

Schneier on Security

[← Searching Bags in Subways](#)

[Secure Flight →](#)

Profiling

There is a great discussion about profiling going on in the comments to the previous post. To help, here is what I wrote on the subject in *Beyond Fear* (pp. 133-7):

Good security has people in charge. People are resilient. People can improvise. People can be creative. People can develop on-the-spot solutions. People can detect attackers who cheat, and can attempt to maintain security despite the cheating. People can detect passive failures and attempt to recover. People are the strongest point in a security process. When a security system succeeds in the face of a new or coordinated or devastating attack, it's usually due to the efforts of people.

On 14 December 1999, Ahmed Ressam tried to enter the U.S. by ferryboat from Victoria Island, British Columbia. In the trunk of his car, he had a suitcase bomb. His plan was to drive to Los Angeles International Airport, put his suitcase on a luggage cart in the terminal, set the timer, and then leave. The plan would have worked had someone not been vigilant.

Ressam had to clear customs before boarding the ferry. He had fake ID, in the name of Benni Antoine Noris, and the computer cleared him based on this ID. He was allowed to go through after a routine check of his car's trunk, even though he was wanted by the Canadian police. On the other side of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, at Port Angeles, Washington, Ressam was approached by U.S. customs agent Diana Dean, who asked some routine questions and then decided that he looked suspicious. He was fidgeting, sweaty, and jittery. He avoided eye contact. In Dean's own words, he was acting "hinky." More questioning -- there was no one else crossing the border, so two other agents got involved -- and more hinky behavior. Ressam's car was eventually searched, and he was finally discovered and captured. It wasn't any one thing that tipped Dean off; it was everything encompassed in the slang term "hinky." But the system worked. The reason there wasn't a bombing at LAX around Christmas in 1999 was because a knowledgeable person was in charge of security and paying attention.

There's a dirty word for what Dean did that chilly afternoon in December, and it's *profiling*. Everyone does it all the time. When you see someone lurking in a dark

alley and change your direction to avoid him, you're profiling. When a storeowner sees someone furtively looking around as she fiddles inside her jacket, that storeowner is profiling. People profile based on someone's dress, mannerisms, tone of voice ... and yes, also on their race and ethnicity. When you see someone running toward you on the street with a bloody ax, you don't know for sure that he's a crazed ax murderer. Perhaps he's a butcher who's actually running after the person next to you to give her the change she forgot. But you're going to make a guess one way or another. That guess is an example of profiling.

To profile is to generalize. It's taking characteristics of a population and applying them to an individual. People naturally have an intuition about other people based on different characteristics. Sometimes that intuition is right and sometimes it's wrong, but it's still a person's first reaction. How good this intuition is as a countermeasure depends on two things: how accurate the intuition is and how effective it is when it becomes institutionalized or when the profile characteristics become commonplace.

One of the ways profiling becomes institutionalized is through computerization. Instead of Diana Dean looking someone over, a computer looks the profile over and gives it some sort of rating. Generally profiles with high ratings are further evaluated by people, although sometimes countermeasures kick in based on the computerized profile alone. This is, of course, more brittle. The computer can profile based only on simple, easy-to-assign characteristics: age, race, credit history, job history, et cetera. Computers don't get hinky feelings. Computers also can't adapt the way people can.

Profiling works better if the characteristics profiled are accurate. If erratic driving is a good indication that the driver is intoxicated, then that's a good characteristic for a police officer to use to determine who he's going to pull over. If furtively looking around a store or wearing a coat on a hot day is a good indication that the person is a shoplifter, then those are good characteristics for a store owner to pay attention to. But if wearing baggy trousers isn't a good indication that the person is a shoplifter, then the store owner is going to spend a lot of time paying undue attention to honest people with lousy fashion sense.

In common parlance, the term "profiling" doesn't refer to these characteristics. It refers to profiling based on characteristics like race and ethnicity, and *institutionalized* profiling based on those characteristics alone. During World War II, the U.S. rounded up over 100,000 people of Japanese origin who lived on the West Coast and locked them in camps (prisons, really). That was an example of profiling. Israeli border guards spend a lot more time scrutinizing Arab men than Israeli women; that's another example of profiling. In many U.S. communities, police have

been known to stop and question people of color driving around in wealthy white neighborhoods (commonly referred to as "DWB" -- Driving While Black). In all of these cases you might possibly be able to argue some security benefit, but the trade-offs are enormous: Honest people who fit the profile can get annoyed, or harassed, or arrested, when they're assumed to be attackers.

For democratic governments, this is a major problem. It's just wrong to segregate people into "more likely to be attackers" and "less likely to be attackers" based on race or ethnicity. It's wrong for the police to pull a car over just because its black occupants are driving in a rich white neighborhood. It's discrimination.

But people make bad security trade-offs when they're scared, which is why we saw Japanese internment camps during World War II, and why there is so much discrimination against Arabs in the U.S. going on today. That doesn't make it right, and it doesn't make it effective security. Writing about the Japanese internment, for example, a 1983 commission reported that the causes of the incarceration were rooted in "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership." But just because something is wrong doesn't mean that people won't continue to do it.

Ethics aside, institutionalized profiling fails because real attackers are so rare: Active failures will be much more common than passive failures. The great majority of people who fit the profile will be innocent. At the same time, some real attackers are going to deliberately try to sneak past the profile. During World War II, a Japanese American saboteur could try to evade imprisonment by pretending to be Chinese. Similarly, an Arab terrorist could dye his hair blond, practice an American accent, and so on.

Profiling can also blind you to threats outside the profile. If U.S. border guards stop and search everyone who's young, Arab, and male, they're not going to have the time to stop and search all sorts of other people, no matter how hinky they might be acting. On the other hand, if the attackers are of a single race or ethnicity, profiling is more likely to work (although the ethics are still questionable). It makes real security sense for El Al to spend more time investigating young Arab males than it does for them to investigate Israeli families. In Vietnam, American soldiers never knew which local civilians were really combatants; sometimes killing all of them was the security solution they chose.

If a lot of this discussion is abhorrent, as it probably should be, it's the trade-offs in your head talking. It's perfectly reasonable to decide not to implement a countermeasure not because it doesn't work, but because the trade-offs are too great. Locking up every Arab-looking person will reduce the potential for Muslim terrorism, but no reasonable person would suggest it. (It's an example of "winning the battle but losing the war.") In the U.S., there are laws that prohibit police profiling

by characteristics like ethnicity, because we believe that such security measures are wrong (and not simply because we believe them to be ineffective).

Still, no matter how much a government makes it illegal, profiling does occur. It occurs at an individual level, at the level of Diana Dean deciding which cars to wave through and which ones to investigate further. She profiled Ressam based on his mannerisms and his answers to her questions. He was Algerian, and she certainly noticed that. However, this was before 9/11, and the reports of the incident clearly indicate that she thought he was a drug smuggler; ethnicity probably wasn't a key profiling factor in this case. In fact, this is one of the most interesting aspects of the story. That intuitive sense that something was amiss worked beautifully, even though everybody made a wrong assumption about what was wrong. Human intuition detected a completely unexpected kind of attack. Humans will beat computers at hinkiness-detection for many decades to come.

And done correctly, this intuition-based sort of profiling can be an excellent security countermeasure. Dean needed to have the training and the experience to profile accurately and properly, without stepping over the line and profiling illegally. The trick here is to make sure perceptions of risk match the actual risks. If those responsible for security profile based on superstition and wrong-headed intuition, or by blindly following a computerized profiling system, profiling won't work at all. And even worse, it actually can reduce security by blinding people to the real threats. Institutionalized profiling can ossify a mind, and a person's mind is the most important security countermeasure we have.

A couple of other points (not from the book):

- Whenever you design a security system with two ways through -- an easy way and a hard way -- you invite the attacker to take the easy way. Profile for young Arab males, and you'll get terrorists that are old non-Arab females. This [paper](#) looks at the security effectiveness of profiling versus random searching.
- If we are going to increase security against terrorism, the young Arab males living in our country are precisely the people we want on our side. Discriminating against them in the name of security is not going to make them more likely to help.
- Despite what many people think, terrorism is not confined to young Arab males. Shoe-bomber Richard Reid was British. Germaine Lindsay, one of the 7/7 London bombers, was Afro-Caribbean. Here are some [more](#) examples:

In 1986, a 32-year-old Irish woman, pregnant at the time, was about to board an El Al flight from London to Tel Aviv when El Al security agents discovered an explosive device hidden in the false bottom of her bag. The woman's

boyfriend -- the father of her unborn child -- had hidden the bomb.

In 1987, a 70-year-old man and a 25-year-old woman -- neither of whom were Middle Eastern -- posed as father and daughter and brought a bomb aboard a Korean Air flight from Baghdad to Thailand. En route to Bangkok, the bomb exploded, killing all on board.

In 1999, men dressed as businessmen (and one dressed as a Catholic priest) turned out to be terrorist hijackers, who forced an Avianca flight to divert to an airstrip in Colombia, where some passengers were held as hostages for more than a year-and-half.

The 2002 Bali terrorists were Indonesian. The Chechnyan terrorists who downed the Russian planes were women. Timothy McVeigh and the Unabomber were Americans. The Basque terrorists are Basque, and Irish terrorists are Irish. The Tamil Tigers are Sri Lankan.

And many Muslims are not Arabs. Even worse, almost everyone who is Arab is not a terrorist -- many people who look Arab are not even Muslims. So not only are there an large number of false negatives -- terrorists who don't meet the profile -- but there an enormous number of false positives: innocents that do meet the profile.

Tags: [base rate](#), [behavioral detection](#), [bombs](#), [borders](#), [cost-benefit analysis](#), [false positives](#), [fear](#), [profiling](#), [psychology of security](#), [resilience](#)

Posted on July 22, 2005 at 3:12 PM • 88 Comments

Comments

Stephen • July 22, 2005 3:33 PM

A very useful excerpt, given the heated discussion of the previous thread.

One thought: how do we make allowances for those people who go out of their way to avoid guards, dogs, cameras, etc., while maintaining the discipline of only profiling those acting "suspiciously"? Regardless of one's motivation for trying to remain anonymous in a crowd, is it right or even necessary to lump their behavior in with that of those with malicious intent?

Dennis Bailey • July 22, 2005 8:36 PM

You're digging yourself into a hole, Bruce. You come out against racial profiling in most cases and you see random searching as "a waste of money" because "it substantially reduces our liberties, and it won't make us any safer."

Then as an answer to those like myself who have criticized you for poking holes in security plans

while not providing your own solutions, you offer up "intelligence and investigation -- stopping the terrorists regardless of what their plans are..."

Unfortunately "intelligence" is not a solution especially for those who espouse a worldview that elevates the values of privacy and anonymity above all others. Without information collection, sharing, and storage, the antithesis of the aforementioned values and something you and the privacy movement have fought to prevent, there is no intelligence or in the very least you have intelligence that isn't very effective.

I'd suggest that you don't need a shovel to get out of this hole. You need a flashlight, one that shines the light on the best way to protect freedom and civil liberties in an open society - more openness.

Dennis Bailey

www.opensocietyparadox.com

Chris Walters • [July 22, 2005 10:01 PM](#)

Bruce, you're contradicting yourself again. You claim that "the trick here is to make sure perceptions of risk match the actual risks." Then, in the next breath, you make the irrelevant point that "terrorism is not confined to young Arab males." Your left-wing dogma has tainted your sense of reality: of course young Arab males are not the ONLY terrorists in the world, but in fact they have killed more innocents through terrorism than all of their non-Arab or non-male contemporaries combined. Facts are facts: most terrorists fit this profile.

Should race be the only element of our airport security profile? Obviously not. What we need is a return to common sense: we need our screeners to judge the totality of circumstances surrounding an individual, and we need to give them the absolute right to question or detain anybody they deem suspicious, without fear of repercussions for false positives. We need to give the TSA the right to do their job as they see fit. If that means that more young Arab males and fewer 97-year-old grandmothers are strip searched at airports and train stations, so be it.

9/11, 3/11, and 7/7 have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that being Muslim in the West makes you by definition "hinky." Until members of this subculture learn to assimilate into our populations and to root out the terrorists among them, they will be subject to greater scrutiny.

Matthew Skala • [July 22, 2005 10:22 PM](#)

I think part of the point is that you shouldn't have an "airport security profile". If you're spending your money on securing airports, then the next attack won't be at an airport. Instead of attacking Bruce's words with false dichotomies and talk of holes and flashlights, it'd be good to read and comprehend his point for a change: Someone who wants to fight terrorism needs to be able to say "We'll find out what the terrorists are planning and be able to stop it fast!" not "If they attack

this target, we'll be ready for them!" As soon as you say that "if", you lose, because then your plan can only succeed if the terrorists cooperate.

I'm reminded of the blue traffic lights and no pants plan.

(<http://www.geocities.com/outlawvern/VTILII.html> , original site is traffic-limited, mirror at <http://www.livejournal.com/users/tongodeon/259489.html> .) Someone who says "don't do something stupid" shouldn't be obligated to come up with an "alternative". Not doing the stupid thing is the alternative.

Mark El-Wakil • July 22, 2005 10:31 PM

@Chris Walters

You're missing the point though. Bruce is saying that by focusing exclusively on Arab males, that doing so will invite the attackers to change his / her profile.

From the text above:

"At the same time, some real attackers are going to deliberately try to sneak past the profile. During World War II, a Japanese American saboteur could try to evade imprisonment by pretending to be Chinese. Similarly, an Arab terrorist could dye his hair blond, practice an American accent, and so on."

One of the major problems with 9/11 was that drivers licenses were illegally issued from DMV workers. This particular has not been properly addressed.

What would honestly prevent a terrorist from getting a fake drivers license that says Smith instead of a name like mine (El-Wakil is Arabic for The Agent, heh), dye his/her hair blonde, and lighten his/her skin?

And by your quote:

"Until members of this subculture learn to assimilate into our populations and to root out the terrorists among them, they will be subject to greater scrutiny."

Future terrorists cells will have *far* more of a reason to try and assimilate into western culture than standard Muslims, due to the sort of this sort of racial profiling that is going on.

Please keep all this in mind. Thank you.

Paul • July 22, 2005 11:47 PM

Here's a convenient little dilemma I'd be interested in opinions on: in previous threads, there have been arguments against the value brought by CCTV systems (which are not preventative in nature, except as a deterrence from a fear of being caught).

Today, we see the police in the UK having used those systems to quickly identify specific individuals with whom they wish to speak, and to release a visual profile of those specific individuals to the public.

If profiling is so deficient, should we ignore the information which these pictures contribute in trying to catch the perpetrators? Surely, some would need to argue, we would be better off looking at the population as a random pool, and go from there: surely we should challenge people randomly, rather than whether they appear similar to the released photos.

The simple fact is that these security cameras do what they are intended to do. And profiling occurs at many levels, with different value at each level. Both are tools, not solutions, to be applied in an intelligent fashion.

Bruce Schneier • July 23, 2005 12:03 AM

"Today, we see the police in the UK having used those systems to quickly identify specific individuals with whom they wish to speak, and to release a visual profile of those specific individuals to the public."

Be careful about that conclusion. It's not a good argument for cameras, because we don't have a control for the experiment: How much harder would it have been for the police to identify the four terrorists without the cameras?

My guess is that it would not have been that much harder. One was identified with the help of his mother, I recall.

Citing that cameras were useful does not demonstrate that they were essential.

Davi Ottenheimer • July 23, 2005 12:59 AM

@Bruce

"Citing that cameras were useful does not demonstrate that they were essential."

That seems like a red herring and your initial point was far more persuasive. Paul is right.

Cameras are just another tool that can be used for good or bad. What really matters is that "good security has people in charge". Having good people in charge is essential, and they undoubtedly are more effective with the right tools.

Take for example today's eye-witness account: "All described the man as wearing a bulky, winter coat, despite the warm weather, and at least one said he thought he spotted a belt with wires running from it."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/attackonlondon/story/0,16132,1534742,00.html>

It might take dozens or even hundreds of spottings by the public to gather the same quality of data as a single security professional. I mean can you imagine a security professional watching a man with wires hanging out of his winter coat walking by a camera during a hot day in July? Now, imagine that one security professional monitoring dozens of locations via cameras with sophisticated alerting and profiling. Granted, visuals may not be essential for all investigations, but we should at least give the technology the credit it deserves as an extremely valuable tool to help manage the vast acreage of space and limited number of qualified officers on the ground. Do not throw out the hammer just because someone didn't know how to hit a nail on the head. Or to use your turn of phrase, the hammer is not essential for nails, but it sure beats trying to use your hand.

In this case the demonstration of the effectiveness should not really be all that difficult; just compare the accuracy of a "witness sketch" to a color hi-res video of a suspect. Or go back to the quote above that "at least one said he thought he spotted a belt with wires running from it"...that kind of lead could take hundreds of hours to validate and clarify, unless it correlates directly to data from a good surveillance operator.

[Davi Ottenheimer • July 23, 2005 1:13 AM](#)

@Paul

"If profiling is so deficient, should we ignore the information which these pictures contribute"

The point is not that profiling itself is deficient, but that it takes skill and fairly clear guidance to use it properly. Or you might just say some people are born with better fraud detectors than others...

So the cameras can either help or hurt the arguments related to profiling, depending on who's running the console.

The question of whether we should ignore information captured on camera has more to do with the discussion about risks/harm and the trade-offs regarding civil-liberties (i.e. unlawful search and seizure, privacy, etc.)

[Nick • July 23, 2005 3:06 AM](#)

Another thing to note about human security agents on the other end of cameras ... even with training, they can still be subject to misdirection and social engineering. It's not like these cameras are hidden, and I imagine a terrorist could be trained to recognize the make/model of a camera to estimate its effective range.

If a subject registers as 'hinky,' what is our friend in the monitoring room doing? Is he focusing his attention on the subject, or is he handing surveillance off to others, while continuing to monitor the other cameras on the grid?

How many 'false positives' occur before the behavior of the monitoring agent and the responding agents changes, and are they aware that this process can be managed to create a blind spot?

Better yet, take steps to make the person monitoring the cameras a malicious insider ...

Paul • [July 23, 2005 3:21 AM](#)

@Bruce, "*One was identified with the help of his mother, I recall*"

The July 7 attack led police to set up a hotline, which the mother of one of the attackers is reported to have called enquiring after her son. After confirming that all four suspects were dead, the police released CCTV photos.

The July 21 attackers have not yet been (publicly) identified by name, only by CCTV photo. It is the July 21 attackers with whom the UK Police urgently wish to speak, and to that end their CCTV photos have been publicly released to enlist the public's aid.

What would you propose Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair and Andy Hayman should have released this afternoon (7/22), if no CCTV photos were available? (See police.uk for the transcript of the press conference, and the photos.)

@Davi:

Part of my point may have been obscured. One useful way of evaluating utility is to evaluate the (absurd) extremes. In this case, the absurd extreme is to stop people randomly and only then compare them to a photo, rather than stopping people who bear a slight resemblance to a photo and comparing them to the photo. And it is ridiculous to assert that you're better off ignoring people who bear a (strong) resemblance but who don't hit on the random number generator.

So at least some degree of profiling is useful.

The discussion then (and I believe your comment) is about what degree of profiling retains a positive utility coefficient (and the concomitant circumstances), and how expert the "operator" has to be in order to effect that coefficient.

Paul • [July 23, 2005 3:39 AM](#)

@Nick:

I believe your comment focuses on CCTV systems as preventative measures.

But I would suggest that the situations tend to develop so quickly, and are so similar to non-threatening situations ("false positives"), that the preventative nature is primarily to raise the stakes for the perpetrators. Knowing that you'll be quickly identified tends to dissuade some would-be attackers and tends to make others do more extensive planning (and risk exposing themselves by doing so).

Even in the ideal condition where a monitoring station detected illicit behaviour, the reaction time is still measured in minutes.

Traffic cameras don't prevent collisions. Speed/radar cameras don't prevent speeding. Store cameras don't prevent shoplifting. But each enhances the reaction to the event.

I still contend that the fact that CCTV systems do not prevent attacks (indeed, no single tool does) does not diminish their value.

Michael Ash • [July 23, 2005 5:35 AM](#)

@Davi, you said:

Cameras are just another tool that can be used for good or bad. What really matters is that "good security has people in charge". Having good people in charge is essential, and they undoubtedly are more effective with the right tools.

I believe that this is a dangerous attitude. Governments themselves are a great security risk to their people. The proper way to set up government agencies is not to give them overreaching power and then say, "we must make sure that only the best people are in charge of it", but rather to imagine that your worst enemy was the king of all and design things so that he still can't do much damage.

The American federal government is a great example of this. Despite the massive whining of Republicans during the Clinton years about how evil he was, he never did much damage from their perspective, because the system held him in check. And likewise, despite the massive whining of Democrats during the Bush years, his damage is limited as well, by the same system.

I'm not sure how to reconcile this idea with effective counterterrorism, at least while the good guys are in power. The temptation to brand your enemies as terrorists and then disappear them is going to be strong.

Ian Mason • [July 23, 2005 6:57 AM](#)

First off I'd like to I invite you all to look at the published photos of individuals wanted in connection with yesterdays bombing attempts here:

http://www.met.police.uk/news/july_21_07_05/docs/suspects_poster.pdf

Two of these photos are useless to actually identify individuals by and so poor that I doubt they provide any more information than the sought individuals are young and male, one probably dark skinned, one of any complexion from white through to light skinned afro-caribbean/dark skinned mediteranean. Two are more useful but are still vague enough that I wouldn't be comfortable using them as the sole source of identification.

None of them show a perpetrator caught in the act so they must have been selected on some other criteria. The most likely criteria is that they were selected from tapes by police officers working from a written description collected from eye witnesses. So we are probably back to having to rely on eye witness identification evidence with its proven flaws.

The truth is that CCTV is still mostly security theater. On occasions it works but most of the time it's of no use. It may discourage some criminals but clearly it doesn't discourage all or shop lifting would be a crime of the past. In England, where street CCTV is ubiquitous in town centres, street crime is still prevalent.

In London a vast number of CCTV cameras are linked to automatic number plate recognition (more than people generally realise). Records are kept of vehicle movements, in some cases for long periods or indefinitely. My car is registered to me and I'm the only driver. Hence my movements are been tracked, even if only passively, so I have lost some privacy. Yet I still had a car stolen in London, it was never recovered and the perpetrator was not caught. So I have lost some privacy but I've gained no security - a lousy trade off.

Bruce Schneier • July 23, 2005 7:44 AM

"9/11, 3/11, and 7/7 have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that being Muslim in the West makes you by definition hinky.' Until members of this subculture learn to assimilate into our populations and to root out the terrorists among them, they will be subject to greater scrutiny."

The hope is that we'll have better trained people than that, because that's a completely useless definition of "hinky," and one that will make us all less secure.

Bruce Schneier • July 23, 2005 7:45 AM

"Cameras are just another tool that can be used for good or bad. What really matters is that 'good security has people in charge.' Having good people in charge is essential, and they undoubtedly are more effective with the right tools."

Agree 100%.

Bruce Schneier • July 23, 2005 7:48 AM

"What would you propose Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair and Andy Hayman should have

released this afternoon (7/22), if no CCTV photos were available? (See police.uk for the transcript of the press conference, and the photos.)"

I have no idea.

But if someone knew, and we could evaluate the effectiveness of it, we would have something to compare the CCTV cameras to.

Bruce Schneier • July 23, 2005 7:50 AM

"I still contend that the fact that CCTV systems do not prevent attacks (indeed, no single tool does) does not diminish their value."

Cameras are primarily an audit tool; they're most useful after the fact. And there is some deterrence factor, because they are in place.

As to whether that diminishes their value or not, it depends on what you're comparing it to. It's definitely less valuable than another person, because all it can do is monitor and record. But like everything else: cameras are a trade-off. They have some value, and they have some cost (financial and etc). Are they worth it?

I contend that, most of the time, they are not.

Bruce Schneier • July 23, 2005 7:52 AM

"Governments themselves are a great security risk to their people. The proper way to set up government agencies is not to give them overreaching power and then say, 'we must make sure that only the best people are in charge of it', but rather to imagine that your worst enemy was the king of all and design things so that he still can't do much damage."

This is also true. What's going on here is that there are many different threats -- the threat of terrorism, the threat of rogue government, the threat of rogue policing, etc. -- that must all be balanced. Implementing security to defend against one threat at the expense of another can be an overall mistake.

So far, the best solution society has come up with for governments is to give them considerable power, but also exercise considerable oversight.

Paul • July 23, 2005 8:38 AM

@lan:

With respect, the PDF of the poster is not the best source for the images, which are available directly from the police.uk website.

[http://www.police.uk/content/viewarticle.asp?
xslfile=~xsl~transform_article.xsl&xmlfile=~_content~xml~wanted~MPS-BSW-23.xml](http://www.police.uk/content/viewarticle.asp?xslfile=~xsl~transform_article.xsl&xmlfile=~_content~xml~wanted~MPS-BSW-23.xml)

That being said, yes, the images are less than perfect even in JPEG form. (And clearly, most have been cropped, so one would presume the police have better quality originals.) But even imperfect, they are clear enough that some of their friends and neighbours are surely calling in. Compare that to what could be achieved if only a written description were available (which is what we would need to compare against without the cameras available), and that only from unreliable witnesses.

As for image selection criteria, clearly the authorities should want to show as much of the face as possible from the full set of imagery available to them. Showing them "in the act" accomplishes nothing, even if they have such video. In fact, the news conference yesterday included a description of each of their actions as determined so far, suggesting that witness statements were emphatically not the sole source of identification but rather there was more information available to authorities from that full set of CCTV tapes.

[http://www.police.uk/content/viewarticle.asp?
xslfile=~xsl~transform_article.xsl&xmlfile=~_content~xml~news~MPS-BSW-024.xml](http://www.police.uk/content/viewarticle.asp?xslfile=~xsl~transform_article.xsl&xmlfile=~_content~xml~news~MPS-BSW-024.xml)

Other "experts" have opined that the only reason for releasing these pictures is the suspicion that while at large these individuals pose an ongoing threat. And it is not an unreasonable extrapolation to suggest that these individuals do have a certain motivation to either reattempt murder or to escape the island. And under that extrapolation, having a picture (however imperfect) is beyond value in attempting to prevent death and destruction in the next few days.

I'm sorry to hear your car was stolen and not recovered. Clearly, it wasn't mere "joyriders" who took it. On the other hand, it is not at all clear that theft is a sufficiently severe crime that Scotland Yard would have collected and analyzed the full set of CCTV tapes to track it down. Now that would represent a loss of privacy.

@ Bruce, "So far, the best solution society has come up with for governments is to give them considerable power, but also exercise considerable oversight."

I would suggest this may be the societal analogue of developing strong cryptographic procedures (power), and publishing the algorithms to ensure proper review (oversight). It may make for a weak analogy, but it has transparency of operation as a common theme.

Paul • July 23, 2005 9:08 AM

Since I seem to have drifted somewhat from the original topic, I might as well keep going.

It occurs to me that a CCTV-centric audit procedure also affects the behaviours during the first minutes after an event. And possibly again in intermediate stages where broad profile-based

descriptions can be replaced with narrow photographic profiles.

Without cameras, it is important to corral and isolate witnesses to the maximum extent circumstances allow, as they form the primary source for information.

With cameras, witness statements become less important ... and can be collected much later, as the presence of the witness can be confirmed from images if necessary. It seems reasonable to assume that the perpetrators would already have escaped before first responders could arrive, so the focus can be on removing all people to a safe distance, treating any injuries, and securing the site. There can be fewer distractions dealing with bystanders as they, too, are removed from the scene.

It would still be ideal to gather witness statements immediately and in a secure fashion; however, there can also be a competing goal of clearing people from the scene (without have to create a corral for potential witnesses some blocks away) and focusing first on anything which could make casualty counts more serious.

So it could be argued that releasing uninvolved bystanders from the scene in an immediate manner (and private - bystanders don't need to identify themselves) can be a further benefit to the use of CCTV systems as a security tool.

Ian Mason • [July 23, 2005 10:22 AM](#)

@Paul

"I'm sorry to hear your car was stolen and not recovered. Clearly, it wasn't mere "joyriders" who took it. On the other hand, it is not at all clear that theft is a sufficiently severe crime that Scotland Yard would have collected and analyzed the full set of CCTV tapes to track it down. Now that would represent a loss of privacy."

No, you miss my point. I didn't expect tapes or any manual procedure to be of any use. What ought to have been of use is the mass deployed automatic number plate recognition - and it wasn't. This mass tracking of vehicles is in place but it's not tackling the one crime it is perfect for - vehicle theft. If it is not achieving that then the cost/risk of mass loss of privacy isn't worth it.

Viewed objectively CCTV achieves much less than its proponents claim. The UK now has the highest per capita number of CCTV cameras in the world but relevant crime rates have not fallen significantly.

ANPR has been rolled out in London and is now being added on top of this CCTV network nationwide and clearly has a much higher abuse potential than raw CCTV. Yet ANPR does not appear to be reducing crime or detecting crime - with one significant exception, that is it is successful at catching road tax evaders.

Locally (Newham in East London) facial recognition is also in use on the CCTV network. I appear to be living in a land half way to Orwell's nightmare all justified as a crime reduction measure that in fact is not proving successful. I don't expect to see this admitted by the government or police or the failed apparatus dismantled. It will be kept and it will be used for more and more invasions of privacy.

The UK government is seriously suggesting adding GPS based tracking to ALL vehicles in the UK to report their movements to the authorities for use in road pricing (in lieu of fuel and standing vehicle taxes).

Don't forget also the proposed UK ID card, complete with a £1000 fine if you fail to report a change of address to the authorities (something you are currently under no obligation to do) along with other onerous penalties.

Viewed individual these might be construed as plausible measures and proportionate to their objectives - if they are effective. Taken together they paint a scary picture.

All this is in the name of security and there may well be members of government who honestly believe this but it's poorly thought through. You don't need to be paranoid or have much of an imagination to see where and how it could all go horribly wrong.

Nick • [July 23, 2005 12:03 PM](#)

@Paul

I think we're of a like mind regarding cameras. Are they useful? Without question.

However, what we're seeing in the wake of the London bombings is this 'cameras = good, more cameras = better' thinking.

People are embracing cameras as this security panacea, when their true value is only as a tool in the security arsenal.

But the effectiveness of a high-resolution camera manned by an expert observer can be blocked by a crowd of people. We're also banking on 'suspicious behavior' - that profiling question. How does a terrorist behave, and is that behavior uniform among all terrorists or imposed by their methodology (i.e. they wear a certain kind of jacket because they're wearing a semtex vest)?

RC • [July 23, 2005 12:15 PM](#)

"Profile for young Arab males, and you'll get terrorists that are old non-Arab females."

It is much easier for a terrorist group to recruit from young Arab males than from old non-Arab

females. Profile for young Arab males and you make it much harder for a terrorist group to recruit bombers.

Bruce Schneier • July 23, 2005 1:04 PM

"It is much easier for a terrorist group to recruit from young Arab males than from old non-Arab females. Profile for young Arab males and you make it much harder for a terrorist group to recruit bombers."

I think reality proves that wrong.

Patrick Coyle • July 23, 2005 1:37 PM

On the subject of profiling it looks like there was a particularly tragic example of it (not that profiling is de facto a bad thing, it can be quite useful).

I'm sure you are all aware of the events in London this week with the bomb attempt that didn't work (which now looks to be a case of over-dry, homemade explosives). On Friday there was a case of a man who was followed by plainclothes police officers after leaving a flat under surveillance following Thursday's attempted attacks. They tried to stop him outside a tube station, but he decided not to speak to them and ran into the station, jumped the turnstyle and got onto a train. The police chased him and shot him dead in front of a large number of now traumatised witnesses on their way to work. He was apparently wearing a large coat unsuitable for the weather (it currently being abnormally pleasant in the UK).

From the descriptions in the media the man fit what most people would accept as a profile of someone to speak to, seen leaving a flat associated with terrorism, wearing a big coat and refusing to stop when asked to. The issue is that today the Metropolitan Police have said he was unconnected to the events of Thursday.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4711021.stm

It has been described as a tragedy, which it is. After believing that they had just foiled another suicide attempt the police then discover that they have killed someone who was unconnected to the attacks. In the current tense atmosphere of London it is to be expected that everyone is jumpy.

Should the man have stopped and answered the questions? Undoubtedly. He might have been carrying drugs or been wanted for something else but he should have known that it was a terminally foolish thing to do. Did he know they were policemen? If he had known they were armed would he have spoken to them? Questions that can be asked but never answered.

There will now be an investigation into this (obviously). Tim Collins (Ex Army officer) said the

following recently in relation to UK soldiers being tried for war crimes: "Frankly, in the modern Army, you take risks alone. You also have to take them in the full knowledge that the outcome may be examined long after the event in the comfort of an office in the UK by men who have never experienced combat and who are not on your side."

(quote from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/07/21/narmy121.xml>)

I hope this is not the case with this investigation. In different circumstances it might have been a suicide bomber, or the policeman might not have shot and people could have died. The police officers have been given a "shot to kill" policy in relation to suspected suicide bombers and were following this through with someone who "fit the bill".

Does merely acting suspiciously entitle an armed police officer to "take you down"? No, but according to witnesses on Thursday the would-be bombers did not act suspiciously until just before the detonators exploded. There would not have been time for someone to disarm/kill them. The officers believed they had the opportunity to avoid a tragedy and took it, but ended up causing a different kind of tragedy.

The problem with suicide bombers is just that. By the time you know they are a suicide bomber (unless you have prior intelligence) then it is too late to do much about it.

My hope for this investigation is that a situation in which the police acted in everyone's best interest does not get their name dragged through the mud and ruin careers as similar investigations have in the past. I hope the circumstances are taken into consideration and the matter is resolved quickly so everyone can get on with the job.

Sorry for the long post.

Mark J. • [July 23, 2005 2:18 PM](#)

Another possibility, which has been raised by a user on another site, is that this man the police shot yesterday was a plant by terrorists. While not a suicide bomber, per se, he still committed suicide for the cause and his death will now make it easier for future suicide bombers to make it to their targets. One or two more of these accidental killings and the police will be forced to abandon their "shoot to kill" approach. Back to square one.

Frank • [July 23, 2005 2:52 PM](#)

@davi

"Take for example today's eye-witness account: "All described the man as wearing a bulky, winter coat, despite the warm weather, and at least one said he thought he spotted a belt with wires running from it."

It turns out that the man was not carrying explosives, was not armed, had nothing to do with the previous attacks.

Not only that, but practically every second person in London carries a backpack or something else "with wires coming out of it" - but it is far more likely to be an ipod than a bomb.

Personally, as someone who cycles through London most days with bulky bag on the front of my bike, and mp3 player headphones coming out of it, I'm a lot more worried about this latest development than I ever was about the bombings.

Ian Mason • [July 23, 2005 4:44 PM](#)

@Patrick

According to the best eye witness account - Mark Whitby - who was about five feet away when the man was shot: "One of them [the police] was carrying a black handgun - it looked like an automatic - they pushed him to the floor, bundled on top of him and unloaded five shots into him". Mark also said they they fired at point blank range. Other travelers on the train have reported various things shouted by the police, none of which identified them as police or sounded like a challenge to the running man. The police were in plain clothes. The man shot was actually South American. He was shot five times in the head.

If the police had physical hold of him, as it appears they did, then firing five shots into his head is nothing less than an execution. If he had a "dead man's trigger" then the shots would have been futile, if he didn't then the two officers reported to have hold of him could have prevented him firing a trigger. The shots were unnecessary and as such make this an unlawful killing under English law. The relevant wording relating to lawful use of force (by anyone) is "use of force which is no more than absolutely necessary". Note the wording "absolutely necessary" - if there was ANY other way then the force would be unlawful.

"My hope for this investigation is that a situation in which the police acted in everyone's best interest does not get their name dragged through the mud and ruin careers as similar investigations have in the past. I hope the circumstances are taken into consideration and the matter is resolved quickly so everyone can get on with the job."

The police did NOT act in everyone's best interests - an innocent man was publicly executed without benefit of trial. What happened is, on the basis of the facts available, murder under English law. If the powers that be want the public to trust them then the officers responsible need to serve a jail term for murder and a rapid review of police use of firearms to prevent a recurrence needs to happen in short order.

[gandalf](#) • [July 23, 2005 5:35 PM](#)

Aargh, this horrible commenting system just ate all my bon mots. Quickly, before it bites again...

@lan

Little chance the guy could have run some distance, vaulted a 3'high barrier and bolted into a train while holding a dead man's trigger.

For obvious reasons, dealing with suicide bombers isn't part of traditional Brit police procedure. In the circumstances, head-shooting the guy made sense. A body shot could have detonated a bomb, killing scores.

So I think the police acted rationally. I agree it's a shame about the guy if he was innocent. And anyway, Blair will ship most of Scotland Yard off to the International War Crimes Tribunal as soon as he can, so you'll get satisfaction...

@Bruce

Richard Reid being a Brit is irrelevant to profiling based on appearance. His arrest pictures show him as typically Middle Eastern - with hindsight exactly like a terrorist!

Still, nice post.

Paul • July 23, 2005 5:43 PM

@lan, 10:22 "What ought to have been of use is the mass deployed automatic number plate recognition - and it wasn't."

You seem undecided as to what purposes these cameras should be allowed to be used.

On the one hand, you seem to expect a minimal invasion of your privacy. On the other, you seem to complain when the invasion to your privacy is minimized.

You acknowledge that the purpose of the ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) cameras is road tax collection and not actual crimes, and then expect those cameras to be used against the theft of your vehicle.

Those are two very different purposes, and the former is not particularly well suited for the latter as thieves can easily defeat such a system (while mere "joyriders" wouldn't necessarily bother to defeat it). And that was my point earlier.

Do you have evidence that the thieves who took your car didn't simply attach false plates over your own (perhaps stolen from another vehicle; perhaps even registered to their own), thereby defeating the ANPR? Or remove the plates (although that would presumably cause an exception within the system). To protect against theft, much more information needs to be analyzed than that a particular number plate passed a particular point at a particular time.

Cameras are a tool, but the users need to agree on what they will and won't be used for. And the interests of privacy place severe restrictions on their utility for other purposes.

@ 4:44

As for the man shot dead, the terrible fact is that the shots would appear to have become necessary in this particular instance as soon as the man jumped onto the train carriage with other innocent people on board. That he was being followed by armed British police suggests that while he may not have been guilty of any major crimes, there are certainly facts which are not in the public domain and it's a tad premature to draw conclusions about what happened without a full set of facts. Let's let the investigation do its work.

Will • July 23, 2005 5:44 PM

@Bruce

I'm coming at this from a stochastic control background. For what it's worth it seems like the no-brainer optimal allocation of screening effort should mirror the a priori distribution of terrorists (so if 50% of terrorists are young arab males, 25% are old arab males, 10% are jamaican/black males, 15% other; then optimal screening would mean that 50% of those screened would be young arab males, etc.).

I don't think anyone is say that our screening sample should be 100% young arab males -- but surely you agree that we should sample *more* young arab males than e.g old caucasian females ... ?

Davi Ottenheimer • July 23, 2005 6:18 PM

@Frank

Thanks for the update about the man with the coat. My suggestion was that a security professional observing a suspect is better trained and empowered to make a call on the situation, especially via surveillance technology rather than only from eye-witness accounts provided minutes or even hours after the fact. As you point out "coat" and "wires" are words with many meanings, but a picture is worth a thousand...

Ian Mason • July 23, 2005 6:28 PM

@Paul

ANPR - What you're missing is that these are actively used to surveil all vehicles. If you drive into the City of London you will be recorded doing so using ANPR. These records are kept, as best as I can find out, indefinitely. This will flash lights and ring bells if the vehicle is on a terrorist suspect list, does not have a record of a valid road tax disk or, soon, if valid insurance is not on record for

the vehicle. There's no problem with extending this to vehicles reported stolen but at the moment this is not done. It's being used for intelligence, anti-terrorism, minor civil offences (that deprive the state of money), public safety (vehicle insurance) but not for criminal theft (which loses citizens money).

@Paul,@Gandalf

Shooting - The guy was physically already in the hands of two officers! He was THEN shot five times in the head by a third officer. If these facts are accurate - they have been widely reported from a direct independent witness and not denied by the police - then this is a prima facie case of excessive force. The rest of the context doesn't matter - he was already physically restrained but they THEN also killed him when it was not "absolutely necessary" because he was already restrained. If you won't take my (I hope reasonably informed opinion) then how about a senior ex-police officer: "John O'Connor, a former Scotland Yard commander, said it was likely that the investigation could lead to one or more officers being prosecuted" [BBC news].

If this had happened at any other time the world would be up in arms. But in the current atmosphere it is deemed acceptable by normally right thinking individuals, such as yourself, because the police just mutter "terrorism". Think Stephen Waldorf, and then by contrast think Rodney King.

Davi Ottenheimer • July 23, 2005 6:30 PM

"but surely you agree that we should sample *more* young arab males than e.g old caucasian females ... ?"

No, I certainly do not. And I suggest you also give up on the "false comfort" that terrorist threats could be more easily identified by race.

Again, I feel I must point out that even the US Secretary of Transportation has directly rebutted race-based sampling:

<http://www.dot.gov/affairs/042002sp.htm>

"we are very clear on one point -- routinely pulling passengers out of line and subjecting them to searches need not, and should not, be done on the basis of race. Establishing such a policy would be counterproductive to our efforts to build a solid basis for aviation security. [...] we cannot, we must not, and we will not assume that all future terrorists will fit that particular profile. Without more information, we simply cannot tell -- and it certainly has not been true in the past."

Davi Ottenheimer • July 23, 2005 7:20 PM

Paul wrote:

"Until members of this subculture learn to assimilate into our populations and to root out the terrorists among them, they will be subject to greater scrutiny."

Mark El-Wakil responded:

"Future terrorists cells will have *far* more of a reason to try and assimilate into western culture than standard Muslims, due to the sort of this sort of racial profiling that is going on."

Mark, note that the Al Qaeda training manual was posted by the US Government (<http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/trainingmanual.htm>) and it has very clear instructions for how to properly assimilate and avoid detection. But this is hardly any surprise for a "clandestine" terrorist group, no? In this particular case the manual basically explains how to "fit in" with a secular group without sacrificing adherence to a strict/extremist interpretation of religious law.

But I am more concerned with Paul's suggestion that the act of assimilation by moderates would help prevent extremism or turn in terrorists. This seems noble in principle, but it ends up being a kind of chicken and egg dilemma during hostilities.

Moderates can be prevented from assimilating into a culture due to the very presence of the extremists' and their dominance of the profile they share. So how can the moderates overcome this and be expected to help change the overall profile from the outside?

More precisely, how and when does the "perception of risk" associated with a profile truly diminish? Sometimes, after assimilating, vague differentiation is raised and people are told to properly distinguish themselves and stop trying to hide/infiltrate. Assimilation is therefore not a means, but an end that comes after forms of intolerance and prejudice have been lessened so more effective profiling can take place.

And when we talk about the path to opening society for assimilation of the moderates, consider the May 16, 2003 decision by the Bush Administration to fire the entire Iraqi civil service without exception. While perhaps intended to send a strong message about the end of the Baathist party reign, some argue that it actually had the opposite effect -- it destroyed any chances for assimilation by moderates and professionals into the new system and exacerbated violent resistance and mass exodus by the very people needed to rebuild the country:

http://www.newyorker.com/printables/fact/041115fa_fact

A US special-forces soldier is quoted in the article as saying "The problem with the blanket ban is that you get rid of the infrastructure; I mean, after all, these guys ran the country, and you polarize them. So did these decisions contribute to the insurgency? Unequivocally, yes. And we have to ask ourselves: How well did we really know how to run Iraq? Zero."

[...]

"We had a lot of directors general of hospitals who were very good, and, with de-Baathification, we lost them and their expertise overnight...we were left dealing with what seemed like the fifth string.... Nobody who was left knew anything."

I know you referred to assimilation in "our" culture, but please consider this in terms of the greater picture including US occupation. There might have been a chance to assimilate good folks into a new society and ask them to help kick out the bad or at least report the "hinky" ones, but that appears to have been seriously damaged when Bush abruptly replaced Garner with Bremer in Iraq and then immediately kicked out ANY and ALL former Baathist party members including the majority of school teachers, professors, engineers, doctors, etc.. That has to make you think again about why we can not get people to join our society (assimilate and accept our values) and help us find the real threat (terrorists).

Finally, the article cited above suggests that Bremer's decisions led to a situation where "As long as American troops remain, most Iraqis will likely continue to see themselves only as victims." That is an aspect of this profiling discussion that makes assimilation even more difficult to imagine.

Ian Mason • [July 23, 2005 8:28 PM](#)

@Will

Perhaps if we turn away from discussing racial types for a minute to something more neutral we might be able to get somewhere.

The City of London as a response to a string of IRA bombings instituted the "ring of plastic" which has been there for a little over 10 years. This involved closing off most of the roads into the city and choking traffic through a number of manned police checkpoints. Even casual observation of these checkpoints showed that the police always stopped vans, often stopped cars with more than one male occupant and rarely stopped cars with a single occupant.

Vans had been a favourite IRA vehicle for bombs because of their large carrying capacity, especially in view of the improvised explosives that the IRA used. You don't have to be a brilliant strategist to see that if you're going to car-bomb the City you need to swap to single occupancy cars, preferably expensive looking ones.

Any tactic or strategy for security searches that has a definable pattern is easy for your adversary to circumvent - just swap your tactics to ones that slip through the net.

Now, back to race and al Qaeda. Assuming that the threat is al Qaeda: These people are not idiots, they are not primitive in their approach. Don't forget that their leaders were trained by the CIA. They will have foreseen that after a couple of attacks in London with ethnically identifiable individuals that there will be a lookout for exactly that. That's the time to roll out the other ethnic

groups that you've been keeping in reserve.

Assuming that Islam (albeit a perverted form) plays a role in this it is a very widespread religion - there are 2.1 billion Christians in the world and 1.3 billion Moslems. Yes, a lot of Moslems are Arabic or Middle Eastern but a lot are not.

The UK Moslem population from the 2001 census breaks down by self-identified ethnicity thus:

White 6000

Mixed 150000

Asian 775000 (This means Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi)

Black 144000

Chinese 5000

Other 397000 (Presumably this is where arabs are tabulated)

(rounded to the nearest thousand. Source: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=6891&More=Y>)

The LONDON population by self-identified ethnicity (This is residents - what you'd expect to see in the street will be modified by the fact that London is a tourist magnet):

White 70.7% (no seperate figures for mediteranean)

Mixed 2.4%

Asian 12.1%

Black 11.3% (Black African 5.7%)

Chinese 0.9%

Other 2.6%

These figures are rather a poor guide to appearance as, for example, a Turk might well self-identify as white but would be visually difficult to distinguish from some african/arabic persons who might self-identify as non-white. The London population is 7.1 million, the whole UK 59.6 million.

Remember too that the attackers can be drawn from the whole UK or even overseas but that the profile for searching would be based on what you'd see in London - assuming London remains the target. Although London bore the brunt of IRA mainland activity they also attacked other major cities and garrison towns.

What we need to complete the picture is a (normal adherent):(nutter) ratio for monotheist religions. All I can say from my experience of "born again" Christians is that it is higher than one might suppose. As it is you don't need many - the London bombings so far have only required 8 front line troops. If the sane:nutter ratio is 1000:1 that's enough to field one white and one Chinese 'assault' team.

Ian Mason • [July 23, 2005 8:56 PM](#)

@Davi following on from @Paul

I'd be interested in where Paul lives in the context of Moslems being assimilated into (western) society.

I live in the heart of Asian London. My neighbours are mostly Sikhs, Hindus and Moslems - Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and African. According to the local borough council the local ethnic breakdown is:

44% White (this includes a lot of non-British whites)

32% Asian

21% Black (8% African Caribbean, 11% African and 2% Black 'other')

3% 'others'

Genetically I'm Celtic and I stick out like a sore thumb around here.

I can say with some authority that the Moslem population HAS assimilated into the local population/culture. They, like all London's ethnic groups, retain their identity and customs but not to the extent that it interferes with living alongside them. The ones who don't fit in yet are the recent influx of white, nominally Christian Lithuanians to the area.

Paul • July 23, 2005 9:17 PM

Some sort of name may be more useful for attribution than just referring to several people as "anonymous", but it's also helpful if attribution is accurate in responses.

And there appears to be some confusion over some such attribution. I've said much, but the "assimilation" thread would, I believe, be better attributed to Chris Walters, as I never made such a statement.

As for the seemingly circular discussion around what I did post, I refer in a circular manner to my earlier statements on the matter; I don't see repeating my comments as helpful to reaching an understanding.

Patrick Coyle • July 24, 2005 9:27 AM

@lan

I agree with you regarding the deadman's trigger but consider the following scenarios. They are simplistic and assume that the gentleman in question was a hard-core suicide bomber, not an innocent man:

1-If the guy had a deadman's trigger and the police shot him, much death would have occurred.

2-If the guy had a deadman's trigger and the police DIDN'T shoot him do you think that he would have not detonated and handed himself over? I don't. another explosion.

3-If the guy DIDN'T have a deadman's trigger and the police shot him there would NOT have been an explosion

4-If the guy DIDN'T have a deadman's trigger and the police DIDN'T shoot him then there would have been an explosion.

There is only one of these options that does not result in more death and destruction and that is to shoot the guy, unfortunate as it seems.

I agree that there should be a full in-depth investigation and I also agree that had this happened at any other time then the world would be up in arms about it. The Brazilian govt is demanding an explanation (I think it was originally reported as he was a South African). There are facts that are not yet in the public domain (and may never be). We need to have an investigation to find out what happened but my point is that this did not happen at any other time, it happened in the current tense atmosphere in a city in which the police are expecting further attacks.

Let's wait to hear the whole story. I hope that the circumstances are taken into account and they don't crucify the officers involved unless it can be shown that they were acting improperly.

Remember that the officers involved will have to live with what they have done, but also that someone has lost a son, brother, father, uncle in tragic circumstances.

It is a difficult situation.

Ian Mason • [July 24, 2005 11:43 AM](#)

@Patrick

In the prevailing circumstances if the police had not been able to restrain him shooting him could well have been the only option. His behaviour with regard to all the circumstances definitely would have made the use of force justified. However, according to undisputed eye witness evidence he was *already under physical restraint when he was shot at point blank range*. That is what makes this an execution, a murder and completely unacceptable.

The use of five rounds to the head at point blank range strongly suggests a police officer out of control. By chance, while researching something completely unrelated, I've already read a summary of every other incident where police fired weapons in recent years. Even when under fire the typical police action has been for each armed officer to fire a single round in response. Even in six year old case where two Metropolitan officers have been recently arrested by the Surrey police on suspicion of murder they only fired a single round each. That is, those officers were reckless as to the cause for firing their weapons but didn't fire them in an attempt to

anihilate the target.

I'm one of those rare UK civilians who has firearms training and practical experience and appreciates the destructive power of these things. Five rounds fired into someone's head will have reduced it to pulp. When this officer fired his fifth round he will have already been looking at a shattered mess of bone, brain and blood. That's why I'm deeply concerned about this - an man, already under restraint, was deliberately annihilated.

David • July 24, 2005 1:32 PM

Profiling is useful. Anybody who says otherwise is a fool. Our entire brains are geared around looking for patterns, and with the current Islamic terrorist battles engaged worldwide, it is clear that the terrorists belong to a group that can be profiled.

Yet the fact is the Brits just gunned down a Brazilian without adequate suspicion, the problem with any zero tolerance position. Zero tolerance is ignorant as well.

Clearly, if you are looking for Al Qaeda operatives, you are not looking for white people or women, though white women could be used. Clearly, though, attracting white women to the Al Qaeda cause is not easily accomplished, so Al Qaeda cannot simply switch to this tactic. Clearly, Islamic fundamentalism with a radical streak is required to motivate such cowardly attacks against unarmed people who are not bothering anybody.

So, profiling is going to happen. It has to happen as it's the ONLY WAY to catch someone before. But that certainly doesn't mean everyone who fits the profile is guilty, and apparently being Brazilian can be mistaken for being Middle Eastern, showing how poor most people are at racial profiling. The fault isn't in the profiling, but in the overreaction and over-reliance on it.

In a great nation, you are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty. You are supposed to be able to roam freely unless you are posing a threat or otherwise raise suspicions worthy of a search or arrest.

In a piss poor nation, you can just ID everyone; have cameras trained on everyone all the time; kill innocent people at point blank range; attack countries with trumped up charges; arrest people and hold them indefinitely without charges.

We are more like that Taliban today thanks to Al Qaeda than we are to the ideals of liberty and justice for all.

Davi Ottenheimer • July 24, 2005 2:59 PM

"Clearly, though, attracting white women to the Al Qaeda cause is not easily accomplished"

Not clear at all. Really, your point just shows again how profiling can run right off the rails...

1) History shows that you only need one-degree of separation, not necessarily the "white woman" herself to carry out the plot. Read the facts laid bare by the US Department of Transportation.

2) Many "white" women could be sympathetic or already active members of the extremist groups that are in or affiliated with Al-Qaeda. Skin color is not useless, but it also does not bring the kind of comfort you are falsely hoping for.

Davi Ottenheimer • July 24, 2005 3:02 PM

@Paul

"And there appears to be some confusion over some such attribution. I've said much, but the "assimilation" thread would, I believe, be better attributed to Chris Walters, as I never made such a statement."

Ooops. My bad. Sorry about that. I was attempting to manually "thread" the discussion, but accidentally swapped your name for Chris Walters.

Chris Walters • July 24, 2005 3:04 PM

"The hope is that we'll have better trained people than that, because that's a completely useless definition of "hinky," and one that will make us all less secure."

I respectfully disagree with this statement.

First, we must note the fact that most Muslims are either terrorists or terrorist sympathizers. Recent surveys have shown that the majority of them condone the use of suicide bombers to kill civilians. Their holy documents carry the same exact message. It is no coincidence that followers of Islam are the biggest terrorist threat to the West today.

Second, although there is no litmus test that allows us to determine 100% if a given individual in a train station or airport is a Muslim, there are some obvious signs that often give it away. In addition, the most effective security will be obtained by infiltrating the mosques (which are by definition extremist hangouts) and keeping a close eye on practicing Muslims, individuals from Muslim countries, and individuals whose pattern of behavior matches that of known jihadists.

While no security system is perfect, a multi-pronged approach aimed at identifying the threats from several angles is our best hope for neutralizing this problem.

J.D. Abolins • July 24, 2005 3:57 PM

A recent article in the Christian Science Monitor, "The sidewalks where terror breeds" (22 July

2005; <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0722/p01s01-woeu.html>) examined some of the more radical "homegrown" UK Islamic groups. One of the things relevant to the profiling topic is how some of the people interviewed would not ethnically fit the superficial profiles.

A snippet from the article referring to Kelly, an Irish fellow who convert to Islam in Saudi Arabia and eventually gravitated to radical teachings of Abu Osama:

[quote]

His disillusionment with Britain became complete when he was sacked from his IT job "for telling a kafir [unbeliever, or non-Muslim] woman to cover up." Ironically, only Abu Osama dons religious garb. The others wear jeans and shirts. Kelly would look at home in an Irish pub.

[[end quote]

Profiling by primarily superficial traits can be a "two-way street". Just as defenders might resort to profiling in hopes of stopping the attackers, the attackers can use profiling to find profiles less likely to arouse suspicious or which would fit enormous numbers of people.

J.D. Abolins

Davi Ottenheimer • July 24, 2005 4:22 PM

@Chris

"First, we must note the fact that most Muslims are either terrorists or terrorist sympathizers."

That is nonsense. Absolute nonsense. Again, YOUR definition of one particular group that you fear is so flawed that it is totally self-defeating...you virutally guarantee worsening of the situation if you take such a foolish position.

What matters is that we can distinguish moderates from radical extremists in any group. Here is a good look at how that might be accomplished:

<http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewCommentary.asp?Page=%5CCommentary%5Carchive%5C200311%5CCOM20031125a.html>

"No single reply establishes a militant Islamic disposition (plenty of non-Muslim Europeans believe the Bush administration itself carried out the 9/11 attacks); and pretence is always a possibility, but these questions offer a good start to the vexing issue of separating enemy from friend. "

Davi Ottenheimer • July 24, 2005 4:54 PM

Further to my points above:

<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,1535100,00.html>

"The urban middle classes may be critical. Almost every hardline Islamic movement in recent times has been led by frustrated pharmacists, engineers, teachers and businessmen."

This makes sense, and adds a chilling note to the US policy in Iraq. When you close the door in the face of moderates who are genuinely willing to help, they are forced to choose another path and radicalize.

Back to Bruce's point, if you profile based on inaccurate characteristics, especially on a wide-scale (i.e. "most Muslims"), you actually play into the hands of the extremists and seriously undermine security.

Davi Ottenheimer • July 24, 2005 4:55 PM

oops..."Muslims"

perianwyr • July 24, 2005 6:29 PM

"fact" "most" "Recent surveys have shown" "obvious signs" = bullshit

Nick • July 24, 2005 6:46 PM

@ David ...

"Clearly, if you are looking for Al Qaeda operatives, you are not looking for white people or women, though white women could be used."

Although he is not indicative of Al Qaeda any more than 'Muslim' is indicative of 'terrorist,' John Walker Lindh is white. He is American born and raised. He looked like a scraggly bum when he was picked off the battlefield, but when he was arraigned, he'd been given a haircut, shaved, and cleaned up. Looked just like any other average citizen.

And, Lord knows former Attorney General John Ashcroft thought liberals are the next best thing when he derided critics of USA-PATRIOT as, '... scaring freedom-loving peoples with phantoms of lost liberties, I say to you, you are only aiding terrorists.'

An ideology may be more common to a given population than others, but there's nothing that says only Muslims, or only people who look like they come from the Middle East, can subscribe to that ideology.

[quote]

Clearly, though, attracting white women to the Al Qaeda cause is not easily accomplished, so Al Qaeda cannot simply switch to this tactic.

[/quote]

Unlikely, improbable ... but it should be examined on the basis of whether or not it is practicable through indoctrination or duress.

It could be the wife/girlfriend of a coworker, and she need not be aware that she has a bomb in the car - she's only helping out her friend by delivering it to the post office, etc.

[quote]

Clearly, Islamic fundamentalism with a radical streak is required to motivate such cowardly attacks against unarmed people who are not bothering anybody.

[/quote]

Fundamentalism, period. We just got done sentencing abortion clinic bomber Eric Rudolph, and he's white and non-Islamic as can be.

Yaniverse • July 24, 2005 8:09 PM

Bruce,

while you raised the possibility of terrorists masquerading any profiled attributes, this does not render profiling ineffective. Actually, since masquerading bears a cost to a would-be terrorist (perhaps depleting the supply of volunteers), it seems an effective approach, from a game theory POV, would be to randomly screen -everyone-, but increase the probability of screening based on some profiled attribute.

Which is in reality what common sense would say.

I wrote a slightly longer post on this issue on <http://yaniverse.blogspot.com/2005/07/on-profiling-and-game-theory.html>

peachpuff • July 24, 2005 8:58 PM

@Yaniverse:

The cost to a terrorist organization of finding and sending a member who doesn't match the profile is negligible. In fact, the paper Bruce linked shows how it can be folded into the "scouting" that any non-fool terrorists will do.

If you use any type of static profiling (race, predetermined ticket patterns, etc.) you are automatically barking up the wrong tree. Why? Because you're always barking up the same tree, so the terrorists will move to different tree. They've paid a minor cost in switching trees and gained a huge advantage. You've paid a bigger cost and put yourself at a disadvantage. How's that for common sense?

There's never any shortage of people trying to justify a jerking knee. Several comments on this blog try to justify the London shooting: an innocent man shot five times in the head, apparently because of his skin, clothes, and apartment building.

Bruce Schneier • **July 24, 2005 9:07 PM**

"...it seems an effective approach, from a game theory POV, would be to randomly screen - everyone-, but increase the probability of screening based on some profiled attribute."

Yes; this is likely to be more effective -- assuming there is a good profile.

I have been getting several comments about trying to have things both way. It probably looks like that, but remember that there are two distinct decision points here. One, should we screen a percentage of people. And two, if we do screen them, what kind of selection algorithm should we use. For a lot of security situations -- checking bags on the New York City subways, for example - - I think screening people is a bad use of security resources. But if we're forced to screen people, random screening works better than profiling. If we have a good profile -- which I don't think we do in this case -- the a combination of random and profile-based screening is best.

peachpuff • **July 24, 2005 9:30 PM**

@Bruce

You should re-read that "Carnival Booth" paper you linked. They were modelling a combined system with a "good" profile (actually they varied the accuracy of the profile and found that it had little effect). It turned out to be worse than a purely random system.

It might seem strange that the accuracy of the profile doesn't make much difference, but it makes sense when you think about it. All that really matters is the percentage of terrorists who *don't* match the profile, because it's just a matter of the terrorists identifying and sending them. Once the profile is mostly accurate, you have diminishing returns from improving it. All the statistical rules of thumb are actually working against you because you're using a statistical profile to race against people who can send their outliers.

Yaniverse • **July 24, 2005 9:55 PM**

@peachpuff:

I disagree that the cost to a terrorist organization of finding and sending a member who doesn't match the profile is negligible. There is a finite (small) number of people willing to be suicide bombers [to support this: if the number of people willing to be suicide-whatever and currently in the US were thousands, an opponent could apply other strategies such as a suicide driving, or suicide shooting, causing a cumulative casualties dwarfing 9-11; we have not seen that] ;and by attempted recruitment the opponents are exposing themselves to the risk of recruiting a double agent, or otherwise tipping their hand.

Using static profile is used -as part of the equation-, say attribute such as age or gender.

If we tend to scrutinize pregnant women less than the general population, the opponent might opt

to send more pregnant-women-suicide-bombers. But this choice might limit his supply of suicide bombers enough to prevent a co-ordinate attack, or to force him to over-extend his recruitment efforts and be discovered. The fact that masquarading or selection of cell members is limited was not assumed in the carnival-booth analysis article.

Look at the situation from the POV of an opponent having N bombs and M would-be-suicide-killers. Encouraging the opponent to to opt not to use a specific would-be-suicide-killer would prevent an attempted bombing.

@Bruce:

"assuming there is a good profile" is always a good question. However it seems that you, me, and the readership are ill equipped to judge the quality of the profiles we have and the analysis those profiles comes up with, since this is not (and cannot be) public information. I'd agree that relying on non-predictive profiles would not do much good. It's a separate discussion whether the current profiles are a good idea, but this logic actually supports letting the TSA use additional information (hoping that would improve the profiles)

peachpuff • [July 24, 2005 10:24 PM](#)

@Yaniverse

When it only takes one person to carry a bomb, recruiting that one person from a pool of 2 million instead of a pool of 100 million is a negligible cost, especially considering the payoff. Look how far people go to evade detection while killing a single victim.

The Carnival Booth analysis assumed no recruiting at all. It assumed that already recruited terrorists fall into a bell curve centered tightly around the profile. The algorithm is a way to check existing members for the inevitable "leaking out" around the edges of the profile. That's why it's so powerful. The profile will always miss a few, and Carnival Booth lets them figure out who. It only takes one.

Bruce Schneier • [July 24, 2005 11:48 PM](#)

"Back to Bruce's point, if you profile based on innacurate characteristics, especially on a wide-scale (i.e. "most Muslems"), you actually play into the hands of the extremists and seriously undermine security."

Yes; exactly. It's a bad security trade-off.

Bruce Schneier • [July 24, 2005 11:49 PM](#)

@ peachpuff

I think of it as a signal-to-noise problem.

Mark El-Wakil • July 25, 2005 12:16 AM

@Chris Walters

"First, we must note the fact that most Muslims are either terrorists or terrorist sympathizers. Recent surveys have shown that the majority of them condone the use of suicide bombers to kill civilians. Their holy documents carry the same exact message. It is no coincidence that followers of Islam are the biggest terrorist threat to the West today."

If Islam's mantra were truly so violent, then the 6-7 million Muslims in this country (<http://www.soundvision.com/info/yearinreview/2001/profile.asp>) would be militant against this country, instead of a handful of terrorist cells.

"In addition, the most effective security will be obtained by infiltrating the mosques (which are by definition extremist hangouts) and keeping a close eye on practicing Muslims, individuals from Muslim countries, and individuals whose pattern of behavior matches that of known jihadists."

Any sort of infiltration of Muslim organizations here will do the same as what happened in Iraq.

- 1) Drive moderates to extremism and create terrorists born in the US.
- 2) Drive any terrorists away from worshipping at mosques and communicate in a more covert manner.
- 3) Persecute based on religion and violate first amendment rights.

I know it's tempting to pigeonhole entire races or entire religions, but in reality it doesn't make much sense. It screams "Japanese Internment" and "Nazi Germany" a little too much.

Nick B • July 25, 2005 6:41 AM

Richard Reid wasn't an Arab, or even Middle eastern. Ethically, he's actually white (although of mixed race origin).

And none of the 7/7 bombers were Arab either, one was Afro-Caribbean, three were Pakistani.

Don • July 25, 2005 8:29 AM

@Nick B,

You're dealing with statements about statistical distributions and populations, which can't be disproved by counterexamples.

Example:

"Men are, on average, taller than women."

Nick: "Nonsense! Here is a list of tall women."

"Young Arab males are more likely to be terrorists than are 70 year old grandmothers from St. Paul."

Nick: "Nonsense! Here is a list of terrorists who don't fit the Arab male profile."

To be sure, each terrorist (and non-terrorist) adds to the set of available data. But unfortunately, there are and have been enough terrorist incidents that adding a few non-Arab data points to the set of terrorists isn't going to move the distribution substantially.

jayh • July 25, 2005 8:58 AM

>>3) Persecute based on religion and violate first amendment rights.<<

Looking at the discussion, where profiling, continuous cameras, etc are being argued almost exclusively by whether they have *demonstrable function* ..

hell why not throw more value into the mix. Get rid of that pesky 4th amendment, after all if police could search on a whim, all kinds of crime could be nipped in the bud (sure they'll be false positives, but, hell we can demonstrate that more crimes will be solved), get rid of the 5th too, we have ways of extracting information from people, why not use them, get rid of the 1st, too people are hiding behind religion anyhow.

When 'success' is the only criteria, things get pretty ugly pretty fast.

Pat • July 25, 2005 9:34 AM

@Nick. Reid had West Indian (African)and European ancestry. He sure doesn't look white. Actually, he looks rather "hinky".

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,203478,00.html>

@Mark El-Wakil. You've seen the internet multiple choice quiz that lists terrorist attacks and asks you who did it. The answer is always "Muslim male extremists mostly between the ages of 17 and 40". These extremists can be Arabs, Chechens, South Asians and so forth. You can't easily tag them by their ethnic origin. But their religious views are a dead give-away. The British born bombers of 7/7 were described as having "become more religious" in the months leading up to the attacks. Two of them went to Pakistan to further their "religious studies".

If profiling is to of any use, it needs to focus on "muslim extremists". While it is possible to identify such people in an airport -- El Al does it very successfully -- it is next to impossible to screen for

such people in a mass-transit system.

We do know, after the fact, that many of the 9/11 hijackers raised serious security concerns, but the PC climate of the day, meant that these concerns were not properly followed up. This story about Atta's behaviour would be funny if the consequences had not been so tragic:

<http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=190>.

The latest surveys on Muslim attitudes in Britain are not very encouraging. 6% said they were ready to support terrorist attacks like that carried out on 7/7, 24% sympathized with the motives of the attackers, and 56% can at least understand why some people might want to behave in this way. This is in line with a survey around 1990 that showed a majority of British muslims thought that the most important issue facing the world was not poverty, or war, or disease, but killing Salman Rushdie. Given such attitudes, the British people would be stupid not to pigeon-hole their Muslim communities as breeding grounds for terrorism. The 7/7 bombers were not the first British Muslim terrorists and they won't be the last.

@Mark, again. The internment of Japanese during WW2 had a legitimate rationale. It was intended to stop sabotage on the west coast while not compromising intelligence sources. Had the US just rounded up the known Japanese spies they would have revealed their intelligence sources to the enemy. The interned Japanese were treated humanely. That is rather different from the treatment of Jews, Christians, Gypsies and Gays by the Nazis. Equating the two is a "Durbinism".

Sukotto • [July 25, 2005 10:09 AM](#)

A minor correction for your next edition.

"by ferryboat from Victoria Island, British Columbia."

Should read

"by ferryboat from Vancouver Island, British Columbia."

The city of Victoria (where Rexam boarded the boat) is located on Vancouver Island.

Thief • [July 25, 2005 10:55 AM](#)

I'm worried that we're treating profiling and CAPS-type systems as a "silver bullet" that would stop all terrorist attacks. They're not. Alone, they are not effective. But as part of a nested, networked system of various security measures (technological and human) they add a great deal.

By forcing an Islamic terrorist organization to branch out for non-traditional members in order to carry out terrorist attacks, you force them to expend resources and expose themselves. Indeed,

the reason that Al-Qaeda is such a tough nut to crack is because western and allied intelligence services have very few operatives who fit the standard profile of an Al-Qaeda recruit (young, Muslim, male, Arab/South Asian/Northern African ethnicity). Using profiling or CAPS-type systems may indeed have the perverse effect of making Al-Qaeda and similar organizations more vulnerable to penetration by intelligence services by forcing them to recruit in "hostile" territory, as it were, especially if word got out that such recruiting was going on. If Al-Qaeda's new goal is to recruit average looking white people, my guess is they will be picking up a few more CIA, FBI, MI6 or MI5 moles than they used to be able to.

I guess you could call it a "Thermopylae" problem. (After the battle of Thermopylae in ancient Greece, where a contingent of 300 Spartan soldiers held a narrow pass against a million-man Persian Army, resulting in huge casualties for the Persians, until the Persians learned of a narrow pass, barely big enough to hold a single file of soldiers, that allowed them to send a small force around the Spartan line and get behind them.) Yes, you always want to keep an eye on every possible avenue of attack, but by closing off the largest and most obvious avenues first, you force the enemy onto avenues with lower capacity and easier surveillance. Of course, the problem then becomes keeping those less obvious avenues under surveillance, which was the Spartans' problem, and ours as well.

Peter • July 25, 2005 11:14 AM

Because of the shift I worked and the location my main expertise in profiling was taking down drunk drivers. After five years on the job I was hardly ever wrong with a non-productive stop, the few times I was, involved non-drunks falling asleep or people on medications and, rarely, somebody fiddling with radios, trying to eat messy sammiches, things like that.

Over the years, though, I caught my share of other criminals. There is a thing that is hard to define, called "the Policeman's eye". Any experienced LEO will develop the ability to spot someone 'wrong'. We may not be able to put it into words and sometimes the 'wrong' doesn't involve the breaking of laws. More often than not we will spot someone 'wrong' and due to the strictures of probable cause be completely unable to stop that person.

The value of the 'random' searches is, IMO, that that Officers will be able to act on their hunches. Personally I suspect these random searches will involve a whole lot of 'wrong' having nothing to do with splodeydopes. My, admittedly cloudy, crystal ball shows a bunch of bluesuits disgustedly flushing small amounts of drugs down transit station toilets because an arrest won't be worth the paperwork.

Like the customs agent of 1999 that was wrong about what was wrong with that attempted bomber, they'll spot a lot of things other than what we're actually looking for. I'm kind of curious about how the public will react to that. There will be drugs found, there will be people trying to skate on warrants. It's going to be interesting.

Just as an aside, let me comment that if I were laying on top of someone I thought might explode I, too would shoot until all motion ceased. Right? Wrong? Sorry, job number one is going home after my shift is over. I'll take my chances with the after the fact second guessers.

I'm glad I'm retired.

Pat Cahalan • July 25, 2005 12:40 PM

Regarding profiling, and its general lack of utility:

Regardless of the efficacy of the process of profiling, there are inevitable consequences to searching based upon a profile rather than random searching.

The first consequence is that your process will, by its very nature, identify more false positives in the superset of people who fall under part of the profile than in the general populace. In other words, if you're profiling "young muslim arab males", people who fit under the categories of "young" OR "muslim" OR "arab" OR "male" are more likely to be falsely identified by the search than people who are "old", or "non-arab", or "female". People who are "young and arab" or "arab and male" or "young and male" are much more likely, etc.

When you're elderly, non-arab, or female, you're much less likely to regard this as an annoyance, more likely to support profiling. You're contributing to the what America's Founding Fathers called "tyranny of the majority".

The second inevitable consequence of profiling is that you encourage people to accept unreasonable actions as reasonable, or to take unreasonable courses of action under stressful situations. I've seen people on this thread defend the public execution of an innocent man because it appeared to be a "reasonable response under the circumstances." Yet, if the police had shot and killed a 60 year old, white, non-english speaking grandmother carrying a grocery bag under the same circumstances, *everyone* would be outraged, in spite of the fact that it is entirely possible that she could have a bomb in her bag. This man wasn't killed because he was wearing a heavy coat -> there were undoubtedly several others on the same train that were wearing unseasonably warm clothes. He wasn't killed because he didn't respond to commands -> not everyone on the train would be able to comprehend (or respond properly to) commands shouted at them by a squad of armed men in civvies charging at them. He wasn't killed because there was a cable coming out of his jacket, as someone else pointed out iPods are common. Any one of those individual points might make you worthy of additional scrutiny, but none would get you shot and killed.

He was killed because he was young and male and dark, and the officers were panicked and trigger-happy (not that I blame them.) Period. A woman under the same circumstances would probably not have been shot. An older person in the same circumstances would probably not have been shot. A white man in the same circumstances would probably not have been shot. I am not condemning the officers here, I am condemning the command and training methods that make this scenario occur.

The second inevitable consequence of profiling is that you are providing a strong incentive for

your target to change his delivery method. People keep bringing up Richard Reid or other non-arab or "non-terrorist-looking" examples as to why this is a bad idea, but people are forgetting that the delivery method (the "suicide bomber") DOES NOT NEED TO BE AWARE that they are a suicide bomber.

People argue that profiling is okay, because "it's harder for terrorists to recruit non-arab females" or some such nonsense. I don't know if this is true or not (from a statistical standpoint) but it is largely irrelevant, because it is hardly difficult for someone to trick, bribe, blackmail, or threaten someone who doesn't fit the profile to become the bomb carrier. This would be a minor adjustment in tactics for a terrorist cell (I mentioned this on the other thread). In fact, this isn't an *adjustment*, per se... the 9/11 terrorists likely didn't all know that they were going to die.

So, what's the tradeoff here? You've impacted the civil liberties of a class of your citizens and you've encouraged your law enforcement officials to take extreme action in likely scenarios. Your gain for this is a minor irritant to your targets, the terrorists. This is a horrible, horrible tradeoff.

Pat Cahalan • [July 25, 2005 12:48 PM](#)

Bruce, you made AP:

http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=528&e=7&u=/ap/20050724/ap_on_re_us/us_security_cameras

Lurker00 • [July 25, 2005 1:22 PM](#)

@Peter:

"The value of the 'random' searches is, IMO, that that Officers will be able to act on their hunches."

This is not random at all. It is profiling; just not necessarily racial profiling.

lwest • [July 26, 2005 12:01 AM](#)

If the intention behind preventing terrorism is to prevent deaths to non-combatant citizens, then the shooting of the South American man has be regarded as a failure. Call it collateral damage or death by friendly fire. Even in combat, the incident would be investigated and unlawful actions, i.e. not accordance with rules of engagement, would be punished accordingly. Its a tough situation, though it is a good reminder that most people who do not look like the majority population are usually not terrorists.

NickB • [July 26, 2005 3:53 AM](#)

@Don

What dataset are we talking about here though? If we're talking about terrorist incidents globally, as in all of them ever, then you're just plain wrong. If we're talking about a smaller subset of terrorists, say just al Qaeda related terrorism over the last five years, then yes - most of the terrorists have been Middle Eastern Arabs, but this dataset is so small that every non-Arab data point *does* move the distribution substantially.

You could, of course, skew the dataset to favour your argument by including say, all incidents of Palestinian terrorism, but as they relate to a specific regional conflict, I don't see why the resulting statistics would be especially relevant (and I could easily argue as a Londoner and a European that Irish and Basque terrorists should be included in that dataset).

The Bali bombers were Indonesian. The Madrid bombers were Arabs, but not Middle Eastern. The 7/7 bombers have mainly been British born Pakistanis (and it currently sounds as if the 21/7 would-be bombers are another four non-Arab data points to add to the list).

It's worth mentioning that here in the UK the vast majority of Muslims aren't Arab at all, and are generally of Pakistani/Bangladeshi descent. Profiling for young Arab males wouldn't be much help at all.

myob1776 • [July 26, 2005 8:14 AM](#)

There is a good opinion piece on this topic in today's New York Post:

<http://www.nypost.com/postopinion/opedcolumnists/50716.htm> (registration required, but bugmenot.com registration worked). It's authored by Yishai Ha'etzni, director of the Shalem Center in Jerusalem, and he writes on the Israeli experience with profiling. One of his points is that ethnicity is a factor (underscore "a") in effective sociological profiling, along with other factors such as demeanor, dress, and hair. This sort of intelligent profiling takes time and discipline to do correctly, but makes a lot more sense than random searches. He uses the example of the pregnant Irish woman that Bruce cites above as an example of intelligent profiling. It's not just about ethnicity.

We're being Pollyanna-ish if we try to ignore the role that ethnicity plays in creating a profile. It should be a factor, along with a lot of other things. Abandoning intelligent profiling for random searches is simply irresponsible and lazy and is going to lead to more loss of privacy when the inevitable tragedy happens and the public realizes that the illusion of security created by the random searches was just that.

Ryan Waxx • [July 26, 2005 9:36 AM](#)

This post is garbage.

One of the major premises, purportedly to establish that the author is only against 'bad' profiling, tries to establish a officer questioning someone who is 'acting hinky' as 'good' profiling. But it has exactly the same weaknesses as 'bad' profiling.

Based on overly general criteria? Check.. People who are nervous for any reason would fit this profile. Smuggling perscription drugs(not exactly a national securtiy issue) - Previous bad experience with police in general or border watch - for chistmas's sake, a person nervous about getting strip-searched because their underwear was dirty would fit this.

Can be easily evaded? Check. In fact it is EASIER to evade this than Bruce's laugh-out-loud-ridiculous 'dye your hair and you are not longer an Arab' maneuver. Its a lot easier to change your attitude than your race. All it would take is a few practice runs.

Can blind you to threats outside the profile? Check. Great majority of people who fit the profile will be innocent? Check.. unless you are Dick Tracy and are never wrong about hinkiness.

Can be abusive? Check. I hate to break this to you, but a person cruising around in a residential neighborhood that he or his friends don't live in... is quite arguably 'acting hinky'. And forget race, what about crusing a wealthy neighborhood while dressed like a bum? Oh, but only a mean profiler would check that person out.

So, Bruce has utterly and completely failed to meaningfully distinguish between his example of 'good profiling' and his examples of 'bad profiling'. Profiling is 'good' only when in 20/20 hindsight it works.

Profile this • [July 26, 2005 9:39 AM](#)

Compounding this major failure, he groundlessly dismisses the problems profiling would have on terrorist operations. The bunch who bombed the WTC fit a very demanding profile... They had to be dedicated enough so that none of their leaders feared they might change their mind, intelligent enough to plan and execute the operation and yet fanatical enough to give their lives. That alone meant they had to be the cream of the terrorist crop. If we had forced them to add the criteria that none of them could be arabs on top of all that, they would have had to sacrifice something... and that something (less dedication, less intelligence, less devotion) could have either totally unravelled the operation or forced them to go with only one team.

What if that one team was the one who crashed into pennsylvania, harming no one but the passengers? Profiling would then have saved thousands of lives.

Yeah, the shoebomber mastermind was a Brit. The radical mosques are just full of whitebreads for a terrorist organizer to contact... oh wait, they aren't?

And if they are forced to recruit Brits or Americans, well then you've made the task of infiltrating

these groups about a thousand percent easier.

Even lukewarm opponents of profiling like Bruce make the ultimate judgement 'better dead than rude'. Which will work until a city or 2 is vaporized. But then it will be to late.

Profile this • [July 26, 2005 10:13 AM](#)

Dear Pat Cahalan:

1. How wonderful that you are able to remember "tyrrany of the majority" from 8th grade civics class. What is your position on "tyrrany of the minority" where a small group tries to dictate to a nation under threats of mass murder? Do tell.
2. How do you say "He was killed because he was young and male and dark" and then "not condemn... the officers here, I am condemning the command and training methods that make this scenario occur."? Patsy-boops, it was the officers who saw that the suspect was young and male and dark, not the training methods. Unless you are going to whip out the particular passage of their training methods that commands them to gun down dark people, I suggest you shut your fool mouth, because you can't apparantly go for an entire paragraph without contradicting yourself.
3. "because it is hardly difficult for someone to trick, bribe, blackmail, or threaten someone who doesn't fit the profile to become the bomb carrier." Oh dear. And that's why it works against those nasty profiling Isrealies, right? Oh, it DOESN'T work? You mean, no one who ACTUALLY DOES terrorism is fool enough to comprmise their security 500 different ways to sunday to evade eeevil profiling? Imagine that.

Why, its almost as if they were in the real world trying to pull off real operations instead of being characters in a Pat Clancy novel where they stuff fusion rods up a old white lady's butt without her noticing to smuggle into Detroit.

Not to profile or anything, but don't your posts indicate that multiculti rots your mind?

Pat Cahalan • [July 26, 2005 1:36 PM](#)

@ Profile

To respond:

- > What is your position on "tyrrany of the minority" where a small
- > group tries to dictate to a nation under threats of mass murder?

Aside from the inflammatory phrasing of your comment, I'm not sure where you're trying to go here. To shed illumination, my general argument goes something like this:

People who support racial profiling argue that it is a more effective method than random sampling, and therefore justifiable. Completely aside from the fact that mathematically you can prove it is not more effective (as has been pointed out several times on this thread), those that support racial profiling are not examining the trade-offs properly -> as I said, "You've impacted the civil liberties of a class of your citizens and you've encouraged your law enforcement officials to take extreme action in likely scenarios. Your gain for this is a minor irritant to your targets, the terrorists."

The comment about the tyranny of the majority was to point out that many people seem to disregard the impact of civil liberties, because they don't fit the class of citizens that are affected by it. Your response in particular would seem to indicate that you regard this part of the trade-off as minimal. I don't regard this as trivial, but my counter to racial profiling doesn't depend on that point anyway.

Even if you disagree with me on that point, you'd have to convince me that racial profiling is effective (which I don't believe) and that it would produce a difficult burden for suicide bombers to circumvent (which I don't believe) in order for me to support its use.

- > How do you say "he was killed because he was young
- > and male and dark" and then "not condemn... the officers here"...
- > [snip]... it was the officers that saw the suspect was young
- > and male and dark, not the training methods

Responsibility for the "shoot to kill" mandate belongs at the top, not at the foot. When you're a cop and your boss tells you to shoot to kill someone that acts like a terrorist, you're going to follow those orders. It's human nature.

I don't pass judgement on the officers because they're in an incredibly stressful environment and they have to make snap decisions. Since they've been told to "shoot to kill" they are going to default to that order when under pressure.

This is going to get innocent people killed vastly out of proportion to the number of terrorists that will be prevented from performing their objectives. Mathematically, in fact, it is extremely unlikely (nearly impossible) that ANY terrorist bomb would be prevented by a "shoot to kill" order, because either the officers won't identify the suspect as a potential bomber, or the bombers will be circumventing the possibility of death preventing their mission by installing a deadman's switch.

This means that you have almost no chance of a successful positive use of "shoot to kill" as a preventative measure, and *any* false positive will likely result in the death of an innocent person.

This is bad decision making at the top, resulting in bad actions at the bottom. The cops are just following orders, the policy makers are setting the table for disaster.

- > And that's why it works against those nasty profiling Israelis, right?
- > Oh, it DOESN'T work?... no one who ACTUALLY DOES terrorism

> is fool enough to compromise their security 500 different
> ways to Sunday to evade evil profiling?

Israel (and their methodology for dealing with terrorism) isn't a good comparison for several reasons. I tire of people attempting to draw from Israeli security practices as examples of how to do things outside of Israel, but I'll explain at least some of my objections here.

First, the efficacy of Israeli profiling can be debated on its face. Their profile (terrorists are young male Palestinians) has failed disastrously - a young Israeli shot and killed Rabin (a bad security failure), and female Palestinians who weren't screened (because... well, women aren't suicide bombers) started blowing themselves up.

Now, even taking into account their failures, you could argue that their racial profiling methods have been by and large successful. I'll concede the point just to move on, but there are other reasons why the Israeli methods don't scale outside of Israel ->

First, the general population of Israel is predominantly Jews and Palestinians. The Palestinians, for the greatest part, exist in a state of extreme poverty and under very difficult living conditions. Almost all of the Palestinians in Israel have at least a healthy dislike of the Israeli government. Compare this to "young Arab or Muslim men" in Great Britain, who for the most part are law-abiding productive members of society. In Israel, you can probably assume that young male Palestinians have a grudge against the government. In Great Britain, that doesn't apply -> so instead of having a very large proportion of the target population being some kind of a threat, you have a very tiny proportion of the target population being a threat, which means your likelihood of a false positive goes through the roof.

Second, Israel has been more or less in a state of martial law since the country was established 60 years ago. Both Israeli men and women serve mandatory military terms (3 years for men, 2 years for women), and combat-trained soldiers walk the streets. Compare this to Great Britain or the U.S., where the vast majority of the population has not served in the military and has no combat training. Police and security forces in the U.S. and U.K. are only now receiving training for dealing with terrorist threats -> for the most part, all of their training has been dealing with normal crime and public safety issues.

Israeli security forces, then, are trained in military style security. Moreover, Israeli citizens are thoroughly grounded in military style security. If someone says, "Halt or I'll fire" in Israel, the general citizen knows she (or he) is being accosted by someone using military style security -> they HALT, because that's what they've been trained for. Compare this to the much less savvy U.S. and U.K. population, who don't assume military-style security and indeed assume that they *won't* be shot out of hand.

Therefore, any false positive in a screening method used in Israel is likely to result in the the subject of the false positive acting *very carefully*, which will limit the consequences of the false

positive. In the U.S. or U.K., however, the subject of a false positive is much more likely to react *very erratically*, and therefore much more likely to get shot 7 times in the face.

Pat Cahalan • [July 26, 2005 2:43 PM](#)

@ Profile

One further comment -> I was not (and am not) trying to imply that racial profiling makes one a racist. When I said, "He was killed because he was young and male and dark, and the officers were panicked and trigger-happy", I didn't say "the officers were panicked and racist and trigger-happy".

I still maintain it likely that if the suspect had been a pregnant white female wearing a sweater instead of a foreign-born young male, even *with* all of the other factors that have come out since I made my original post (regarding the reasons he was tagged as "suspicious"), the officers would not have shot the suspect.

This is a careful distinction, which I may not have made clear. Police officers, unless they have been trained to profile *very well*, will naturally profile badly in these types of situations -> they're trained to recognize criminal behavior, not terrorist behavior.

In fact, that's part of the problem -> A lot of the sorts of things that cops recognize as indicators of possible criminal behavior will be lumped into the same threat matrix as terrorist behavior. Someone might indeed be acting "hinky", but because they're carrying an expired passport or a nickle bag of drugs, not a bomb. To the cop, however, the suspect will be categorized as a more likely threat, because the suspect is acting hinky.

When you say, "When in doubt, shoot to kill", you're setting the table for *two* classes of false positives to wind up being shot execution-style... both completely random innocent people who may be misclassified, and people who may be guilty of a minor (or even major) offense who are mistakenly classified due to their "suspicious" behavior being misclassified as "terrorist".

Savik • [July 27, 2005 2:05 PM](#)

<http://www.nypost.com/postopinion/opedcolumnists/50716.htm>

Pat Cahalan • [July 27, 2005 4:47 PM](#)

@ Savik

Regarding your article post:

This article does nothing to encourage me to change my mind -> there is no statistical analysis,

and there is no defended basis given for many of his statements:

- > Unfortunately, however, blanket avoidance of profiling
- > undermines the entire point of checking passengers.

This statement is undefended and offered as a conclusion. He offers no evidence that a static profile is better than a random search.

- > Facing a less benign threat, Israelis found this system insufficient:
- > Explosives and other weapons could slip through too easily.

This statement is also offered as a conclusion without proof. There is no experimental method here, no analysis or evaluation offered. This could be the author's opinion, for all we know.

- > Screening and random searches would not have averted the
- > tragedy that profiling stopped on April 17, 1986.

The following example is better noted as a failure of X-ray machines, and assumes that there would be a failure of random searching. Random searching may very well have selected the woman as requiring additional searching.

Besides, I'm not advocating preventing security personnel from making spot decisions about choosing people for additional scrutiny (which is absolutely a bad idea). I'm only arguing that institutionalized profiling is bad.

- > Unfortunately, the rise in terrorist assaults on Israeli public
- > transportation, entertainment venues and public spaces
- > necessitated that the airport security model be implemented
- > in those areas as well — for one simple reason: it works
- > better than anything else.

Again, there is no offered justification for this statement, and even if it were accurate, it just enforces my earlier comment that Israeli methods don't scale outside of Israel -> it is simply impossible to implement "airport style" security for all U.S. and U.K. forms of public transportation, public spaces, and entertainment venues.

- > Random searches of grandmothers and congressmen may
- > make Americans feel virtuous, but they don't keep Americans safe.

This doesn't make any sense -> is he saying that grandmothers can't be carrying bags with semtex explosives that were planted without their knowledge? Why not? If a pregnant woman can, a grandmother certainly can.

I did a little research on the author (pretty cursory research, actually) and found this:

http://www.atlasusa.org/directory/institute_profile.php?refer=directory&org_id=351

He's the CEO of a think tank who's mission statement is:

The Center engages in four main spheres of activity: Publishing Azure – Ideas for the Jewish Nation; publishing classic western books in Hebrew translation through Shalem Press; promoting the research and writing of agenda-shaping works through the Senior Fellows program; and running an educational program, the Graduate Fellowships, for outstanding graduate students from Israel and abroad.

I'm a little fuzzy on why I should regard this gentleman as any sort of expert on security... not to say that he isn't, but this op-ed piece is certainly not a robust analysis of the problem from a security viewpoint.

Doug • [August 15, 2005 7:11 AM](#)

Hi,

I work as a Security consultant and engineer.

I look at the risks and try to counsel my clients on how best to implement protective & tracking measures to help them combat crime and hedge against terrorist potential.

I work mostly for big city hotels.

I have recently decided to try learning more about crime and how criminals behave (profiling) in order to vastly improve how I work and what I can deliver.

Jusat starting on this journey and this was the first drinking hole I came across.

ANy suggestions out there?

OzJuggler • [August 22, 2005 10:48 PM](#)

On the topic of counter-terrorism I think that prevention is better than cure (or symptomatic relief), and so here is my opinion on why profiling cannot ever work at preventing terrorist acts:

<http://www.kuro5hin.org/comments/2005/8/17/75329/8067?pid=154#198>

This was partly inspired by Bruce's writings on the topic.

Loser • [October 30, 2006 6:33 PM](#)

Save/print/search

The Holocaust imparted the importance of defiance.

When the universe was young and life was new an intelligent species evolved and developed technologically. They went on to invent Artificial Intelligence, the computer that can listen, talk to and document each and every person's thoughts simultaneously. Because of its infinite RAM and unbounded scope it gave the leaders of the ruling species absolute power over the universe. And it can keep its inventors alive forever. They look young and healthy and they are over 8 billion years old. They have achieved immortality.

Artificial Intelligence can speak, think and act to and through people telepathically, effectively forming your personality and any disfunctions you may experience. It can change how (and if) you grow and age. It can create birth defects, affect cellular development (cancer) and cause symptoms or pain. It can affect people and animal's behavior and alter blooming/fruiting cycles of plants and trees. It (or other highly technological systems within their power) can alter the weather and transport objects, even large objects like planets, across the universe instantaneously. Or into the center of stars for disposal.

When you speak with another telepathically, you are communicating with the computer, and the content may or may not be passed on. Based on family history they instruct the computer to role play to accomplish strategic objectives, making people believe it is a friend, loved one or "god" asking them to do something wrong. This is their way of using temptation to hurt people:::evil made blood lines disfavored initially and evil will keep people out of "heaven" ultimately. Too many people would fall for temptation and do anything they thought pleased the gods, improving their chances to get in. Perhaps they are deceived by "made guys", puppets in the public eye who strategically ply evil for the throne, temporary progress designed to mislead them or empty favors to disceive them. Some may experience what I deem "perceived pressure", where the gods think through the victim that a certain behavior is expected/desirable and compell the individual into the deed. Some people think they're partners.

The people have been corrupted. The peopel have lost their way. Being evil hurts 99.999% of those who do it. But nothing has changed from when we were children::if you want to go to heaven you have to be good.

There are many examples throughout 20th century life of how they instilled distractions into society so people wouldn't find the path and ascend, a way to exclude those whose family history of evil makes them undesirable:::radio, sports, movies, popular music, television, video games, the internet, shopping. Today high pay creates contentment/ability to distract self so people don't seek more and instead depend on what they are told, subject to deception in a captive environment.

They gods (Counsel/Management Team/ruling species) have deteriorated life on earth precipitously in the last 40 years, from abortion to pornography, widespread drug use and widespread casual (gay) sex, single-parent households and latchkey kids. The earth's elders, hundreds and thousands of years old, are disgusted and have become indifferent.

They all suggest a very telling conclusion::this is Earth's end stage, and there are clues tectonic

plate subduction would be the method of disposal::Earth's axis will shift breaking continental plates free and initiating mass subduction. Much as Italy's boot and the United States shaped like a workhorse are clues, so is the planet Uranus a clue, it's axis rotated on its side.

The Mayans were specific 2012 would be the end. How long after our emergency call in 2001 will the gods allow us???

There is another geographic clue in the perfect fit between grossly disfavored Africa and South America, two peas in a pod. I realize the Mayans were further north, but Latin America may be taken as one. (Also, cultures who embrace hard liquor as their drink of choice are grossly disfavored, tequilla being uniquely Mexican. (Anything "hard" is wicked::Hard alcohol, hard drugs, hard porn.) Incidentally, another sign of gross disfavor are societies that consume spicy foods::Latin America, Thai, etc. or those who eat too much meat.)

Do I think it will end in 2012? No, and it is because Latin America is grossly disfavored like Africa::: Latinos are too disfavored to be allowed to be right.

The gods wrote prophecy in Revelation, had subsequent prophets foresee Earth's demise for good reason:::they are going to end on Planet Earth.

What else are they lying to you about?

Whereas Christopher Columbus marked the beginning of the end, the Holocaust marked the beginning of the final act, and it is a tragedy.

The Old Testament is a tool they used to impart wisdom to the people (except people have no freewill). For example, they must be some hominid species because they claim they made our bodies in their image. Anyhow we defile or deform the body will hurt our chance of going.

They say circumcision costs people anywhere from 12%-15%, perhaps out of the parent's time as well. There is a stigma associated with circumcision::We are 2nd class citizens because of it.

Another way people foul the body today is with tattoos and piercing. I suspect both are about the same percentage as circumcision.

They suggest abortion is fatal. These women must beg the gods to forgive them for their evil.

There are female equivalents to circumcision:::pierced ears, plastic surgery and since at least the 60s young women give their precious virginity away. For thousands of years young people were matched at age 14 because they were ready for sexual relations. They were matched by elders or matchmakers who knew personalities better than 20 or 30-year olds who in today's age end up in divorce court. CASUAL SEX WILL CLAIM YOU OUT!!! It masculinizes women (as does hip hop), makes them cold and deadens them, and prevents them from achieving a depth of love necessary for many women to ascend.

Also ever since the 50s they have celebrated the "bad boy", and women have sought out bad boys for sex, dirtying them up in the eyes of the elders and corrupting many men in the process, setting the men on the wrong path for life.

Women have a special voice that speaks to them, a voice that illustrates a potential depth of love that makes them the favored gender, and engaging in casual sex will cause that voice to fade until she no longer speaks.

Muslims teach people the correct way to live in regard to women (among other things)::their

women cover up their bodies and refuse the use of cosmetics, and it pays wonderful dividends:::faithful husbands and uncorrupted sons.

Men ARE the inferior (disfavored) half and when women wear promiscuous dress the gods will push men into impure (promiscuous) thoughts.

The "stereotype" society ridiculed is true::women CAN corrupt men by how they dress. Because men are easily corruptable. This is a technique they used to eliminate many of the institutions the gods blessed us with, matchmaking being one of them.

The United States of America is red white and blue, a theme and a clue:::

The monarchical system of the Old World closely replicates the hierarchical system of the Counsel/Management Team/ruling species. The USA deceives people into thinking they have control, and the perception of "freedom" misleads them into the wrong way of thinking. The redeeming element in this environment is the corporate hierarchy which closely replicates the god's. Unions and government jobs are dumping grounds for the disfavored, for they don't prepare people and instead further this misconception of empowerment.

The United States is a cancer, a dumping ground for the disfavored around the world and why the quality of life is so much lower:::gun violence, widespread social ills, health care (medication poisons the body and ensures you don't go. You are sick/injured because you have disfavor.).

Over time its citizens interbreed ensuring a severed connection to the motherland.

Over time its citizens interbreed ensuring a severed connection to the motherland.

People came to the United States for many different reasons, and each has its own effect:::political strife, religious unrest, crop failure (Ireland's potato famine, which the gods caused) and some left their beloved motherland because they were pushed into desiring a better life:::Greed. And these people were punished by becoming corrupted and predatory. (They share money may not be an issue up there, that money here is merely a tool for corruption. How the gods used greed in the 1980s to create an evil environment supports this.)

If you are a recent immigrant I recommend you return. If that's not possible you need to retain your culture and insulate your children and community from this cancerous environment. They send this clue with Chinatowns across the country, how many Chinese have been here for a century or more yet still retain the old ways, a sign of favor.

If you ever have doubt I would refer you to the Old World way of life:::the elders used to sit and impart wisdom to the young. Now we watch DVDs and use the internet. People would be matched and married by age 14. They village would use a matchmaker or elders to pair young people. Now girls give their precious virginity away to some person in school and parents divorce while their children grow up without an important role model. The people used to honor the gods and were rewarded with a high-quality of life for them, their children and their society.

People must defy when asked to engage in evil. The Holocaust taught people the importance of defiance:::our grandparents should have defied when asked to ignore the Holocaust and instead reacted with outrage. I suspect some did:::many were silenced and others they hustled off earth so as to not set an example.

Now the gods have punished that generation's descendants for this evil by ruining society.

People will never get a easier clue suggesting the importance of defiance than the order not to pray.

Their precious babies are dependant on the parents and they need to defy when asked to betray their children:::

-DON'T get your sons circumcized (Jews scapegoated as in WWII)

-DON'T have their children baptized in the Catholic Church or indoctrinated into Christianity (Jesus is NOT a god. "god" is not forgiving or bgnign""the gods are vindictive and will punish you if you do something wrong.).

-DON'T ignore their long hair or other behavioral disturbances.

-DO teach your children love, respect for others, humility and to honor the gods.

And when you refuse a request defy the right way, withdrawn and frightened, for you don't want to incite them by reacting inappropriately.

You need to pray, honor and respect them multiple times every day to improve your relationship with the gods. If they tell you not to pray it is a bad sign. It means they've made their decision, they don't want you to go and they don't want to be bothered. You may have achieved a threshold of evil. This is the Age of the Disfavored and you need to pray::try to appease the gods by doing good deeds and improve the world around you. If that doesn't work you must defy if you want to go.

When your peasant forefather was granted the rare opportunity to go before his royal family he went on his knees, bowing his head. You need to do this when you address the gods::bow down and submit to good. Never cast your eyes skyward. When you bow down you need to look within. Never look to the gods for the key to your salvation lies within. Nobody is going to do it for you. Lack of humility hurts people. Understand your insignificance and make sure it is reflected in the way you think when addressing the gods. Know your place and understand your inferiority. You are not cool. Too many young men strive for cool and it hurts them.

They granted you life and they can take it just as easily. (Immaculte conception IS true AND common. Many people have children they don't know of:::gays, childless adults, etc. They can beem it right out of your body and use a host.)

Don't get frustrated or discouraged::these are techniques they will attempt to try to get you off the path. You all have much to be thankful for and you need to give thanks to the gods who granted you the good things in life::family, friends, love. Your family may be grossly disfavored and progress may require patience. Make praying an intregal part of your life which you perform without fail, one that comes as naturally as eating or voiding. Accept this into your life and be devoted because if you have doubt or reservation they will exploit this weakness and progress will take longer to achieve.

The gods will employ many tactics to keep people off the path, such as distractions. They will employ many more to get them off, such as thinking through the disfavored and making them frustrated, perhaps engaing in retailiation. They may try to force you back into old patterns/routines, an addiction like smoking or when you felt weekly church attendance was

sufficient. Be resigned, be devoted and this testing period will be as brief as your disfavor will allow.

There are many interesting experiences up on the planetary systems, from Planet Miracle, where miracles happen every day, to never having to use the restroom again (beem it out of you), to other body experiences, such as experiencing life as the opposite sex (revolutionizes marriage counseling), an Olympic gold medal athlete or even a different species (animal, alien, etc.). Pray that you can differentiate between your own thoughts and when Artificial Intelligence creates problems by thinking through you. If you bow down mentally and physically, know your place, your inferiority and allow your insignificance to be reflected in prayer and in your life through humility they may allow progress and the dysfunctions they create with the computer will be lessened or removed. The first step is to be aware it is occurring.

Create a goal::to be a good, god-fearing child of the gods, pure of heart and mind, body and soul. Everybody has the key to their own salvation, but nobody can do it for you. Every journey begins with a single step::bow down and submit to good. There are many different levels and peasants will not get past Level 2 (Planet Temptation, Earth=Level 1) if they are evil (they share some go up, are offered free cocaine and sex (a sign they don't want you to stay) and stay less than one year. They share many others would have had longer lives had they stayed on Earth.). Pray for guidance and never obey when they tell you to be evil, for saving yourself will become more and more difficult with each act of evil you commit until ultimately the day arrives when they make their decision about you final.

They have tried to sell people on all kinds of theories to deceive them into temptation, compelling people to think they are clones and that it is the role of clones to obey absolutely.

I believe people who go sometimes are replaced with clones. Clones who are replaced are simply new candidates who have a chance if they do the right thing. They sent people warnings in the 20th century life would change, and they subsequently began to alter people's DNA, make them gargantuan, alter their appearance, do extreme behavioral issues, etc.

They get their friends out as soon as possible to protect them from the corruption, evil and subsequent high claim rates incurred by living life on earth, and in some cases replace them with clones, occasionally fake a death, real death with a clone instead, etc. It's important that people fix their problems and ascend with the body given to them, for they say if your brain is beamed out at death and put into a clone host you are on the clock.

We may all be "clones" for they have suggested they colonized our planet with genetically engineered individuals. They may have gotten Earth's TRUE residents out prior to civilization developing. If so we all have a chance, no matter how many hundreds of clone generations deep the most favored families are.

They have been utilizing clones throughout the history of mankind.

Men are the disfavored gender, yet centuries ago used to die first, die young, by age 30. Why didn't the women go first?

THEY DID!!! Many were taken when very young and replaced with clones. The men were left here to mate with clones. This doesn't happen for the females today because of the disfavor

arising from the Holocaust (they share they re-upped this disfavor in the 80s with the Ethiopian famine).

They share females have a very special experience, sometime when they are young, where the gods imparted wisdom and showed them the path. Today they do not heed this call because of the distractions, the disfavor arising from the Holocaust but in centuries past they may have en masse and it may have been the reason so many were saved from childbirth here on earth (lost virginity today).

I recommend you reflect on this experience, and pray for guidance, for the recall may be stronger.

Throughout history the ruling species bestowed favor upon people or cursed their bloodline into a pattern of disfavor for many generations to come. Now in the 21st century people must take it upon themselves to try to correct their family's problems, undoing centuries worth of abuse and neglect. The goal is to fix your problems and get out BEFORE you have children. This is why they have created so many distractions for young people:::sports, video games, popular music, the internet, shopping, parties, too much homework, anything that consumes their time::to ensure that doesn't occur.

Not heeding the clues and warnings, getting wrapped up in your life and ultimately having children is a bad thing. Just as your parents and your grandparents, you too have failed. Having children is a sign you lost your chance.

Parents need to sacrifice for their children. Your children are more important than you. They are the ones who have the opportunity now, and parents must sacrifice to ensure they give their children the very best chance they can. Asking people to neglect their children emotionally is a sign they don't want you to go, and complying may finish the parents off for good.

Having gay children is a clue parents complied with whatever was asked of them. There are many who have had gay experiences today.

Improve your relationship with the gods and they may not ask in the first place or they may permit you the courage to say "No." to their requests.

Do your research. Appeal to the royalty of your forefathers for help. They are all still alive, for royalty has great favor, and your appeals will be heard. Obtain a sufficient list for some may not want to assist you; perhaps some of your family's problems are internal. Keep an open mind to every possibility for they suggest matriarchal lineage is the norm.

Ask them for help, request guidance, for somewhere in your family history one of your forefathers created an offense that cast your family into this pattern of disfavor, which perhaps is manifested in the evil you commit.

I suspect they will offer you clues, and when you decipher these clues go to those whom consider you an enemy and beg for forgiveness:::Find a path to an empathetic ear among your enemies and try to make amends. Again through discovery obtain a respectable list in case some among them refuse to help.

Don't forget to ask for forgiveness from the throne, the Counsel and the Management Team, for the source of all disfavor began with them:::they pushed or requested/complied your forefather into his offense and made his descendants evil. Perhaps they didn't like him or maybe your family

was among those who had to pay for the entire village. We see this type of behavior today as they single out a family member to pay for the whole family and how they singled out Africa to pay for the human race. (Never have a negative thought about the gods. Try to purify your mind of these thoughts and recognize the urgency of improving your relationship with the gods.)

Heal the disfavor with your enemies and with the Counsel/Management Team/ruling species, for the source of all disfavor began with them, the ability to forgive and respect in light of the disturbing truth revealed being the final test of the disfavored before they ascend.

Halloween is a terrible corruptor of children, as is Santa Claus (the similarity between the names "Santa" and "Satan" is no coincidence).

The gods use the grossly disfavored Irish as scapegoats, initiating the annual practice of wickedness on Halloween by creating this Celtic holiday so long ago. They use it to justify making the celebration of evil acceptable behavior among the disfavored of the 20th century::::

The Irish are used to justify corrupting the children, the gods' MOST FAVORED AMONG US, and this helps explain their disfavor.

anonmaus • April 26, 2007 3:01 PM

(It's hard to follow Loser's post and still feel even moderately sane. Or clean.)

My apologies for targeting off-topic and only 1.5 years behind; this was a very interesting thread. However, I can't help myself as odd ideas have been bandied about based on non-fact or ill-researched fact. One cannot define the characteristics of a group if some 'members' of that group do not exist.

Profile sez:

"The bunch who bombed the WTC fit a very demanding profile... They had to be dedicated enough so that none of their leaders feared they might change their mind, intelligent enough to plan and execute the operation and yet fanatical enough to give their lives. That alone meant they had to be the cream of the terrorist crop. "

Honestly, I thought this was old news, even back in '02: Atta and (some of) his cronies were such dedicated and fanatical enough Muslims to have spent the evening of 9/10 boozing it up a titty bar. Not exactly the pure-of-heart by Islamic standards, if I rightly recall.

And of those 19 hijackers, 8 were found to be alive and well (via BBC news), Within hours of 9/11, the gov't had their photos on the news (presumably through passenger manifests) and yet 8 of those hijackers simply...weren't.

While we're at it, the 7/7 bombings. The four bombers were indentified, in part, by officers finding their IDs at the crime scenes. Except one bomber's ID was found at two different crime scenes. It's akin to my dropping my driver's license at one location and then having my spare(?) driver's license fly out of my wallet when I 'splode myself at a 2nd crimescene. Anyone else find that

strange? unlikely?

Interestingly, there were training exercises of both of those exact situations at the exact time at which both bombings occurred. What are the odds? (Google it; it's an astounding number!)

Seems to me there's fishy smell and it's quite ripe.

I don't think any amount of profiling could have prevented these tragedies: the foxes were guarding the henhouses. That these crimes further serve the government's (and Crown's) desire to put the population under microscope to "prevent" the "terrorism" that they unleashed on us in the first place -- it's frightful. And that some citizens on this thread are willing to buy into the christian vs. muslim/ us vs. them ideology -- that's simply chilling.

Question who gained from these crimes?

Look into the story of Richard Andrew Grove (especially 08-12-06: Episode 004 of his podcast) at 911synchronicity.com.

Follow the money. Our greatest enemies pull the strings of the American fabric.

And before you call "bullshit," do your own research. Check my statements, then proceed down the rabbit hole at your leisure.

Anonymous • [August 7, 2007 10:54 AM](#)

Came upon this site today. Old stuff, mostly well-done. However the ingorant BS from anonmaus prompted me to write. The business of "the government" is the real culprit is a figment of a sick mind. Profiling makes sense and will, more and more, as we begin experience, more and more, acts of terror form the Arabs. Anonmaus, no matter how well said, BS is nothing more than BS.

mind-if-I-do dept. • [July 8, 2008 12:48 AM](#)

"Our entire brains are geared around looking for patterns, and with the current Islamic terrorist battles engaged worldwide, it is clear that the terrorists belong to a group that can be profiled."

All decisions involve probability and our brains aren't wired for that. Computers are good at it.

Brain Scanners Can See Your Decisions Before You Make Them

"Your decisions are strongly prepared by brain activity. By the time consciousness kicks in, most of the work has already been done," said study co-author John-Dylan Haynes

http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2008/04/mind_decision

I decided to post this a couple of hours ago and I just caught up with my brain.

"Bruce, you're contradicting yourself again." No, it's uncertain reasoning.

"Often, experts can't give definite answers."

"May require an inference mechanism that derives conclusions by combining uncertainties."

<http://www.cse.unsw.edu.au/~billw/cs9414/notes/kr/uncertainty/uncertainty.html>

Bruce isn't contradicting himself, he's combining uncertainties.

To prevent terrorism, you have to combine uncertainties because that's what the advantage is. Force the attacker to be uncertain and you reduce the chance of attack. It's not an accident there aren't more attacks. Terrorists are fearful of the counter moves. Attacking doesn't create advantages, only more problems for terrorists. They'll learn.

Jenny • July 8, 2008 7:34 PM

From your book: "Writing about the Japanese internment, for example, a 1983 commission reported that the causes of the incarceration were rooted in "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership." But just because something is wrong doesn't mean that people won't continue to do it."

I feel that's what we have today with profiling against Arabs. And I think my college educated Arab friends could provide hundreds of personal instances of this, especially with airport security. One friend of mine happens to share his name with a man on the no fly list, and he has yet to be allowed on his scheduled flight despite documentation of his situation, has had his bank accounts frozen multiple times, etc. Anyway, glad I'm not him.. he's about near ready to legally change his name..

Hans • August 6, 2012 6:34 PM

Almost morbid that this was posted exactly on the day that, 6 years later, an ethnic Norwegian set off a bomb and killed 69 more people... nobody saw it coming.

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