joe was born in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1959. While Joe's mother was an introverted Catholic, his father was a gregarious Marxist history professor who thought religion was the opiate of the masses. Over time Joe would try to please them both. With his father's encouragement, during his teenage years Joe devoured existentialist literature. After reading Nietzsche he moved on to Kant, Heidegger, and Sartre. When the family moved to Los Angeles in the mid-1970s Joe received a scholarship to attend a prestigious L.A. prep school. There he came under the influence of a Catholic priest who molested him. The experience devastated Joe and his educational performance declined. Seeking a male role model to cope with his problems, he became obsessed with Napoleon.

Joe married in his early twenties and took on a variety of occupations but never settled on anything substantial. Still preoccupied with the molestation Joe grew mean and bitter. Estranged from his parents, he suffered financial problems and fought with his wife. "I was in a fuck-it state of mind," he explains. Joe snapped in 1987. After murdering his wife he drove to San Francisco where he killed his sister and brother in law.

It wasn't until Joe was locked up in the L.A. County Jail that he came to terms with the evil deeds he had done. "I sat on my bunk and began to pray. I was looking for an authentic voice," he says. To test the power of prayer Joe asked God to bring him some donuts. And remarkably, he says, "Some guy comes down the tier with a sack of

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

donuts he'd lifted from the kitchen." Convinced that an "authentic voice" was speaking to him Joe began looking for other signs from above, something that would lead him onto a spiritual path capable of alleviating the fear of spending the rest of his life in prison. The sign came from his mother.

"My mother sent me this catalog of books," he says. "In there I saw this ad for the *Autobiography of a Yogi*"—Paramahansa Yogananda's (1946) spiritual classic on his life and the ancient science of yoga. Yogananda's narrative explains the subtle laws behind the natural events of everyday life and how some of these events can be miraculous. Like asking God for donuts in jail and having them miraculously appear. "I had the greatest joy of my life while facing murder charges," Joe explains. "Joy showed me there is reason to live. I learned that bliss is inexhaustible. From that point on, bliss was to become the anchor of my faith. I know it is God's bliss."

Joe has spent the past twenty years in prison, doing life without parole. A disciple of Yogananda since first reading the *Autobiography* in 1987, today Joe meditates twice daily and spends two hours each day doing yoga. At 7-feet tall, Joe is lean, clear-eyed, and speaks with a commanding magnetism. A model inmate, he offers meditation classes to other prisoners, claiming that the practice can provide inmates with metaphysical experiences, including "rolling out of the body" by connecting with the Chakras. "I also teach that the primary reason to practice the virtues [compassion, courage, gratitude, and love] is that you have no peace without them."

Joe's religious conversion represents a life-long search for a male role model. It began with his Marxist father who rejected God; found intellectual ground in existentialists like Nietzsche; and was then run aground by the most significant religious

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

person in his life: His priest. This crisis of faith led Joe to the hyper-masculine Napoleon. After killing three family members, he went in the opposite direction and found succor in the gentle Indian mystic Yogananda. “I overcame my fear through the practice of meditation and yoga which gave Yogananda credibility in my eyes,” he concludes. “They [meditation and yoga] have tied me to my own autobiography and helped me with incarceration. Doing life in prison? It’s just another gig.”

Another virtue of the dharma is service to others which manifests itself in Joe’s outreach to other inmates at New Folsom Prison—whom he refers to as “my people, the people in blue.” In addition to teaching meditation Joe counsels inmates on coping with the threat of prison violence. His primary concern is Islam. “People should be concerned with Islam,” he says. “There is a fundamental brokenness about Islam in this place. You hear it mainly in the chow halls. Muslims talk about decidedly antagonistic things. In prison, Islam tends to reinforce a negative vibration centered on pride and ego. Many of my people are completely terrorized by this.”

Solitary Confinement

Any study that addresses the human factors at play in prisoner radicalization must attempt to synthesize trends in extremism. Like the previous cases, the next vignette shows that signs of radicalization include positive personal behavior; a factor that has *not* gone unnoticed in the post-9/11 debate on prisoner radicalization. Sometimes the source of that positive behavior can come from the most unexpected place.

Kenny was born in Simi Valley, California, in 1953. His mother was a Catholic and his father was a Freemason. Kenny was raised Catholic but generally, as he said, “I hated everything.” His teenage years coincided with the peace and love era, though, and

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Kenny fell in with the California hippie movement where he began to see a different side of things. LSD introduced him to the possibilities of expanded consciousness and California flower power provided the social network to make those possibilities happen. Throughout the late sixties and early seventies he tripped, sold marijuana, grew his hair long, and moved from one California commune to the next. "Life was different then," he says without the faintest hint of irony. During these years Kenny also became a thief and did two terms in the California Youth Authority. Kenny never went to school, never held a job, and by 1972 the 19-year-old had become an acid casualty. "LSD fried my brain," he says.

Kenny killed someone in 1972—he doesn't offer who or why—and was sentenced to life without parole. He did his prison time with the same abandon as he displayed on the outside. He didn't work, didn't program, and had no use for religious groups, which he thought "were weak." Mainly he walked the yard and developed the reputation of a thug. In 1977 Kenny was sent to Folsom Prison where he was pressed into the Aryan Brotherhood and began tattooing himself with swastikas. Two years later, he hit bottom:

> I went to the hole for stabbin' somebody in '79. There was a war between the Aryan Brotherhood and the Mexican Mafia. They [the AB leadership] sent me down two books to read. One was on Odin/Asatru. It didn't make any fuckin' sense. The other was on Teutonic Wicca. Wicca is a young religion. It's only 54 years old. I liked the stuff about Celtics. I think it [the book] was called *Solitary Practice for Wiccans*. It made things a lot simpler.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Kenny emerged from solitary confinement a follower of the Wicca religion. Its pagan practices and rituals, focusing on the sanctity of nature, reminded him of the California hippie communes with their psychedelics and back-to-the-land philosophy. Ironically, and wildly contrary to anything that has ever been written about them, the Aryan Brotherhood was responsible for Kenny's spiritual awakening.

Over the years Kenny has read other religious books, including the Bible and the *Practice Guide to Ruins*. In the 1990s he helped organize a group of prisoners who petitioned the administration for their right to open and maintain what is called a Wicca/Asatru Circle.

The Circle is an open-air cage, about the size of three prison cells that sits adjacent to the Folsom chapel. I spent some time at the Circle on my visit to the institution. From what I observed and was told, Kenny and the others spend their days in the Circle worshipping the sun, the sky, the wind, and the birds. Generally, they hate buildings. Kenny is shirtless, trim, tanned, and covered with Nazi tattoos— epitomizing what criminologist Jack Katz (1988) would call a "bad-ass presentation of self." He is clearly the shot-caller here due in no small measure to the charisma he carries from three decades as an Aryan warrior. "This Circle makes me feel fulfilled," he says. "Some guys come out here to start shit about my tattoos sometimes. Some think I'm a devil worshipper, but I just blow 'em off."

Today Kenny claims that "My white power days are gone. I'm not much of a hater anymore. Cops [guards] here call us a piece of shit. But if I'm tied to this patch of Earth, I can relax." At the end of the day Kenny says that the opportunity to practice his faith is the best thing that has happened to him since being down. For proof he produces a

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

card with two stars on it, indicating that he has had no disciplinary infractions in two years. Chaplains and other prisoners speak highly of Kenny for his ability to act as a spiritual mentor for younger members of the Wicca/Asatru community. “Religion,” he concludes, “that’s what makes me feel good now.”

Protection-Seekers

Prison administrators and chaplains are unanimous in their view that most black inmates join religious groups for protection. “When a young black man comes to prison,” says a Florida gang intelligence official, “he is introduced to all these new religions. Technically, he’s lost. But everyone tells him: ‘Don’t mess with the Muslims. They got their stuff together.’ Muslims got their own protectors. The Nation of Islam: they police their own. They are very well groomed and have an inner strength. You rarely see Muslims involved in a fight.”

Officials also agree that there is currently a rift unfolding in the inmate Muslim community between traditional Islam (including the Nation of Islam and Moorish Science Temple) and the newer, more radical forms of Prison Islam. “It’s the fringe element we worry about most,” said another Florida intelligence official. Further addressing the rift, a chaplain remarked: “The Muslims who practice Prison Islam—they look down on traditional Islam. So inmates who hold to the traditional practices and teachings have to stand up and show they’re strong.” Although several protection-seekers from the fringes of Prison Islam were discovered in the study, one stands out as an analytic exemplar.

The Richard Reid Syndrome

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Marcus's story is all too common among black prisoners from South Central Los Angeles. Born there in 1972 Marcus was raised in a large Christian family in Athens Park presided over by his maternal grandmother who was the founder of her own Black Gospel Church. When he was ten years old Marcus began to see "a big hypocrisy" in the Church and lost interest in religion. He started running the streets and grew attracted to materialistic interests. He also became the family outcast. Having never met his father, Marcus fell under the influence of an older male role model who belonged to the Athens Park Bloods. Marcus began slinging dope for the gang when he was twelve; or, as he puts it: "I was forced into the life."

Marcus caught his first adult case in 1988 when he was sixteen years old. He was locked up in the L.A. County Jail in a special housing unit for Bloods only. "It was the worst time of my life," he says. "It was a big negative place, man. Robbery, assaults, people screaming at night." Marcus was kept in L.A. County until he turned 18, then he was transferred the California State Prison-Corcoran. There, Marcus was visited by his long-lost father, a Muslim convert.

"My father taught me that to live in prison I needed discipline," Marcus recalled. "Discipline: That was my attraction to Islam." Marcus took his Shahaddah at Corcoran in 1991 (the pledge: *There is no other God than God*). He was paroled in 1994 and returned to Athens Park. "I was treated like a star," he says. "Like Michael Jackson or something. I got all this attention from women. They'd never seen a Muslim before. They thought I was some kind of messiah or something. The respect: It was unexpected. My uncle gave me a nickname: Farrakhan."

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Yet Marcus struggled with his new faith. He attended mosque only once over the next year and eventually stopped praying altogether. Seeking more discipline in his life Marcus joined the Fruit of Islam in Compton but found the FOI to be little more than a glorified street gang. “I was more of a plane Muslim,” he says. “I didn’t want to have to stand on the corner selling bean pies and the *Final Call* like they was recruiting.”

By 1995 Marcus was back in prison on a firearms violation, this time at the California State Prison-Tehachapi. He recalls:

> There was lots of gang activity there. You had to be in a gang to survive. That’s when I turned to Islam in a serious way. We had to have our services on the yard because they [the guards] wouldn’t let us have chapel. We met on the track outside. We even had a physical confrontation behind that.

Two years later with his father’s encouragement Marcus became a Sunni Muslim, “the true Islam” as he refers to the faith. Bonded together across gang lines for protection, and deprived of chapel services where they might have legitimately pursued their religious interests, the Sunnis of Tehachapi began to congregate under the banner of Jam’iyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheed (JIS) led by the charismatic Kevin James, a man so pious in his religious beliefs that he had used the concrete floor in his prison cell to grind a chunk of skin and tissue from his forehead.

Yet Marcus’s involvement with the Sunni-inspired JIS was just as superficial as his previous commitments to old school Islam. He was paroled in late 1997 and returned to Athens Park. Weeks later he violated his parole by moving to Houston, Texas. “I got back into the dope game and got my girlfriend pregnant with my third child,” he says. “I always get distracted, no matter what I do.” Marcus returned to Athens Park one more

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

time in early 2004. “I was a big shot in the neighborhood [by then],” he boasts. “Everybody else in Athens Park was either dead or addicted.”

Marcus was arrested later that year and sent to New Folsom Prison where he began serving a 25-year sentence for kidnapping and carjacking. For protection he once again turned to Kevin James and JIS. According to Marcus, JIS has been a positive force in his life. “It helped me humble myself, helped me be patient. For instance, it helps with patience when my cell door isn’t opened [in a timely fashion] by the guards. It has helped me with being in prison.”

There is, then, parallel between JIS and al-Qaeda. Like al-Qaeda shoe-bomber Richard Reid, Marcus converted to Islam upon the advice of his own father. (Reid’s father was a career criminal who converted to Islam while in prison and then encouraged his son to do the same when he was locked up). Also like Reid, Marcus wasn’t the sharpest knife in the drawer. Reid was less a religious zealot than a deeply troubled young man. In fact, some terrorism scholars claim that Reid may be psychotic (Khosrokovar, 2006; Strozier, 2007). Marcus had his own issues, perhaps owing to narcissism and abandonment. In any event Marcus would “always get distracted, no matter what.” This applied to his religious commitments as well.

Yet Marcus’ story also reveals an important difference between JIS and al-Qaeda. Unlike most of bin Laden’s followers, Marcus was apolitical. He voiced no ideological values in the interview and claimed to have read no books during his conversion to Sunni Islam. Marcus was also different from fellow JIS member Lavar Washington. Upon parole, Washington relied on the international jihad movement to recruit foot soldiers of terror out of a community mosque. Once he was released from prison, though, Marcus

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

had no interest in his mosque and was totally stupid about international affairs. Marcus was all about the bling-bling back then. Today he's concerned with surviving in prison and nothing more. This feature of prisoner subcultures was noted by numerous administrators in the study.

"I've worked in Georgia prisons since 1975," said the President of the Islamic Division of the American Correctional Association of Chaplains. "And I've met thousands of prisoners; thousands. I don't see where prisons would be a place for terrorist recruitment. Terrorism demands sacrifice and prisoners ain't ready to sacrifice anything. Most Islamic prisoners are just looking for protection and a place to belong."

Michigan's administrative chaplain said much the same: "Prisoner conversions are less about faith than they are about power. Power gives inmates protection. For most guys, religion is a way to do time—something you do in this period of your life and nothing more." He continued:

> Our prisoners are thugs. Tossing around names like 'al-Qaeda' and 'Jihad' is simply opportunistic. Those who say they're connected to al-Qaeda are psychotic or suffer from varying degrees of ambulatory psychosis and are housed in a closed wing of the State mental hospital…Prisoners hate the whole authority structure. They hate the prison system and everybody in it, including you. I see no evidence of radical prisoners.

Similar sentiments were echoed by a gang intelligence official in Florida:

> We didn't have problems with Muslims before 9/11. Since 9/11, problems have been coming into the prisons from staff, reporters, and different agencies. Staff sees things on TV about al-Qaeda and then come to work and spread these stories

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

to other staff and inmates. But the inmates have changed over the years. Today inmates have no values. Most of them can't even tell you who Martin Luther King was. Most of them never heard of the civil rights movement. They have no history of the struggle black people went through here in the South. They're all about the money, the clothes, and the gold chains. These are not people you recruit into terrorism.

The above comments provide powerful witness to the reassuring point of view on prisoner radicalization. They confirm previous criminological work and investigative reporting showing that there is no relationship between prisoner conversions to Islam and terrorism. Moreover, the typical prison convert to Islam is a poor, unskilled black male who is more concerned with daily survival than he is with martyring himself for Osama bin Laden.

The reassuring viewpoint clearly helps us understand the rule of prisoner radicalization. But it does not help us understand the exception to the rule. How *do* we explain Kevin James and JIS? How do we explain Gary Yarbrough, Jamal Ahmidan, Muktar Ibrahim and others who have converted to extremist religions while in prison and then went on to mount terrorist attacks upon their release? Perhaps the answer lies beyond biographies of personal crisis and protection.

The Searchers

By far, the most prevalent type of conversion discovered in this research was the searcher—those inmates who had embarked upon a spiritual quest that allowed them to assume and subsequently discard a succession of convert roles. These inmates were primarily motivated by a search for identity and meaning in their lives. Searchers tended

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

to be better educated, better read, and more articulate than other converts. For them the spiritual search was a gradual process that began long before their first brush with criminality. Searchers reveal both the complexity of religious conversion and the importance of culture in the conversion process, particularly ghetto culture with its expressions of outrage and urgency. Searchers cross racial boundaries and are more knowledgeable of world events and more forthright in expressing political opinions. Such transparency may be a sign of the times. A veteran Florida chaplain describes the trend like this.

> Today's inmates are more dissatisfied with the government than they were ten years ago or even twenty years ago. The seeds of dissatisfaction are everywhere. Inmates display more aggressive posturing. They cluster on the yard by religion. More aggressive people are doing the evangelizing. Racism is rampant. Most of these men grew up in an evangelical home and became alienated by religion. Now they are open to anything. They find a new religion in prison which reinforces their opposition to authority. Serious offenders are showing up in these groups. Some of these inmates are a very fertile ground for jihad….It may be time to take another look at America's rich religious heritage and be more discriminate when religious liberty becomes a shank in the back.

The John Walker Lindh Syndrome

Mario was born to Catholic parents in Bogotá, Colombia in 1987. The family moved to the barrios of Brooklyn, New York, in the early 1990s where they found low-wage jobs in the service sector. When he was ten years old Mario and his older brother entered service sector employment of another kind: Selling crack.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

In 2002, 15-year-old old Mario joined the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation (ALKQN), a street gang founded in the mid-1980s by Luis Felipe (King Blood) at New York's Collins Correctional Facility. At the time, the ALKQN leadership was attempting to steer the gang in a more positive direction by renouncing its violent past and launching a campaign to reform the organization into a community movement (Brotherton and Barrios, 2004). As part of that effort ALKQN began using the writings of King Blood to create a spiritual practice for its members based on the concept of "realidad humana" (the real humanity) through rituals and ceremonies designed to address the daily reality of dead-end jobs, poverty, police brutality, cultural invisibility, and institutional racism. This movement to velcro ALKQN's gang identity onto its religious identity became known as Kingism.

Kingism's spiritual practices led ALKON members to grapple with implications for activism that were waiting to be discovered in earlier radical movements concerned with social justice. Like the other Kings and Queens, Mario caught this cultural wave and that led him to the Universal Zulu Nation. Founded by the legendary rapper Afrika Bambatta (also known as "The Godfather" and "The Renegade of Funk"), the Zulu Nation arose out of the Bronx as a reformed street gang in the 1970s. By the turn the century the Zulu Nation had achieved worldwide acclaim as an "international hip-hop awareness" movement concentrating on social events for youth built around electronic dance music and elements of the hip-hop culture. Philosophically the Zulu Nation is bound together by a desire to help others regardless of skin color. As such, the Zulu Nation has incorporated doctrines from various "thinkers, fighters, or straight-up controversial people from any race or nationality," including Minister Louis Farrakhan of

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

the Nation of Islam. “The Universe of Zulu Nation gives you permission to choose religion,” says Mario. “My Godfather [Bombatta], he started me being religious.”

Mario and his brother left Brooklyn and moved to Miami, Florida, in 2005. Shortly thereafter Mario was arrested for armed robbery and incarcerated in the Broward County Jail where he experienced another turning point in his religious life:

> I was locked up with a guy from Pakistan. He taught me about Islam and helped me understand the Koran. It [the Koran] wasn’t hard to understand, just like the Bible’s not hard to understand….Islam has helped me settle down. I’m humbling myself before Allah now. Islam helped me learn about the world and what is going on, like with the war in Iraq and all that shit. It’s just like my Godfather taught me.

Mario began his twenty-five year sentence for armed robbery as a Sunni Muslim. While he claims that the Sunni teachings have increased his self-esteem, he emphasizes that the biggest breakthrough has come with “putting down my ego.” Yet Mario still has a foot planted in the Zulu Nation. Referring to his Godfather, Mario’s eyes swell with pride as he says: “I’m ready to do whatever he wants me to do. I’m ready to sacrifice.”

But Mario’s odyssey does not end there. Since arriving at the Franklin prison Mario has come under the influence of the Black Hebrew Israelites, an offshoot of the Miami-based Nation of Yahweh founded in 1979 by a former Black Muslim named Hulon Mitchell Jr. (1935-2007), who later changed his name to Yahweh Ben Yahweh. In tracing their lineage to the biblical Tribe of Judah, Black Hebrew Israelites believe they are God’s chosen people. Hence, the faith is only open to blacks.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

"Black Hebrew Israel is the word," says Mario. "It teaches that the black race is the true race. I believe in Black Nationalism now, the Assembly of Yahweh. These are the people of God. I've been in trouble in Florida and Texas, in prison both times. I met lots of black men. Strong black men defy authority. I know. This is what my Godfather taught me."

So here, then, is a summary of Mario's religious conversions. He grew up Catholic and converted to Kingism through his affiliation with the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation. Kingism led him to the Zulu Nation, which introduced Mario to the Nation of Islam. Once incarcerated, Mario converted to Sunni Islam through the one-on-one mentoring of a Pakistani cellmate. And then he embraced Black Hebrew Israelism even though Latinos were traditionally barred from the faith. All of this Mario did before his 21st birthday. But more importantly, Mario's story reveals that searchers do not so much assume and then discard convert roles as they seek to synthesize various roles into a chiliastic identity that deifies the black male role model.

And here we see an important similarity with the life course events of John Walker Lindh, the Marin County, California, youth who miraculously made his way to Afghanistan where he joined the Taliban prior to 9/11. Like Mario, Lindh's conversion to Islam was also preceded by an absorption in hip-hop and its diverse visions of blackness. Lindh's journey began at twelve years old when his mother took him to see Spike Lee's film *Malcolm* X. Lindh's passion for Malcolm X was then channeled into an exploration of the Black Nationalism and quasi-Islamic messages that informed much of the hip-hop subculture during the 1990s. This was especially so for such "conscious rap" artists as Public Enemy, Mos Def, and Lauryn Hill, with their off-hand references to the Nation of

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Islam and the Black Panther Party. Central to the message of conscious rap is a disdain for commercialism that seeks to empower the listener through the act of self-affirmation—an affirmation that signifies, in essence, that every black male is God.

The Scholars

Searchers stood out for their intellectual aptitude, a trait that was equally capable of generating both reverence and contempt among fellow inmates. Below are six of the most instructive cases.

The Peacemaker

Ladell was born in Miami in 1975. He was raised by his maternal grandmother in a strict Southern Baptist home that allowed little opportunity for trouble. "I grew up in church," he recalls. "My grandmother made me go to church six days a week till I was twelve or thirteen. I read the Bible two times by then and could quote you the Scriptures by heart." Around the age of fourteen, he says, "I went to the streets." Literally hundreds of violent gangs roamed Miami in those days and Ladell threw his lot in with the Black Gangster Disciples, a set of the Chicago-based Folk Nation.

Yet the Disciples were not the cause of his problems. "Around sixteen," he explains, "I met my mother. She had money, lots of it. She was a big time drug dealer, and I went there." Over the next several years Ladell also made big money in the crack trade, working as a retailer for his mother. Ladell lived the high life. He fathered two children, bought a Mercedes Benz, gold chains, and the entire gangster rap CD collection. "Even though I was doing all this," he says, "I always had a spiritual side. I always felt like I had a personal relationship with a deity. And I loved history. When I saw *Roots* my

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

life changed." The dope game would change his life even more. In 1998, when he was 23 years old, Ladell killed a rival drug dealer and was sentenced to life without parole.

Once incarcerated, Ladell joined the Nation of Islam. Two years later, however, he met a prisoner who introduced him to an alternative view. "In prison I met someone on a search," says Ladell. "He was an older guy. He gave me a Bible and we started talking about how you could learn history on the Bible." Even though he had read the Bible as a youngster, Ladell says "I never studied it. I just read it because I had to." During the course of his Bible study with the older con Ladell experienced an epiphany. "It came in a dream," he says. "I saw myself face to face with God. He was quoting II Timothy 2:15. When I woke up, I felt a complete change and felt good."

II Timothy 2:15—"*Study to shew thyself approved unto God*, *a workman that needeth not to be ashamed*, *rightly dividing the word of truth*"—set Ladell on what he calls "a history journey, not a spiritual journey" leading to an important discovery:

> I learned that eight out of ten of the Biblical prophets had a spiritual awakening while in prison. I saw that blacks were like that, too. We didn't have time to study in the free world. Now in prison we do. There's no mistake about it: Prison is the best thing that ever happened to me and it's the best thing that ever happened to lots of black men.

Realizing that the Nation of Islam "didn't move me like the Bible moved me," Ladell abandoned the NOI and developed a religious creed of his own by combining Scripture with the revisionist black history of Yahweh Ben Yahweh's 96-page paperback classic, *You Are Not a Nigger! Our True History, the World's Best-kept Secret.* "The Hebrew Israelites didn't believe the meek would inherit the earth," writes Sydney

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Freedberg in her Pulitzer Prize-winning coverage of Yahweh Ben Yahweh. "[But] They thought that by standing up for themselves, they would" (1994:5).

The same promise would be afforded to black prisoners, reasoned Ladell, if only they learned to *study* like a *workman…that needeth not to be ashamed*. Thus Ladell embarked upon a mission to create a unique religious experience for the black prison inmate. His was a modified version of Black Hebrew Israelism beginning with the premise that inmates view the prison experience as taking away their purpose in life. "You sacrifice purpose and you have nothing," he says. "That is prison for most black men. It has no value to them. You got to change that wave around." Ladell taught inmates that prison was actually a gift from God. It was part of the black man's cultural history. Once understood, this gift would set prisoners on "a revolutionary path to self-betterment." That demanded casting off the dogmatic bonds of Black Nationalism, however, because it "only sets the black man down the satanic path to the skin color game"—a game that in Ladell's view has been a destructive force for incarcerated black men because "it promotes divisions among God's children." Contrary to traditional Black Hebrew Israelism, Ladell accepted any convict into his group, regardless of skin color. His philosophy was "One God, one mind, one love."

Like traditional Black Muslims and Black Hebrews, though, Ladell's group was a conservative outfit whose followers disdained materialism and the trappings of hip-hop subculture. "Hip-hop" says Ladell, "has been the worst influence on our people, puttin' down a generation gap through our people. Negativity has no place among us." When asked to explain the goal of his creed Ladell replies: "Having an infinite mind; a mind that goes beyond politics. I don't preach religion. I preach culture."

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Once transferred to the Franklin prison, Ladell began counseling other prisoners in need of spiritual comfort and eventually developed a dedicated following. A chaplain recalls:

> Within a year he [Ladell] had become a charismatic leader. It wasn't immediate, but he evolved as a leader. He would begin each of his Black Hebrew meetings by quoting II Timothy 2:15. It was his cardinal verse, intended to make sure that others were diligent about their setting. All of his followers would quote the verse as a guiding principle. Nowhere in the literature of Black Hebrew Israelism is there any mention of II Timothy 2:15. Nor is it mentioned on the Yahweh Ben Yahweh web site. It was totally unique to Ladell and his followers.

Today Ladell is in a more secure correctional facility where guards can carefully monitor his efforts to proselytize in the name of "One God, one mind, one love."

The Pariah

Morino is an African American, born in South Central Los Angeles in 1975. His formative years were unremarkable. He attended the local AME church, made good grades in elementary school, and played on a basketball team. Life began to take a dramatic turn for the worse, however, during the late 1980s. "My teenage years were brutal," he admits. "I started ditching school at twelve. I had no supervision. I came from a broken home. I started drinking, smoking weed, selling drugs." After doing two stints in California Youth Authority, Morino returned to South Central where he was shot in a drug deal and run over by a car driven by a rival dealer. "That's when I started to believe in vigilante justice," he says. "It's [also] when I started to pray to God."

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

In 1994 Morino was sentenced to prison on drug charges. He got out two years later and became, in his words, "a big time drug dealer. But I hated what I was doing. God answered my prayers by locking me up for good." In 1996 Morino was sentenced to life without parole for first degree murder. He was 21 years old.

Over the next five years Morino immersed himself in reading, concentrating on philosophy, history, and religion. "I read everything I could find about people being in harmony with other people," he says. Favorites included a book on Kabbalah called *Sages and Seers* along with *The Time is Now: Divine Revelation for Mass Destiny in This Hour at Hand* by the Prayer Warriors, and James Allen's classic essays on thought and consciousness, *As a Man Thinketh.* Yet the books that influenced him most were masterpieces of literature including, *Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* and *Essays* by Francis Bacon—works that speak eloquently to the hell of tortured isolation. "Blake and Bacon made me feel that I had the same potential they did," says Morino.

Yet this program of self-improvement came at a heavy cost for the young convict. "I became a pariah among my own people," he says. "The other black inmates, they started to turn against me [because of the readings]. I belonged with people like me." This dilemma led Morino to an intense study of Islam. "I read about Islam for years," he said. "My spirit needed meaning." After the terrorist attacks of 9/11 Morino's interest naturally turned to the role of Islam in world politics and he became a daily consumer of PBS's *Newshour with Jim Lehrer.*

He converted to Shia Islam at Folsom Prison in 2002. "I chose Shia because of the spirit of it," he says. "The other [forms of Islam] were too absolute." Consistent with his self-imposed rehabilitation program, Morino threw himself into his new faith. He

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

changed his diet and his name; gave up drugs, drink, and smoke; became more tolerant of others; and learned how to deal with his enemies. Asked how his life has changed, Morino says: “I’ve learned to appreciate the smallest thing. I also realize I was the victim of my own activities.” Yet because of the hardening of attitudes among other Muslims on the yard following the U.S. invasion of Iraq, he found himself a pariah for a different reason. He explains:

> Among these Muslim out here I don’t belong. People are recruiting everyday. It’s a ripe climate for terrorism. It’s scandalous. Everybody’s glorifying Osama bin Laden. But these Muslims come to Islam with the same gang mentality they had on the streets. Same red rags, same blue rags [symbols of the Crips and Bloods]. The mentality is pure ignorance driving terrorism. There is recruiting feeding on the broken spirit and ignorance.

The Pipe Dreamer

Jemahl was born to a black father and a white mother in Erie, Pennsylvania, in 1974. His father decamped shortly thereafter. Jemahl’s mother attended a Protestant church but “religion was no big deal in our family,” Jemahl recalls. “I turned bad at eight years old,” he continues, “and was sent to juvenile hall.” There he was influenced by a chaplain who convinced Jemahl of Jesus’ love and after reading the Bible Jemahl became a born again Christian. Yet at fourteen Jemahl incinerated that identity and embarked upon a journey that would lead him to atheism. “I began to look at Christianity as brainwashing,” he says, “so I started my own quest to find the truth. I read books about Albert Einstein. I became a science man and realized that religion didn’t jibe with science. I used my own system of analytical deduction to find the truth.”

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

At fifteen Jemahl returned to his mother's home in Eerie but things didn't work out. He was sent back in to juvenile hall in 1989 on robbery charges and fell into a severe depression. "I did lots of lonely cell time looking out the window," Jemahl explains, "watching the change of seasons. For awhile I didn't speak to anyone. I became introverted. Being introverted caused me to listen to my own desires, my thirsts."

At this point Jemahl was visited by his father, a convert to the Nation of Islam. Upon his discharge in 1990 Jemahl moved with his father to Los Angeles. "I tried to relieve my pain with sports, women, and drugs," he says. "I had strong desires and was trying to find something. For awhile the drugs worked, sometimes mushrooms, sometimes LSD. [When I took these drugs] I felt myself go up and felt myself at an astral level. I was [also] influenced by people I met in California and started having conversations in spiritual terms."

When he was seventeen Jemahl dropped out of high school, joined the Bloods, and was subsequently arrested for a triple homicide. He was remanded to the adult prison system and began serving life without parole.

There he continued his search. "I went to the pen at seventeen," he says. "I joined the Nation of Islam and then became a Five-Percenter"—the Five Percent Nation, a NOI offshoot founded in Harlem in 1964 by Clarence 13X, based on the premise that only five percent of Nation members can call themselves true advocates of freedom and justice.

> Through the Five-Percenters I learned that black power is my roots. I never saw the dynamics of race before. Five-Percenters teach that the message for the black man is that you must educate yourself to live. The biggest factor is identity. Europeans stripped blacks of their identity and this went deep into our history.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Jemahl's next transformation occurred in 1993 with the release of *Enter the Wu-Tang Clan (36 Chambers)*, considered by many critics to be one of the most significant albums of the 1990s and one of the greatest hip-hop albums of all time. Wu-Tang's ethos blended Eastern philosophy expressed in kung fu movies with Nation of Islam preaching and comic book-like characters (Ghostface Killah and Ol' Dirty Bastard) for just the right touch of levity. "Wu-Tang Clan caused me to see that the Five Percenters was the old way," Jemahl says. "I rejected Five Percent philosophy but still saw oppression. The black man still had his back to the wall." And this development, in turn, led Jemahl to search for a more strident religious ideology. "I needed to find justice," he says, "justice that leads to martyrdom."

That search led Jemahl to Sunni Islam. He converted to the faith in 1994 while incarcerated at California State Prison-Calipatria. Jemahl's affiliation with the prison Sunnis, combined with his links to the L.A. Bloods, made him a prime candidate for recruitment into JIS when he arrived at New Folsom Prison in 2003. But there were institutional factors behind his recruitment as well, summarized here by the New Folsom chaplain during the height of JIS's recruitment campaign:

> Chaplains were too busy to help with any serious religious conversions due to the overcrowding problem here. For the prisoners who converted to Islam, we had to rely mainly on volunteers. The Black Muslims who come into the prison are a scary bunch, especially the Sunnis. The true Islamic groups like the Sunnis are against the government and against the prison system….There is an element of evil in this prison. Inmates will use any opportunity to lash out against society. There's no state-sponsored effort to save them. Most inmates sit around making

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

> knives at night. There is a 70 percent recidivism rate. This makes the prison a Petri dish just waiting to foment terrorism. The same mentality that drives prisoners drives the suicide bombers in Iraq.

Asked to explain how his affiliation with JIS has changed his life, Jemahl replies with what can only be described as millennial fervor: "I can now see one people. The whole planet is on this journey. Before, my life was egotistical. This is what's killing society: Me, me, me! I began teaching the brothers: We need to do away with labels and boxes and follow the Prophet Mohammad."

Today Jemahl is still at New Folsom where he continues to "teach the brothers" by proselytizing hard-line Islamicism. As he says:

> People should be worried about us. People in this prison feel there is no way out. It's all about winning and loosing. I'm lookin' for justice. That's the difference between me and these other Niggers up in this bitch. When our back is against the wall we [JIS?] will seek justice. This prison is a cauldron of the realities [we face]. Prison is a big business and we're its slaves. This is not so much about Islam. I'm radical. Radical means you're holding to foundation. That's what the suicide bombers do. There's nothing but God left so let's go find a bomb.

The Pimp

Bobby was born in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in 1982. Raised by his maternal grandmother in the Southern Baptist Church, he claims to have "found Jesus" during his adolescence. Yet shortly thereafter he began to stray. After dropping out of school he moved from gang banging to the dope game. By the time he was fifteen Bobby had been shot, knifed, and had all of his teeth kicked out in a fight. An uncle took him under his

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

wing and introduced Bobby to the sex trade. He bought Bobby some flashy clothes and had him fitted with gold-plated false teeth. Moreover, Bobby became a pimp.

He was also extremely bright and a fiercely independent thinker. Bobby's life was the ghetto and there he was exposed to street preachers, each with their own unique theory and rhetorical flair. The street preachers gave Bobby some pamphlets on conspiracy theory that would begin his search for identity. These included such obscure Afro-centric works as "Lies and Secrecy" (about the Afrikaner Broederbond that ran the apartheid system in South Africa); "Why Slavery?" and "Why the Ghetto?" Yet the biggest influence on Bobby's thinking was Albert Pike (1809-1891), regarded by some as America's preeminent Freemason. Arising from obscure origins (theorized to be anywhere from the time of the building of King Solomon's Temple to the mid-1600s), the Freemasons are a worldwide fraternal organization that espouse moral and metaphysical ideals, which includes a belief in a deity. For Bobby, the Freemasons served as a gateway to the cultic.

In 1999, Bobby, then seventeen, was convicted of drug dealing and armed robbery and remanded to the adult prison system to begin serving a 25-year sentence. "When I got to prison I read the Bible and went to Baptist services in the chapel," he says. "But I was looking for something else to explain my criminality. When I found out the answer, I began to hate whites. I began to *hate* them." This hatred led Bobby to the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors (UNNM), a cultic religion that grew out of the Black Muslim movement of the late 1960s. Over the years, though, the UNNM rejected Islam (claiming that the religion has been historically useless for African Americans) focusing instead on their African roots in Egypt. UNNM doctrine also accentuates sociological and

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

biological explanations for the vitality of the African race and concludes that dark-skinned people have wisdom superior to lighter skinned folk. “I read about Malachi York,” says Bobby. “I followed what he said.” (UNNM’s spiritual leader, York claimed to be an extraterrestrial being and prophesied that space ships would descend from the sky in the magic year of 2003 to pick up 144,000 Africans chosen for rebirth as supreme beings.)

From there, Bobby continued his involvement in cults and became a Satanist. “I worshipped the devil for awhile,” he says. Yet just as quickly Bobby snuffed this identity and become a devotee of Black Hebrew Israelism.

> It answered all my questions about race. I had this newfound energy after joining the Black Hebrew Israelites. I got my GED and started reading more history, science, black studies. I had to figure out who I was. I learned that Africa had its golden era, but I never knew that until I joined the Black Hebrew Israelites.

Then again just as quickly, Bobby abandoned the Black Hebrew Israelites and joined the Nation of Islam, but this didn’t last long either because “NOI had a stigma about it,” he says. At this point Bobby began to study the Koran and by the time he reached the Franklin prison in 2006 he had become a Sunni Muslim. “I did better than ever after that,” he says. “I got a job in the barbershop cutting hair and became the best student of Islam at this camp.”

That appears to be more than bragging. Chaplains and prisoners speak highly of Bobby’s knowledge about Islam and his willingness to mentor other disciples of the faith. During my visit to the prison Bobby asked to be interviewed twice so that the sequence and motivations for his conversions would be properly documented. Strains of each

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

religious conversion appeared in his vocabulary, as he easily moved from the use of terms like "social stratification," "Diaspora," and "melanin distribution" (a biological element) in explaining black social movements, to citing obscure facts about the Civil War, Ancient Egypt, Louis Farrakhan, Satanist Aleister Crowley, rapper KRS-1, and Osama bin Laden. "Sunni Islam taught me to accept all different religions," he concludes. "It [also] taught me to not to believe in American imperialism. George Bush is evil."

Here, then, is another example of the complex nature of religious conversion among searchers. Between the ages of thirteen and twenty five, Bobby went from being a born again Southern Baptist to a Freemason; from Freemasonry to United Nuwaubin Nation of Moors; from UNNM to Satanism; from Satanism to Black Hebrew Israelism; from Black Hebrew Israelism to the Nation of Islam, and from NOI to Sunni Islam. Each step of the way he claimed these faiths independent of chaplains, other inmates, and outside influences alike. And instead of casting off one faith for another, he synchronized what he had learned into an original theological model that satisfied his natural curiosity about a divine role in history.

The Prodigy

Akil was born in Richmond, California, in 1970. His father was a black Baptist preacher so the boy had a strict upbringing. Accordingly, his grades were excellent and he avoided the allure of drugs and gangs. Akil graduated at the top of his high school class in 1988 and joined the Army, serving in various capacities here and abroad until 1992. He began questioning his Christian faith during these years and embarked upon a study of Eastern religions, first studying Buddhism, then Taoism, and finally Confucianism.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Akil returned to Richmond in 1993. One night, he got into an argument with an acquaintance over an unpaid debt. A fight ensued and Akil beat the man unconscious. “Unfortunately,” he says with a smile that never leaves his face in a 90 minute interview, “the guy died and I got life without parole.”

Akil arrived at Folsom Prison in June 1994 where he was celled up with a former Crip who had converted to Sunni Islam. Somewhere along the line a prison psychologist told Akil that he had an IQ of 140. This accelerated his conversion process. “My cellie had taught himself to read Arabic,” says Akil. “And he taught me Arabic in two days. After that I read the entire Koran from cover to cover.” Once he completed the reading Akil asked the prison chaplain for information on Sunni Islam and a short time later Akil converted to the faith. The effect on his life was significant, as he claims: “Islam helped me set boundaries. It taught me to have respect for others. It taught me to understand the true nature of humanity. It keeps me from doing the bad things of my past.”

Yet this was not the end of Akil’s conversion process. Sometime around 2000 he embarked on a mission to read the voluminous writings of the eminent Arab scholar Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406). Khaldun’s most famous book, the *Muqaddimah* (translated to English by Franz Rosenthal, Princeton University Press, 1981), was described by the British historian Arnold Tonybee as “undoubtedly the greatest work of its kind that has ever yet been created by any mind in any time or place.” Khaldun wrote on numerous subjects, including cultural history, economics, philosophy, demography, and sociology. It was this final subject that captured Akil’s attention.

Khaldun may have been the first scholar to advance a theory of social conflict. He began with the concept of ‘*asabiyah*, which roughly translates as “social cohesion” or

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

“tribalism.” Social cohesion is thought to arise spontaneously in tribes and other small kinship groups; it is then enlarged and intensified by a religious ideology. Khaldun argued, however, that group cohesion contains within itself the seeds of the group’s destruction. When a society becomes a great civilization, its high point will be followed by a period of social decay. Social decay diminishes the civilization and in time it will be conquered by barbarians. Once barbarians solidify their control over the conquered society, they become attracted to its more refined aspects (such as literacy and the arts) and within a period of four generations the former barbarians will be conquered by a new set of barbarians, who will repeat the process. In this way, Khaldun can be read as a theory of history.

Since converting to Sunni Islam, Akil has been a model inmate. Chaplains extol his virtues: He has avoided conflict with staff and has been a positive influence on his peers. Because of this Akil now leads the Islamic Studies Program at Folsom. As the leading voice of the Muslim population Akil trains other prisoners to become inmate teachers based on what he calls the “Three R’s”—Rehabilitation, Repentance, and Reform.

Akil’s Islamic Studies Program not only provides Folsom prisoners with a viable rehabilitation program, but it also serves as a countervailing weight against Islamic extremism. In 2007 there was only one part-time Muslim chaplain at the Prison; he was responsible for roughly ten percent of the Islamic instruction. Akil and his team of inmate teachers were responsible for 90 percent of the instruction. “We can’t rely on the prison to rehabilitate us,” says Akil. “So we have to do it ourselves. I get help with my self-help

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

groups because I have the foundation." A Folsom chaplain further explains the dynamics at play here:

> Overcrowding is the main problem here. It affects everything we do, foremost among them the way we deliver services to the Muslims. Muslims are quite prevalent in the population. We have Sunnis, Wahhabis, al-Islam, Nation of Islam we have lots of them, and Shiites. The Nation of Islam is the biggest problem. They pressure or intimidate inmates to convert. The NOI has some legitimate concerns. It is true that many administrators have a bias toward Christianity. But NOI is very radical. They play all these tapes by Louis Farrakhan. Their preachers tell inmates that 'Guards are not your friend'—I don't know how helpful that is. NOI also has a strong anti-government bent. They encourage inmates to overthrow the government.

Another Folsom chaplain expounds on these themes, offering insight into the justification for using inmate teachers:

> As chaplains, we are called on by the administration to monitor Muslim preachers who come into the prison. The problem is that many of these volunteers go over our heads to get credentials. They go to someone in central office or the legislature [and get approval that way]. We need greater uniformity for voluntary screening of these people. Also, we get no gang intelligence down here [in the chapel]. There is no officer presence in the chapel. Yet we have to abide by the chaplain's code: We won't permit one religious group to speak negatively about another. Intelligence is good when that code is broken, but nobody in intelligence listens to us.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The chaplains at Folsom Prison face enormous obstacles. The burden of overcrowding, the strident voices coming out of the Nation of Islam, the lack of chapel security, and role conflicts between chaplaincy and intelligence—all of these factors have led the chaplains to believe that the best way of providing Islamic services is not by relying on volunteer clerics from the community, but by turning to moderate Muslim prisoners led by Akil. "In the JIS case," says the second chaplain quoted above, "inmates were disenchanted with the religious offerings they received from the institution. To avoid that problem again, we must offer inmates something they are *not* disenchanted with." Volunteer preachers are not the solution to that problem because they cannot be controlled. But inmates like Akil can be controlled if they are allowed to remain active and authentic representatives of inmate concerns about Islam.

In addition to gaining the chaplains' respect for his service to the prison, Akil has appeared on CNN, PBS's FRONTLINE, and the Discovery Channel. Not surprisingly, Akil's views on prisoner radicalization reflect elements of Khaldunian sociology, as he explains below:

> The potential for radicalization is there, no doubt. There is no one from the outside who will radicalize us. That can only happen from the inside. Maximum security is more likely to produce radical prisoners because there is more violence in this environment. Yards are so politically charged these days, so guys who teach Islam teach from that perspective. They have to in order to maintain their credibility with inmates…The potential for radicalization must be understood on a one-to-one basis, because nobody's going to risk going radical in a public place. Believe me: if I want to go radical in public I can! You must remember: Islam has

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

always been shaped by the environment in which it is practiced. Prison is no different. As long as you can keep the environment right, you can avoid having radical Muslims. But in maximum security, you [Muslims] need to make a show on the yard because gangs do it. If gangs make a show, then Muslims have to make a show to survive.

The Pagan

Although much attention has been paid to the terrorist threat posed by prisoners once they are released, little attention has been given to the fact that correctional institutions may themselves be a potential target. As the JIS case demonstrates, street gangs are capable of forming gang alliances in prison that have a terrorist agenda. Other cases show that prison gangs are capable of using the same or similar tactics as terrorist groups. Because of this, U.S. prisons now have a Homeland Security function. Of primary concern is the matter of Improvised Explosive Devices, commonly referred to as IEDs. An estimated 70 percent of all terrorist attacks worldwide are carried out with IEDs. Recent intelligence indicates that the prison gangs most capable of using IEDs are the white supremacy organizations, including the Aryan Brotherhood, the Order of White Knights, and inmates who claim religious affiliation with Druidism and Odinism (Mercer, 2007). For example, investigators in the Virginia Department of Corrections recently interrogated a former member of the Aryan Brotherhood who served as sergeant-at-arms for the gang. According to a videotaped interview with the prisoner, as sergeant-at-arms it was his job to make weapons. “There is no crime you can’t do in prison,” he said. “I’ve made shanks and pipe bombs, spears and blow darts and zip guns. For fun, I used to kill birds with a match-head bomb.”(*Ibid.*).

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Such a concern brings us to the next case. Jake was born to an absconding father and an atheist mother in Long Beach, California, in 1977. An average student, during his formative years Jake developed a love of the ocean and took up surfing. "I spent most of my time on the streets or at the beach," he says. "I always enjoyed nature more than anything." He was also a voracious reader and by the age of twelve Jake had consumed *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* by Fredrick Nietzsche. "Probably not a good idea," says Jake as he expounds on Nietzsche's famous statement: "God is dead. We have killed him you and I." Nietzsche caused Jake to challenge the premise of his beliefs up to that point in life, and in response he began to immerse himself in the wild and wooly world of Southern California youth subculture.

He became a punk and then drifted into the glam rock scene. From there he shaved his head, bought a pair of Doc Marten boots, a flight jacket, and a set of brass knuckles—symbols of the international skinhead movement. By the time he was seventeen Jake had become straight-up white power, tattooed with swastikas, Vikings, and Nordic symbols. Drinking heavily now, he began committing the odd hate crime; first bashing gays and then assaulting Asians and blacks. By the time he was 21, Jake had become a legend among California skinheads. A year later, he committed a double homicide and was sentenced to life without parole.

Jake arrived at New Folsom Prison in 1999. Due to his neo-Nazi credentials he was immediately pressed into the Aryan Brotherhood. And in this way he was introduced to the smorgasbord of white supremacy religions—Christian Identity, the World Church of the Creator, Odinism, Wicca and Asatru. "I met this one guy on the yard," he recalls. "[He was] a very strong character. He gave me some books to read." Included among

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

them was Robert Greene's *48 Laws of Power* which has been described as an heir to Machiavelli's *Prince.* Greene's basic premise is that learning one's emotions and the arts of deception are essential for survival. The *Laws* include such principles as everyone wants more power; emotions, including love, are detrimental; deceit and manipulation are life's paramount tools. Embracing power is a ruthless game, intended to give practitioners an advantage over their fellow man. Essentially, the book can be read as a how-to manual for surviving in maximum security custody.

Working against this grain, however, was the Aryan Brotherhood with its code of total domination over their members. Deceit and manipulation of the Brotherhood, the withholding of fealty from its leaders—these are exploitative tactics worthy of being doused with gasoline and set on fire. "The Aryan Brotherhood is all about control," says Jake. "You have no rights. Your ass is owned and operated by the AB."

Also included among the books Jake was given on the yard that day were several tracts on Odinism. "That's how I learned about [the Nordic God] Thor," he says. "I'd always loved nature so Odinism was meant for people like me. I thought, 'This is what I've been looking for all my life.'" Jake converted to Odinism in 1999 and for the next seven years he practiced its pagan ceremonies, followed its rituals, and gave up drinking and smoking. For his favorite God, he selected a woman: Freyja, Goddess of Norse and German mythology associated with earth, fertility, and beauty because "it fit my genetic makeup," he explains. "It's old." Jake also became a fully illustrated man during this period. His arms and torso were now covered with an elaborate web of Nazi and Nordic symbols, and so was his skull and face, giving him a look of sheer malevolence.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Asked to explain what effect the conversion has had on his life, Jake replies: "It made me more secure. Part of the past I've been trying to name all my life has been named." Yet he was still practicing the *48 Laws.* And because of the blood in/blood out oath he had taken earlier, he was still an Aryan Brother. He had no choice in that matter. But choice was what both the *Laws* and Odinism were all about. Claiming what he called his "Odinic right" to self-determination, Jake began to distance himself from the "white drama" of yard politics. This would set him on a collision course with the AB.

Details of the plot are classified. Yet gang intelligence officers were able to offer a broad outline: Sometime in 2006, a conspiracy was forged inside "a major white supremacy gang" at New Folsom to overpower guards on the yard. There is no graver breach to the staff/inmate code of conduct and no more serious a threat to prison security. Such an act provides the essential principle in the complex algorithm that permits the use of deadly force against an inmate. Guards were able to thwart the takeover, however, based on information provided by a confidential informant inside the gang. Officers were also willing to say this: That confidential informant was Jake. Once more, then, there is evidence showing a positive relationship between a prisoner's religious conversion and institutional safety.

Today Jake is in the Protective Custody Unit at New Folsom. He will spend the rest of his life there; never again will he walk the mainline because as a "rat" he is marked for murder. "I found out what was missing in my life," he concludes. "I don't have to be controlled anymore. Now I'm here to practice religion and nothing more."

Manipulating Converts

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Although chaplains offered anecdotal evidence of manipulation as a motivation for prisoners' conversions, none saw this as either a significant factor or a major source of concern. Of the thirty prisoners interviewed for this study, none converted to a religion for manipulative reasons.

Free-World Recruited Converts

Likewise, none of the prisoners were influenced by the recruiting efforts of outside clergy. This held true for all religions: Native American, Wicca, Odin/Asatru, Buddhist, secular humanism, Black Hebrew Israelism, and the various schools of Islam. Prisoners converted to these religions through friendship and kinship networks, or through independent study and reflection. This held true for crisis converts, protection-seekers and searchers alike.

There is no issue of greater concern to the prison intelligence community, however, than the influence of free-world religious leaders who promote Wahhabi Islam in an effort to recruit convicted felons into the international jihad movement. It is of profound importance to the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI. The prison systems examined in this research have different experiences with this problem, and have therefore taken different steps to deal with it.[10]

The Michigan DOC

In the Michigan Department of Corrections, community recruiters pose little threat. Instead, the greatest dangers are presented by prisoners who belong to the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam (including the Five Percent Nation). With their appeal to a Black Nationalist identity, these groups attract some of the most violent

---

[10] See U.S. Department of Justice (2004) for a full review of the BOP's response to this problem.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

inmates in the system. According to one administrator, they draw “most of the thugs” in Michigan prisons who become “the major power brokers on the yard.” The problem then transfers to Michigan’s black communities, especially low-income areas of Detroit, Pontiac, and Flint where Moorish Science and NOI temples have large numbers of ex-offenders in their congregations.

Michigan prisons employ a number of imams from Moorish Science and NOI temples. All of them are vetted through the Chaplaincy Advisory Council operated by the DOC central office chaplain. English language proficiency, U.S. citizenship, and prior criminal histories are taken into account. Members of the Council include the Grand Sheikhs of the Moorish and NOI communities who participate in the vetting. The Council also sets standards for “prisoner imams”—inmates who conduct Jumna services and religious education programs. In this way, then, the Michigan DOC provides a structural prophylactic against outsiders who may recruit prisoners for the cause of Wahhabism.

Equally important, if not more so, are the informal barriers to outside recruitment. Community conflict provides one such barrier. Notes the administrative chaplain:

> Most volunteers who come into the prisons are African American converts to al-Islam who preach very traditional Islamic stuff. Islamic prisoners don’t get lots of support from the traditional Islamic community. The [traditional] Islamic community is made up of Middle-Easterners and most of them don’t like blacks. And the blacks don’t like Middle-Easterners because they feel that Middle-Easterners are taking over their communities. They own all the convenience stores and liquor stores. Black churches are now mosques. So it’s a very antagonistic situation out there.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Another barrier is provided by the inmate imams. "No prisoner faith group," argues the administrator, "be they Moorish Science, the Nation of Islam or al-Islam, wants volunteer support. Prisoners like the power of running their own religious groups. For prisoners, there is nothing more important than power. Volunteers are a threat to that because they represent power sharing."

Moreover, Michigan officials do not see prisoners as a primary area of concern for terrorist recruitment by outsiders. "We process and monitor our volunteers very carefully," says the central office chaplain. "Then we have a staff person monitor their seminars at higher-level security institutions. Outside recruiting wouldn't work in religious groups in prison. Other prisoners in the group would want no part of it." The real threat may be found in deteriorating community neighborhoods, as the chaplain concludes: "There's enough hostility on the streets of Flint to build a terrorist organization. Ever been to Flint? It makes prison look like a picnic."

The Florida DOC

The Florida Department of Corrections also operates its religious services on a traditional hierarchical model. All policies on religious volunteers originate with the Chaplaincy Services Administrator at central office. The policies are passed to a Lead Chaplain who overseas religious services within a designated region of the State. The policies are then implemented at various institutions within regions by 118 full-time prison chaplains. In addition to the full-time chaplains, the Department employs numerous contractors in remote prison camps, mainly serving Jewish and Native American inmates. All volunteers and contract employees are supervised by institutional chaplains, who report back up through the chain of command to central office.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Services for Muslim inmates are provided by religious volunteers and spiritual advisors—all of whom are vetted at DOC central office for ordination certificates, clergy identification cards, criminal background checks, and Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement restrictions. “Most of our Muslim volunteers are doctors and professionals,” says the DOC official responsible for the vetting. “They cause no problems.” This was confirmed by a Franklin chaplain who observed: “The chaplains [in central office] reach out to volunteers in the Islamic community. The volunteers who come here are very mild in their Khotbah [sermons]. They show little doctrinal positioning and are very eclectic in their instruction. The FBI came down here and questioned all of our volunteers after 9/11. The FBI found that they were not a problem.”

What does cause problems, though, is overcrowding. “Our biggest problem is the lack of time to work with all the groups we have in prison,” said the central office administrator. “We don’t have time to fit in all the groups we’re responsible for.” As such, prison chaplains rely on inmate teachers to fill the breach on religious services for Muslims. Within each facility, inmates are permitted to elect one inmate imam who provides Jumna prayers to all Muslims—Sunnis, Shiites, NOI, Moorish Science Temple, and al-Islam—in one combined service conducted under the watchful eye of the institutional chaplain. “And if they get political,” says another central office administrator, “we shut them down.”

But they do get political, of course, and the problem arises with one-on-one proselytizing. The administrator continues:

> We can usually control what happens in the chapel. But recruitment on the compound is always an issue. We don’t want one inmate with power over others.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

> [Therefore] we're interested in hierarchies at the institutions, and the use of rhetoric. There are no secrets on a compound; everybody has their snitches; and there's always somebody to catch. So when we find an inmate who is gaining power, we roll him up and transfer him someplace else, usually to a rural camp.

This "separate and isolate" approach has recently led the Florida DOC to open a new 78-bed special housing unit intended to compel inmates into the practice of traditional Islam. This is where inmates go if they get caught proselytizing Prison Islam.

To be sure, security problems exist in Florida as they do anywhere else, but they do not involve volunteers from the Islamic community, be they Wahhabi or other strains of the faith. The administrator goes on: "We're now having problems with gangs that have a religious basis. They try to take over organized [religious] services and turn them into gang meetings. The Odinists, the Nation of Yahweh and the Black Hebrew Isrealites give us the most grief. "

The California DCR

The situation in California is markedly different. "We have some Black Hebrew Israelites, the so-called Black Jews," said the chaplain at New Folsom, "but they go underground because the Nazi Low Riders have threatened to kill them all. We can't get a Rabbi to come to the prison because the Nazis have threatened to kill any Jew who walks onto the yard." These comments summarize the dominance of gangs in the CDCR. Every other aspect of the system is subordinate to the gang problem, and the gang problem is largely a function of the overcrowding problem. Organized religion is little more than an afterthought.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Before the prison building boom in California, which began in the early 1970s, there was one chaplain for every 500 inmates. Today, there is one chaplain for every 2,000 inmates. “Chaplains are hired simply for compliance to [American Correctional Association] standards,” says the New Folsom chaplain. “Chapels are used mainly by gangs as a way to do gang business— passing drugs, selling sex, violence.” In addition to overcrowding and understaffing, another factor that makes this possible is the architectural design of New Folsom. The prison has three yards, each with its own chapel. To get from one yard to the next requires walking through three security gates, ground transportation through two sally ports, and then walking through three more security gates—a trip than can take an hour or more. “Multiple yards means that a chaplain’s presence gets spread around,” said another chaplain. “So the chaplain tends to loose his influence on any particular yard. That’s when gangs move in [to chapels].”

Perhaps the most striking difference between California and other jurisdictions is the absence of centralized leadership. The CDCR does not have a central office administrator in charge of chaplaincy services. Therefore policies on religion are developed at each institution. All records of religious affiliation among inmates are maintained locally, typically in paper files since California prisons have yet to computerize their records. All religious services are locally coordinated. And all volunteers are locally selected; hence there is no uniform system for approving volunteers.

More than 15,000 volunteers work in CDCR institutions; some 90 percent of them in religious programming. Together, Folsom and New Folsom have about 100 religious volunteers who are vetted not by chaplains but by intelligence officers. Intelligence

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

officers vet these volunteers for security clearances, yet little attention is given to such religious credentialing as ordination certificates or clergy IDs, thereby creating a structural loophole through which the Wahabbists may pass should they be so inclined. Some religious volunteers make their way into the prisons through political contacts in Sacramento, thereby exploiting another structural loophole. Because prison chaplains are left out of the loop when it comes to selecting and approving volunteers, they often distrust these volunteers once they arrive at the institutions. In order to abide by the chaplain's code prohibiting one faith group from disparaging another, chaplains tend to work around volunteers by allowing inmates to lead the bulk of religious services for Muslims because they, at least, can be trusted. Meanwhile volunteers continue to show up at the prisons where they hold Islamic services without oversight by chaplains and guards.

Such social conflict creates an organizational culture no longer driven by ideals of reform but by personal interest. Due primarily to a lack of administrative control, volunteers are pitted against chaplains who are pitted against guards and intelligence officers. The culture of self interest then extends to prisoners, many of whom already hold extreme views about their government. Sunni inmates are pitted against Shiites; Shiites are pitted against the Nation of Islam; NOI against the Black Hebrew Israelites who face the murderous Nazi Low Riders, and so on down the racial divide it goes. Add to this the immense overcrowding problem, the lack of chapel security, and the administrative failure to share intelligence with chaplains, and all the organizational preconditions are in place for the emergence of another terrorist group like JIS. The only

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

thing missing is a charismatic leader capable of radicalizing the most vulnerable. If this research is any indication, there is no shortage of such leaders in California prisons today.

The Influence of Chaplains

There is one final note to be made on motivations for conversion. Prior research has identified five reasons for religious conversions among inmates (crisis, protection, searching, manipulation, and free-world recruitment) yet strangely absent from this list is the influence of prison chaplains. I am not talking about volunteers here, but full-time, state-funded prison chaplains. As it turns out, they can play a crucial role in the conversion process.

Two New Folsom prisoners claimed that their religious conversions could be directly attributed to the institutional chaplain through his work in what is called the Inside Circle Foundation. Established by inmates and ex-convicts at Folsom Prison in 1997, the Inside Circle is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to offering prisoners an ecumenical, spirit-led experience that attempts to restore their personal lives. Today over 100 inmates participate in the program at New Folsom. In addition to supervising weekly Men's Group meetings inside the New Folsom chapels, the institutional chaplain oversees several four-day intensive training programs each year. Inside Circle also involves a network of ex-offender facilitators who return to the prison on a weekly basis to take part in the Men's Group meetings. Its goal is to reduce both prison violence and recidivism rates for parolees.

One of the two cases mentioned above—a 58-year-old prisoner named John who is serving a life sentence under California's three-strike law—will suffice to make the point that chaplains matter:

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

I spent the first four years here hating everything. Then I met Dennis Marino [the chaplain] and he brought me back into the fold. He laid it out very simply. He said: ‘John, it’s time to get your life right with God. Stop all your hating and get right with God, now. Not next month or next week, but now!’ I’d tried other religious programs. I went to all these Islamic meetings, Jehovah Witness meetings but none of them had structure. Without structure rehabilitation won’t work. But the Men’s Group made me evaluate myself. I can say anything in there. It’s better than all the psychological counseling I’ve had to deal with problems I’ve got from two tours of duty in Vietnam. It’s not a matter of bonding with these other men, but of trust. Trust is a precious thing in the penitentiary, a mighty precious thing.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

CHAPTER FOUR:

The Terrorist Threat

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the second research question: What do correctional intelligence officials have to say about the potential for religiously-converted prisoners to become terrorists? The chapter draws on interviews with intelligence officials in Florida and California, as well as information gleaned from briefings and interviews with two intelligence analysts from the National Joint Terrorism Task Force.

The Florida Experience

Florida officials have been interested in terrorism since it was discovered that Jose Padilla had converted to Islam after serving time in the Broward County jail in 1992. The Florida DOC coordinates its terrorism intelligence through security forces also responsible for drug enforcement. The gang intelligence section operates separately under the Security Threat Group (STG) division, but shares information with the terrorism intelligence section.

The head of terrorism intelligence recognized that that many Florida prisoners are vulnerable to radicalization and terrorist recruitment. Prisoners themselves are keenly aware of this. The official said: “Radicalized prisoners are very aware that people are interested in radicalized prisoners. They are very careful who they talk to in prison.” The official also noted that most inmates are radicalized by other radical inmates, and not by outside influences. He further recognized that the greatest threat emanates from fringe elements of Prison Islam, including Muslim inmates who “look like white supremacists.” Finally, the official acknowledged that the greatest challenge to gathering intelligence lies

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

in the organizational culture of American corrections. "Good intelligence depends on good law enforcement," he said. "And there is no law enforcement mentality in corrections. The STG model is too rigidly defined. It is inflexible and cannot detect criminal sensibilities [in the inmate population]. Intelligence has to adapt to new issues all the time. Gang coordination at the institutions is the key."

The Department's STG administrator coordinates the activities of 100 gang intelligence officers in 135 correctional facilities where they monitor more than 11,000 gang members. The greatest threats to security stem from the geographic origins of inmates involved with the Latin Kings, the Gangster Disciples, the Folk Nation, a Haitian gang known as the Z Mafia, and the Zoo Niggers, which includes black and white prisoners. The world of gangs has become very complex in recent years as white supremacists are now joining such gangs as the Crips, the Bloods, and the Black Gangster Disciples. Confirming the trend toward the racial integration of gangs noted by terrorism intelligence, and the threats to chapel security noted by Florida chaplains in the last chapter, the STG administrator recognized that:

> Gang members are now crossing racial lines and joining other gangs to increase their numbers for protection issues. Everything has to do with protection. Gang members need to meet so they use religious call-outs to meet. White supremacists are crossing over to the Islamic groups. Members of the National Socialist Movement are becoming Sunni Muslims. White inmates are joining black supremacy groups. Some white supremacy inmates want a harder edge so they are going into foreign national groups who are of interest to the terrorism section.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Consistent with the observations of the terrorism intelligence administrator, the STG administrator said that prisoner radicalization was less a problem of outside recruitment than it was of inmates radicalizing other prisoners in small groups. Finally, and also consistent with terrorism intelligence, the STG administrator recognized that the greatest challenge to prison security lies in organizational culture. “Prisoners have changed but so have staffs,” he said. “This is a younger generation [of correctional administrators and guards] who has no interest in helping inmates. They are looking for easier ways to supervise inmates, cheaper ways, and that’s about all.”

The California Experience

In California, all law enforcement functions are managed by the Office of Correctional Safety (OCS). The OCS is responsible for a host of duties, including criminal investigations, fugitive apprehension, gang management, security, intelligence, and emergency preparedness and response. It also has responsibility for detecting, preventing, and deterring prisoner radicalization. All of these duties fall to 125 institutional gang investigators under OCS authority. The scope of their work is staggering. There are more than 300,000 inmates, wards, and parolees in the California prison system. They generate an estimated 5.8 million visiting, telephone, financial, incident, and movement data points annually. An estimated 20,000 inmates belong to prison gangs, the most disruptive being the Mexican Mafia, the Black Guerrilla Family, the Aryan Brotherhood, the Nazi Low Riders, and the Nuestra Familia.

The issue of prisoner radicalization is subsumed by these other formidable problems. “Terrorist screening, investigation, and assessment do not exist in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation,” confessed the head of OCS.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

"The issue just came to the fore with the JIS case. We've been more worried about the southern Mexicans assaulting northerners on a daily basis." In the wake of the JIS case, the OCS has conceived prisoner radicalization in the cold calculus of a management information problem. "We have no computer system in place to monitor inmates," the OCS chief went on. "We have no technical sophistication now. We have only paper files or we rely on phone calls."

In response, the OCS is poised to implement a multimillion dollar computerized data management system known as the Threat Assessment Center. The Center will hold more than five-million pieces of data on such security issues as inmate disciplinary incidents, intelligence operations, inmate visitation, and mail and phone call records. This information will then be "pushed out" to individual institutions and other intelligence systems. The Threat Assessment Center will also provide the technological capabilities necessary to perform link-analysis between criminal indicators at different institutions or data-mine suspicious activity intended to meet the objective of preventing prisoner radicalization in California. Without the Threat Assessment Center, says a CDCR budget request, the OCS will not have "the intelligence functions necessary to prevent terrorist suspects…and prison radicalization from operating within its correctional system statewide" (CDCR, 2007: 2).

Asked if such data management could have prevented the JIS incident, the OCS head responds: "Yes. If we had intelligence capabilities across institutional lines back then, we could have monitored [Kevin James's] phone calls and mail. That would have led us to the plot."

The Federal Experience

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

American terrorism is ultimately an issue for the federal government. Kevin James did not wage his terrorist plot against the State of California, or its beleaguered prison system, but against the United States of America for its role in Iraq. Prisoner radicalization is therefore of primary concern to the federal government; at best it is only a secondary concern to state prison administrators. From Florida to California these administrators are more concerned with institutional security than they are with identifying prisoners who may have a grievance against the U.S. Government, whether or not that grievance was fomented by Islamic extremism. In the daily life of prison wardens, terrorist recruitment is a low priority.

The federal effort to combat prisoner radicalization is conducted under the Correctional Intelligence Initiative (CII). Its purpose is to prevent potential acts of terrorism by inmates in the United States. CII includes all federal, state, local, territorial, tribal, and privatized prisons. Roughly 75 percent of all cases referred to CII involve state and local corrections who channel information to CII through their own Prison Program Radicalization Working Group (Trout, 2007). (Florida and California both participate in the CII.) The CII has four subprojects: (1) general intelligence gathering; (2) recruiting in custody; (3) confidential sources on terrorism matters; and (4) inmates calling persons of concern (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004). Information on these subprojects is channeled through the National Joint Terrorism Task Force (NJTTF) at FBI Headquarters. The FBI then opens a case if the information warrants it.

The CII program has recently completed assessments at 2,088 state and local correctional facilities in the United States. The major findings of the assessments can be

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

summarized in seven points. Most of these points are consistent with the results of my research.

First, there are a significant number of terrorists who are already in custody. These prisoners include domestic terrorists (former members of the Order, etc.) and international terrorists (most importantly, members of al-Qaeda). They are incarcerated at all jurisdictional levels. For example, Richard Reid was first locked up in a county jail, then sent to a state prison, and finally to a federal institution. Kevin James went from a state prison to a county jail and then to federal lock up. Such high-profile inmates may try to either carry on a preexisting terrorist plot, or radicalize other prisoners for the cause.

Second, radicalization occurs locally. While inmates may be inspired by foreign terrorist groups like al-Qaeda, these groups are not directly involved in the radicalization process.

Third, local efforts to radicalize prisoners have been aided and abetted by individuals who come into prisons to provide services directly to inmates. Some of these individuals have been highly mobile, visiting prisoners in more than one state. Some have distributed extremist literature to inmates.

Fourth, there is evidence of gang crossover in the radicalization process. Gang members are radicalized on an individual basis, which may be based on individual criminal skill sets. Radicalization is therefore developed on a prison gang model.

Fifth, intelligence on radicalization has come from confidential sources within prisoner populations (presumably from gang members).

Sixth, the CII assessments did not discover a JIS-like pattern of terrorist recruitment in U.S. prisons.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Seventh, there is, however, an important lesson to be learned from the JIS case. Similar to JIS, the CII assessments show that charismatic leadership is the most important factor in prisoner radicalization. Charismatic leadership is more important than the most commonly reported sociological factors associated with radicalization (such as overcrowding, conditions of confinement, lack of rehabilitation, etc.)

An intelligence analyst for the CII recognized two critical problems in the federal effort to detect, deter, and disrupt the radicalization of prisoners. One is simple awareness. “A major problem of the CII program is that not everyone is aware of it,” he said. “No matter how well you get the word out some [prison officials] are just not going to be aware of the program.” The other problem relates to the provision of religious services for Muslim inmates. The analyst concludes:

> It is difficult to attract imams to prison work. Contractors ordinarily provide Islamic services for inmates. Charismatic inmates may assert themselves as unauthorized imams. When this happens, chaplains simply allow prisoners to lead the group.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions and Recommendations

Motivations for Conversion

This study began by identifying various motivations for prisoner conversions to non-Judea Christian faith groups and asked the question: Which of the motivations are most often cited by chaplains and prisoners themselves? Interviews were conducted with fifteen prison chaplains, some of whom assisted with the selection of inmates for the study. Thirty inmates were interviewed, all of whom were incarcerated for violent crimes. Two-thirds of them belonged to a prison gang and many had been in street gangs prior to incarceration. During their imprisonment, these inmates underwent conversions to a wide range of religions, including Native American, Islam (traditional and American versions), Black Hebrew Israelism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christian Identity, Odinsim, Wicca, and secular humanism.

Consistent with previous research, the study found that prisoner conversions are motivated by personal crisis, or by the need for protection (Irwin, 1980). Although their influence has been neglected in prior studies, it was discovered that institutional chaplains also play an important role in motivating inmate conversions.

Yet the primary motivation for religious conversion is spiritual searching, a process in which an individual searches “for some satisfactory system of religious meaning to interpret and resolve his discontent” (Lofland and Stark, 1965: 868). It was determined that prisoners are often able to assume and subsequently discard a succession of convert roles. In addition to religious meaning, searchers are inspired by their quest for

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

identity and knowledge which is found in books, hip-hop music, and media. This is especially true for inmates who convert to Islam—a finding that is in line with the emerging literature on radicalization among Western Muslims.

Most notably, Wiktorowicz (2005) interviewed thirty members of al-Muhajiroun, a transnational Islamic movement based in Britain that supports the use of violence against western interests in Muslim countries, and found that a key factor in Islamic radicalization is *religious seeking* which "involves a process of trial and error whereby the individual independently searches for knowledge through friends and family, books, or the media" (2005: 7). Taken together with findings of the present research, Wiktorowicz's study is important because it shows how people from different places, under different circumstances, create cultures of Islamic radicalization in similar ways. Such a phase may be particularly dangerous for people with novice levels of religious expertise, however, because they are highly susceptible to radical interpretations of Islam. For novice searchers, the only way to combat the expansion of radical Islam is through the moderating voice of religious authority and intellectual agency (Beutel, 2007).

The study tested the hypothesis that, no matter the motivation, joining a non-traditional religion provides a means for prisoners to take advantage of available resources to use their time in a more productive manner than prisoners who identify with, and internalize, more debilitating and aggressive forms of prison culture. In the main, findings confirm this hypothesis. The study shows that inmate conversions to non-traditional religions generally have a humanizing effect on prison culture by reducing the salience of predatory, exploitive, and fatalistic behaviors normally required to survive.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Not only do non-traditional religions offer prisoners a viable path to rehabilitation, they can also play an important role in prison security.

Terrorist Recruitment

The research also asked the question: What do correctional intelligence officials have to say about the potential for religiously-converted prisoners to become targets for terrorist recruitment? Interviews were conducted with nine intelligence officials. Findings were augmented by a review of court and media documents related to the JIS case at New Folsom Prison. Officials indicate that prisoners are indeed vulnerable to radicalization and terrorist recruitment (see also U.S. Department of Justice, 2004). Yet consistent with the terrorism literature (Richardson, 2006; Sageman, 2004), such recruitment is extremely rare. Terrorist recruitment methods are not designed to enlist large numbers of followers; rather, they are intended to recruit a small cadre of dedicated adherents to the terrorist cause.

The study tested the hypothesis that prisons may be fertile recruiting grounds for extremists who exploit prisoners' conversions to non-traditional faith groups. Findings generally confirm this hypothesis as well, yet that finding must be qualified in terms of the idiosyncratic nature of prisoner subcultures. In harmony with previous scholarship (see Thomas and Zaitzow, 2004), the study found that maximum security prisons are more likely to produce radicalized prisoners than lesser custody institutions. Maximum security has fewer rehabilitation programs; higher levels of overcrowding; more serious gang problems; and more politically charged living spaces. These factors constitute a Petri dish in which terrorism may grow and prosper.

Summary

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

In the final analysis, then, evidence suggests that there is some credibility to both the reassuring and the alarmist perspectives on prisoner radicalization in America. And this presents a conundrum. On one hand, signs of radicalization include positive personal behavior. For the overwhelming majority of inmates who convert to Islam and other non-traditional faiths during incarceration, the experience helps prisoners learn self-discipline and interact with other inmates and staff in a positive manner, thereby making a meaningful contribution to the reformation process. On the other hand, from the crucible of positive behavior comes the potential for ideologically-inspired criminality. In the rarest of cases, conversion may incite terrorism. On this highly circumscribed basis, then, U.S. prisons are vulnerable to prisoner radicalization and terrorist groups that infiltrate, recruit, and operate behind the walls.

Moreover, terrorist recruitment in prison is a problem unlike any other faced by correctional administrators today, or at any other time in history. Terrorist recruitment operates in the deep underground of inmate subcultures, between the seams of prison gangs and extremist religions that inspire ideologies of intolerance, hatred, and violence. Even more importantly, it is a problem so atypical of everyday prison life that it defies prediction. In 2004 there were more than 2 million prisoners behind bars in American facilities; as best we know, exactly one of them (JIS's Levar Washington) was recruited into an actual terrorist plot. Identifying one inmate out of 2 million is like trying to single out and capture a gnat in the Smokey Mountains of Tennessee during the heat of summer. It is impossible. Furthermore, in terms of prison security there is no such thing as a policy that guarantees total control of an inmate population. Inmates have ways of

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

compromising even the most well crafted security methods, including those meant to detect and deter radicalization.

The Social Context of Prisoner Radicalization and Terrorist Recruitment

The research made additional discoveries that provide a more nuanced social context for understanding prisoner radicalization and its potential link to terrorist recruitment.

Islam is the fastest growing religion among prisoners in America. Among those who seek faith while imprisoned in the United States, approximately 80 percent turn to Islam.

Prisoner conversions usually occur through friendship and kinship networks. The study confirms previous research showing that social networks are important in explaining how people are recruited into religious movements and organizations (Lofland and Stark, 1965). Prisoners typically convert to Islam and other non-Judea Christian religions upon the advice of parents, cellmates, and fellow gang members. Although inmates may be inspired by free-world foreign terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda, these groups are not directly involved in the radicalization process (see also U.S. Department of Justice, 2004).

There is increasing conflict within inmate Islam. The increase of Islamic populations in U.S. prisons has led various factions of the faith to compete for followers. The Nation of Islam is competing with al-Islam, Sunni, and Shiite strains of the religion. Meanwhile, a radical new "Prison Islam" has emerged from the shadows. These groups are known for encompassing gang values and fierce intra-group loyalties. Therefore, and

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

consistent with prior research, conversions to Islam can be attributed to the volatility of contemporary prisoner subcultures (Dix-Richarson and Close, 2002).

Extremist groups have long viewed the prison as fertile grounds for recruitment. The historical record shows that prison converts to Islam have gone on to commit acts of terrorism. Prisoner radicalization is not unique to Islam. Adherents of white supremacy religions—specifically, Christian Identity and Odinism—have also turned to terrorist action upon release.

Some of the world's most dangerous terrorists are currently serving lengthy sentences in U.S. correctional institutions. These imprisoned terrorists have conducted extensive outreach to other prisoners and to free-world extremists as well. They are true believers who require little proselytizing from outside clerics to carry out their violent agendas. They are incarcerated at all jurisdictional levels: from federal institutions and state prisons to county lock-ups.

The danger to U.S. security is not the number of adherents to Islam, or to white supremacy religions, but in the potential for small groups of true believers to instigate terrorist acts upon their release from prison. A miniscule percentage of radicalized inmates will join terrorist networks, and they are likely to be fresh converts—the newly pious, those with an abundance of emotion and feeling—who are highly secretive about their intentions.

Though impossible to predict, the link between prisoner radicalization and terrorism can be modeled by an analysis of the JIS case. The JIS case is important for three reasons: (1) it represents the only *operational* terrorist plot to occur within the U.S. since the 9/11 attacks; (2) it represents part of an international post-9/11 trend toward

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

homegrown terrorist cells whose members seek al-Qaeda's blessing for an attack; and (3) other prisoners may be trying to emulate the group.

The significance of the JIS case lays in its recruitment and operational strategies. JIS began with a traditional form of American Islam (Nation of Islam) which was used as a foundation for creating an alternative religious vision expressed in a mutating form of Sunni-inspired Prison Islam. This vision provided JIS members with identity, meaning, and a form of collective resistance. JIS operated below security radar, often under the guise of constitutionally-protected rights to religious worship. More than anything, though, JIS was distinguished by its charismatic leader. The group's collective resistance was encapsulated in prison gang culture, thereby fusing JIS's spiritual identity to its gang history. Once JIS conceived its terrorist plot, the plan was taken to the community by a freshly converted parolee who turned to a street gang for firearms to be used in a series of precursor crimes intended to fund the attack. Operatives were recruited from the international jihad movement inspired by the U.S.-led war in Iraq. All the while, the JIS plot continued to be directed by its charismatic leader who remained incarcerated in maximum security custody.

The prisoner radicalization problem cannot be separated from the prison gang problem. Prison Islam began as a gang problem and this problem has only become more complex in recent years. Former rivals, like the Crips and the Bloods, are joining forces under religious banners. Gang members are also crossing racial lines, joining forces with larger gangs to increase their numbers for protection. Some of this crossover involves white supremacists who are joining militant Islamic groups. Radicalization is therefore increasingly developed on a prison gang model.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The greatest institutional-level cause of prisoner radicalization is overcrowding. Institutional chaplains are often unable to help inmates with religious conversions due to prison overcrowding. Overcrowding is the primary cause of chaplain understaffing, the lack of security in chapels, role conflicts between chaplaincy and intelligence officers, and gang dominance of increasingly limited living spaces for prisoner, including yards, cellblocks, chow halls, and chapels. These factors both exacerbate the potential for prisoner radicalization and increase the threat of terrorist recruitment.

The greatest individual-level cause of prisoner radicalization is one-on-one proselytizing. Prisoner radicalization is less a problem of outside recruitment than it is of inmates radicalizing other inmates.

Within inmate organizations, the greatest cause of prisoner radicalization is charismatic leadership. Charismatic leadership is more important than the most commonly cited sociological factors associated with radicalization.

The most immediate safeguard against radicalization in overcrowded prisons may be religious programming led by inmates with moderate beliefs. Charismatic inmates derive their influence by dint of their credibility within the prison population. If authorized by chaplains to represent their various faith groups, charismatic leaders with moderate views may provide an effective counterweight to radicalization.

Central office chaplaincy service provides the best organizational model for monitoring prisoner radicalization. Centralized administration of religious service allows uniform policymaking on volunteers, inmate religious leaders, radicalization, and intelligence gathering.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The greatest challenge to gathering intelligence on prisoner radicalization is hidebound organizational culture. There are two essential features of such organizations: 1) a lack of law enforcement mentality capable of detecting both criminal sensibilities and radical ideologies among inmates; and 2) the lack of management information systems capable of terrorist screening, investigation, and assessment.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, I offer the following recommendations.

A. Hiring Institutional Chaplains in Overcrowded Maximum Security Prisons

1. Recent cuts in funding for religious services have created opportunities for Islamic prisoners to operate on their own, independent of chaplaincy oversight seeking to ensure moderation and tolerance. This has created the space for Islamic extremists to assert themselves as independent imams. Especially worrisome are those charismatic prisoners who espouse jihadist/Salafist teachings. In California maximum security prisons there is one chaplain for every 2,000 inmates. Elsewhere conditions are worse. In fiscal year 2002, the Texas State Prison System went from 154 full-time chaplains to 60 due to budget shortfalls. This left maximum security prisons like the Eastham Unit, once described by *Newsweek* as "America's toughest prison," with only one chaplain serving the needs of 2,500 inmates (Drum, 2007). Legislatures in Colorado and Virginia have totally eviscerated their state prison chaplain systems, opting instead for an all-volunteer faith-based model which has led to more than a thousand inmate grievances.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Recommendation: It is recommended that hiring freezes for chaplaincy services in maximum security institutions be lifted. It is further recommended that maximum security institutions meet American Correctional Association standards that specify one chaplain per 500 inmates.

2. Religious searchers, inexperienced with sacred texts and rituals, seek a personal path to reform and therefore gravitate toward religious guidance. For those who gravitate toward Islam, this guidance may be offered by family members and/or fellow inmates. Guidance may also be offered by qualified Muslim chaplains. However, there is a critical shortage of Muslim chaplains in state maximum security prisons. The same problem exits in the BOP (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004).

   Recommendation: Like the strategy currently employed by the BOP, it is recommended that state maximum security correctional institutions seek full-time Muslim chaplains from organizations such as the Muslim Chaplains Association, affiliated with the Duncan Black MacDonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut.

B. Hiring Muslim Americans to Work In Prisons

3. Although Islam is the fastest growing religion among prisoners in America, the number of Muslims in the correctional workforce has not kept apace. This imbalance perpetuates the outsider status of Muslim inmates, thereby fortifying the conditions which support and sustain the growth of Prison Islam. Muslim American guards, counselors, and especially wardens would

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

bring important cultural and political capital to the correctional arena which could be used to legitimize moderating voices of religious authority for Muslim inmates.

Recommendation: It is recommended that correctional agencies encourage Muslim American entry into the state prison workforce through diversity recruitment at job fairs, as well as offering such financial incentives as scholarships and tuition payments for college graduates.

C. Establishing Central Office Chaplaincy Service in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

4. There is universal consensus among CDCR staff involved in religious programming that the agency could benefit from the establishment of a central office coordinator for chaplaincy service. Such an office could provide institutional program support; computerized record keeping on inmate religious affiliation; uniform policymaking on religious volunteers and inmate religious leaders; oversight on trends in prisoner radicalization; and enhanced intelligence sharing between institutional chaplains and the Office of Correctional Safety.

   Recommendation: It is recommended that the CDCR create a central office chaplaincy service staffed with subject matter experts on Judaism and Christianity; Native American faiths; Islam; Eastern religions; and the pagan faith groups, Wicca and Odin/Asatru.

D. Funding CDCR's Threat Assessment Center

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

5. The JIS case signifies the emergence of a particularly venal form of penal subculture borne of prison overcrowding, gang ascendancy, and global Islamic extremism lodged in powerful grievances over U.S. imperialism. JIS was able to breach the security safeguards of California's community re-entry program due to outdated record keeping procedures. Twenty-first Century ideology cannot be fought with 20th Century technology.

   Recommendation: It is recommended that the California State Legislature and the Department of Homeland Security fully fund the CDCR's Threat Assessment Center.

E. Sharing Intelligence

6. Gang intelligence officers and prison chaplains must begin to form partnerships around the issue of radicalization. Chaplains are often privy to information about prison gangs and their threats to institutional security. Intelligence officers are often privy to information about the religious lives of prisoners. Yet chaplains are typically focused on their specific faith group and do not look at the overall needs of the institution; while intelligence officers are typically focused on institutional safety and overlook information about specific faiths that may be important to their security mission.

   Recommendation: It is recommended that chaplains and intelligence officers come together on a regular basis to share intelligence on prisoner radicalization, religious proselytizing, high profile inmates, and inmate hierarchies. It is recommended that federal law enforcement join this effort as well.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

F. Roll-Call Training in Prisoner Radicalization and Terrorist Recruitment

7. Prisoner radicalization is a dynamic process. The training of staff on this process need not involve lengthy academic discussions of history and inmate subcultures. Rather, it is best handled through daily briefings on current gang recruiting activity and shifting power dynamics among prisoners.

   Recommendation: It is recommended that prison staffs receive daily roll-call training on prisoner radicalization and potential terrorist recruitment. Such training may focus on a host of issues. These include attempts made by street gangs to form alliances with prison gangs; gang criminal activity, including attempts to own a stable of "clean" (non-gang) inmates and staff members for the purpose of smuggling contraband; gang attempts to recruit mercenaries from the general prison population; gang attempts to compromise horticulture programs (the prime source for constructing IEDs); common forms of gang communication (statements, graffiti, calls-to-arms, "outside" and "inside" tattoos, etc.); the arrival of high-profile gang members or terrorist kingpins to institutions; the cultivation of informants within gangs; exploiting gang rivalries; and planning for the unexpected: an actual terrorist event.

G. Researching Prisoner Radicalization and Terrorist Recruitment

8. Finally, no report is complete without the customary call for "more research." But more research is exactly what is needed here.

   Recommendation: It is recommended that the National Institute of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security continue to support research on various facets of prison organizational culture that leads to extremism behind

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

bars. Such a research agenda may provide answers to such fundamental questions as: What does prisoner radicalization actually mean? What specific criminal thinking skills are involved in plotting a terrorist attack? Do radical prisoners have these skills? What role will overcrowding continue to play in radicalizing prisoners? How will radicalization be effected by the current trend toward eliminating state prison chaplain systems? What effect will the ongoing war in Iraq have on radicalization? And: Is it possible to create radicalization "safety zones" within correctional settings?

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

References

ABC News (2005) "Terror Plot Hatched in California Prison." August 16.

Abdelkarim, R.Z. (2002) "Islam in America: Pardon Me, But Your Hate Is Showing."*The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*. Jan/Feb.

Allen, H.E. and C.E. Simonsen (1992) *Corrections in America* (Sixth Edition). New York: Macmillan.

Ammar, N.H., Weaver, R.R., and S. Saxon (2004) "Muslims in Prison: A Case Study from Ohio State Prisons." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 48: 414-28.

Associated Press (2005) "Officials Checking Whether Alleged L.A. Plot Linked to Prison Gang." August 18.

BBC News (2001) "Who is Richard Reid?" December 28.

Baran, Z. (2005) "Combating al-Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat." Testimony before the United States House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities. February 16.

Barkun, M. (1994) *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Barringer, T.A. (1998) Adult Transformations inside a Midwest Correctional Facility: Black Muslim Narratives of their Islamic Conversion. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University.

Benjamin, D. and S. Simon (2002) *The Age of Sacred Terror*. New York: Random House.

Berg, H. (2005) "Mythmaking in the African American Muslim Context: The Moorish Science Temple, the Nation of Islam, and the American Society of Muslims." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 73: 685-703.

Beutel, A. J. (2007) *Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism in Western Muslim Communities: Lessons Learned for America*. Minaret of Freedom Institute.

Branch, T. (2006) *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years 1965-68*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Brisard, J. (2005) *Zarqawi: The New Face of Al-Qaeda*. New York: Other Press.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Brotherton, D.C. and L. Barrios (2004) *The Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Butler, K. (1978) "Muslims Are No Longer an Unknown Quantity." *Corrections Magazine*, 4:55-63.

CNN.com (2002) "Insight." July 3. (Transcript)

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2007) Finance Letter. Fiscal Year 2007/08. CDCR.

Clear, T.R., Stout, J., Dammer, H., Kelly, L., Shapirio, C., and P. Hardyman (1992) "Does Involvement in Religion Help Prisoners Adjust to Prison?" *National Council on Crime and Delinquency Focus*, 11: 1-7.

Clear, T.R. and M.T. Sumter (2002) "Prisoners, Prison, and Religion: Religion and Adjustment to Prison." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 35:127-60.

Cleaver, E. (1975) Excerpt from *Soul on Ice* in *In Prison: Writings and Poems about the Prison Experience*, J.E. Trupin (ed.). New York: New American Library. Pp. 174-182.

Dalrymple, T. (2001) "I See Richard Reids in Jail Every Day." Available at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/core.Content/displayPrintable.jhtm;jsession.

Dammer, H (2002) "The Reasons for Religious Involvement in the Correctional Environment." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 35: 35-58.

Dannin, R. (2002) *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Dix-Richardson, F. (2002) "Resistance to Conversion to Islam Among African-American Women Inmates." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 35: 109-26.

Dix-Richardson, F. and B. Close (2002) "Intersections of Race, Religion, and Inmate Culture: The Historical Development of Islam in American Corrections." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 35: 87.

Drum, V. L. (2007) "Professional Correctional Chaplains: Fact and Fiction." Presented at the American Correctional Association 137th Annual Congress of Correction, Kansas City, Aug. 13.

El-Amin, M. (1990) *The Religion of Islam and the Nation of Islam*: *What is the Difference*? Newark, NJ: El-Amin Productions.

El-Hassan, S. (2002) "Working with Muslims in Prison: The IQRA Trust." In *Islam, Crime and Criminal Justice*, B. Spalek (ed.). Portland: OR: Willan Publishing. Pp. 113-17.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Ellison, C.G., Boardman, J.D., Williams, D.R., and J.S. Jackson (2001) "Religious Involvement, Stress, and Mental Health: Findings from the 1995 Detroit Area Survey." *Social Forces*, 80: 215-249.

Erickson, V.L. (2002) "Social Theory, Sacred Text, and Sing-Sing Prison: A Sociology of Community-Based Reconciliation." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 35: 231-48.

Evanzz, K. (1999) *The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad*. New York: Pantheon.

Fattah, H.M. (2006) "Militant Uprising at Jordanian Prison Is Quelled." *New York Times*, April 14.

Freedberg, S. P. (1994) *Brother Love: Murder, Money, and a Messiah*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Gaffney, F.J. (2005) "The Enemy Within." *FrontPageMagazine*.com, August 19.

Gartenstein-Ross, D. (2005) "Wahhabi Prison Fellowship: The Teaching of Jihad in American Penitentiaries." *The Weekly Standard*, September 26.

Gonzales, A.R. (2006) Stopping Terrorists before They Strike: The Justice Department's Power of Prevention. Testimony before the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh. April 16.

Graham, F. (1971) "Crime and Justice." *New York Times*, October 3.

Guessous, F., Hooper, N. and U. Moorthy (2001) Religion in Prisons 1999 and 2000. London: Great Britain Home Office Research Development and Statistics.

Gunaratna, R. (2002) *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hagedorn, J. (2006) "Gangs as Social Actors." In *The Essential Criminology Reader*, S. Henry and M.M. Lanier (eds.). Boulder, CO: Westview. Pp. 141-52.

Haley, A. and Malcolm X. (1975) Excerpt from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* in *In Prison: Writings and Poems about the Prison Experience*, J.E. Trupin (ed.), New York: New American Library. Pp: 164-171.

Hamm, M.S. (2002) *In Bad Company: America's Terrorist Underground*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

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

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Harris, R. (2006) "Kevin James and the JIS Conspiracy." FRONTLINE, October 10 (Internet version)

Hasan, A.G. (2000) *American Muslims: The New Generation*. New York: Continuum.

Hill,G. (2002) "Religious Rights, Duties and Customs of Muslim Inmates." *Corrections Compendium*, 27: 6-7.

Homeland Security Policy Institute and Critical Incident Analysis Group Prisoner Task Force (n.d.) *Out of the Shadows: Getting Ahead of Prisoner Radicalization*. Washington, D.C., The George Washington University/Charlottesville, VA, University of Virginia School of Medicine.

Human Events (2003) "The Right Ear." *Human Events*, 59: 21.

Idler, E.I. (1995) "Religion, Health, and Nonphysical Senses of Self." *Social Forces*, 74: 683-704.

Irwin, J. (1980) *Prison in Turmoil*. Boston: Little, Brown Company.

Jacobs, J. B. (1977) *Stateville: The Penitentiary in Mass Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jenkins, P. (2003) "Islam in America." Foreign Policy Research Institute. Available at http://www.fpri.org/ww/0404.200307.jenkins.ilaminamerica.html.

Johnson, B.R. (2004) "Religious Programs and Recidivism among Former Inmates in Prison Fellowship Programs: A Long-Term Follow-Up Study." *Justice Quarterly*, 21: 329-354.

Kaplan, D. (2005) "Paying for Terror." *U.S. News & World Report*, December 5.

Kaplan, J. (1997) *Radical Religion in America: Millenarian Movements from the Far Right to the Children of Noah*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Katz, J. (1988) *Seductions of Crime*. New York: Basic Books.

Kent, S. A. (1992) "Slogan Chanters to Mantra Chanters: A Deviance Analysis of Youth Religious Conversion in the Early 1970s." In *Sights on the Sixties*, B. L. Tischler (ed.). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. Pp: 121-134.

Khosrokhavar, F. (2006) *Quand Al-Qaida Parle*. Paris: Grasset.

Khosrokhavar, F (2004) *L'Islam dans les Prisons*. Paris: Balland.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Knox, G.W. (2002) "Melanics: A Gang Profile Analysis." *Journal of Gang Research*, 9: 1-76.

Lappin, H.G. (2003) Statement of Harley G. Lappin, Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons. United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary. Terrorist Recruitment and Infiltration in the United States: Prisons and Military as an Operational Base. October, 14.

Lee, M.F. (1996) *The Nation of Islam: An American Millenarian Movement*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Lofland, J. and R. Stark (1965) "Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Religious Conversion." *American Sociological Review*, 30: 862-874.

Lopez, K.J. and S. Schwartz (2003) "Roots of 'Islamic' Terrorism." *Crime & Justice International*, 70: 23-26.

Los Angeles Times (2005) "4 Indicted in Los Angeles Terror Probe." September 1.

Lozoff, B. (1985) *We're All Doing Time*. Chapel Hill, NC: Human Kindness Foundation.

Lyall, S. (2006) "Briton Tried to Buy A-bomb, Prosecution in Trial Contends." *New York Times*, March 23.

Marquez, J. (2005) "Experts Say Indigenous Terror Real Threat." Associated Press, September 4.

Mercer, K. (2007) "Terrorism Behind the Walls." Presented at the American Correctional Association 137th Annual Congress of Correction, Kansas City, MO, August 12.

Mueller, R. (2006) Remarks for Delivery by FBI Director Robert Mueller at City Club. Cleveland, Ohio, June 27. (Transcript)

Muhammad, A. (2005) "The 1900's." *Muslims in America*. Available at http://www.muslimsinamerica.org/index.php?option=com_content&tas.

NewsTrack (2006) "Report: Al-Qaida Gang Run U.K. Prison." January 30.

Nock, A.D. (1933) *Conversion*. New York: Oxford University Press.

O'Connor,T.P. and M. Perreyclear (2002) "Prison Religion in Action and Its Influence on Offender Rehabilitation." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 35: 11-34.

Pargeter, A. (2005) "The Islamicst Movement in Morocco." *Terrorism Monitor* May 21.

Pistole, J. (2003) Statement for the Record, John S. Pistole, Assistant Director, Counterterrorism Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation. Testimony before the United

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

States Senate Committee on the Judiciary. Terrorist Recruitment and Infiltration in the United States: Prisons and Military as an Operational Base. October 14.

Pitcavage, M. (2002) "Behind the Walls." *Intelligence Report*. Southern Poverty Law Center, Winter.

Richardson, L. (2006) *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat*. New York: Random House.

Richardson, J.T. and M. Stewart (1977) "Conversion Process Models and the Jesus Movement." *American Behavioral Scientist*, 20: 819-838.

Rideau,W. and B. Sinclair (1981) "Religion in Prison." *Angolite*, January/February: 31-56.

Rogers, P. (2003) Terrorism: Radical Islamic Influence of Chaplaincy of the U.S. Military and Prisons. Testimony before the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, October 14.

Rotella, S. (2004) "Holy Water, Hashish and Jihad." *Los Angles Times*, February 23.

Ruchala, C. (2005) "Jeff Fort." Sabaka Dossier. Available at http://www.diacritica.com/sobaka.dossier.jfort.html.

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

Seper, J. (2004) "Prisons Breeding Ground for Terror?" *The Washington Times*, May 6.

Siegel, P.C. (2006) "Radical Islam and the French Muslim Prison Population." *Global Terrorism Analysis*. The Jamestown Foundation.

Silverberg, M (2006) "The Silent War: Wahhabism and the American Penal System." *The New Media Journal*.us, May 6.

Snow, D.A. and R. Machalek (1984) "The Sociology of Conversion." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 10: 167-0190.

Spalek, B. and D. Wilson (2002) "Racism and Religious Discrimination in Prison: The Marginalization of Imams in their Work with Prisoners." In *Islam, Crime and Criminal Justice*, B. Spalek (ed.). Portland, OR: Willan Publishing. Pp. 96-112.

Steinhauer, J. (2006) "Bulging, Troubled Prisons Push California Officials to Seek a New Approach." *New York Times*, December 11.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Strozier, C. (2007) Political Radicalization and the Potential for Recruitment to Terrorism Among Converted Blacks in Prison in the United States. Project Narrative presented to the Department of Homeland Security.

Sykes, G.M. (1958) *The Society of Captives*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Thomas, J and B.H Zaitzow (2004) "Conning or Conversion? The Role of Religion in Prison Coping." *The Prison Journal*, 86: 242-259.

Thompson, D. (2005) "FBI to Do Prisoner 'Threat Assessment.'" Associated Press release, August 30.

Trout, C. (2007) "The Correctional Intelligence Initiative (CII): Preventing Prison Radicalization." Presentation at the American Correctional Association 137th annual Congress of Corrections, Kansas City, Mo. August 14.

U.S. Department of Justice (2006) The Federal Bureau of Prisons' Monitoring of Mail for High-Risk Inmates. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Inspector General, Evaluation and Inspections Division. Report Number I-2006-009.

_____________________ (2004) A Review of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Selection of Muslim Religious Service Providers. Washington, D.C. : Office of Inspector General.

U.S. v. Samana (C.D. C.A.), No. 05-16662M.

Vanderbilt University (1971) "Headline: Attica State Prison. CBS Evening News, September 15, 1971." Television News Archive.

Waller, M. (2003) Terrorist Recruitment and Infiltration in the United States: Prisons and Military as an Operational Base. Testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, October 14.

Warren, J. and G. Krikorian (2005) "Authorities Investigate Radical Prison Gang." *Los Angeles Times*, September 4.

Wicker, T. (1975) *A Time to Die.* New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Books.

Wiktorowicz, Q. (2005) *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Zoll, R. (2005) "American Prisons Become Political, Religious Battleground over Islam." Associated Press, June 4.

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.