



## Terrorists and the Boston-Area Institutions of Higher Learning That Educated Them

by John D. Woodward Jr

### INTRODUCTION

**B**oston, home to America's first university, Harvard, and its first insurgents, the Sons of Liberty, has become an impressive intellectual center with over seventy universities in the greater metropolitan area. Perhaps as a result, Boston also has the unfortunate distinction of educating terrorists. This article describes some of the more infamous terrorists and their connections to Boston-area institutions of higher learning. Included also are lesser known or long-forgotten terrorists, as well as a terrorist "false alarm" and an academic archive containing terrorist-related information. To preemptively avoid an extended and somewhat theoretical argument over whether all these individuals are truly "terrorists," as opposed to criminals, crazies, or freedom fighters, the reader can make her own judgments.

In sum, here are the stories of fifteen terrorists, consisting of eleven males and four females, whose acts span a 100-year period, representing nine different Boston-area institutions of higher learning, i.e., Boston University, Brandeis, Bunker Hill Community College, Harvard, Massachusetts College of Pharmaceutical Sciences (MCPS), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Northeastern, University of Massachusetts (UMass) Boston, and UMass Dartmouth.

One terrorist was an ethnic nationalist active a century ago; six were anti-government, anti-authority violent extremists representing the New Left; one revolutionary was convicted of terrorism charges overseas; seven were religious terrorists or jihadis; along with two terrorist "suspects," and one person mistaken as

a terrorist. Also included is a discussion of one local university's archive of terrorism-related activity pertaining to the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

### BOSTON MARATHON BOMBING THE TSARNAEV BROTHERS, KATHERINE RUSSELL, AND DANIEL MORLEY



Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev set off two bombs on Boylston Street, near the finish line of the Boston Marathon on April 15, 2013, killing three people, including Lingzi Lu, a Boston University graduate student from China, and maiming many others. In the aftermath, the Tsarnaev brothers murdered MIT police officer Sean Collier on the MIT campus on April 18. As police closed in, they caused violent mayhem, before Tamerlan, the older brother, was killed during a shoot-out with police. Dzhokhar was subsequently apprehended, hiding in a boat stowed in David Henneberry's backyard in Watertown, Massachusetts. Dzhokhar received the death penalty. He awaits execution.

The Tsarnaev family settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts, after applying for, and being granted, asylum in the U.S., based on fears of persecution in Russia due to their Chechen heritage. The brothers graduated from the local public school, Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School. Although they initially enjoyed American culture, both Tamerlan and Dzhokhar eventually became adherents to radical Islam. Tamerlan, the stronger personality of the two, studied accounting on a part-time basis at Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) for three semesters after his high school graduation in 2006, before quitting. On June 21, 2010, he married Katherine Russell, the

1. For an excellent description of terrorist categorizations from the late nineteenth century through the 9/11 attacks, see David C. Rapoport, "Four Waves of Modern Terrorism," (2006) available at <https://www.international.ucla.edu/media/files/Rapoport-Four-Waves-of-Modern-Terrorism.pdf>

daughter of a well-to-do Rhode Island family; her father was an emergency room doctor, and her mother was a nurse. None of Katherine's family attended the Islamic wedding ceremony. Katherine gave birth to daughter Zahira in late 2010.

In 2007, Katherine Russell had enrolled as a communications major at Suffolk University in Boston and met Tamerlan shortly thereafter. She dropped



out of college, converted to Islam at his insistence, and transitioned from American collegiate fashion to full body-covering burka. Katherine, or Karima as she now preferred to be called, was never charged with any crimes related to the Boston Marathon bombing. However, many

doubt that Katherine Russell knew nothing about a plot that her husband and brother-in-law planned in the small apartment where Tamerlan and she resided on Norfolk Street in Cambridge. Moreover, her laptop computer contained Internet searches done a year before the bombings for terms such as “rewards for wife of mujahedeen” and “If your husband becomes a shahid, what are the rewards for you?”<sup>2</sup>

Dzhokhar, also known as Jahar, captained his high school wrestling team, worked summers as a lifeguard at Harvard University, smoked a lot of marijuana, and did well enough academically to earn a scholarship to the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth (UMD), located about 60 miles south of Boston. As he self-radicalized watching Al-Qaeda videos, he continued to smoke pot and became a favorite pot supplier to UMD students. Dzhokhar initially studied engineering but found the courses too difficult. He switched his major to biology, but nonetheless, failed many of his classes by his sophomore year. Despite his scholarship assistance, he had also incurred more than \$20,000 in university debt.

One of the remaining unsolved mysteries of the Boston Marathon bombing is the identity of the person or persons who actually made the bombs. The U.S. Government never identified the actual bomb makers.<sup>3</sup> Tamerlan and Dzhokhar planted the bombs on

2. See, e.g., CBS News, “Boston bomber’s wife researched martyrdom, expert testifies,” April 28, 2015, available at <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/wife-of-boston-marathon-bomber-tamerlan-tsarnaev-researched-martyrdom-expert-testifies/>

3. NBC News, “Boston Marathon bombing Trial: Feds Not Sure Where Bombs Made,” March 26, 2015, available at <https://www.nbcnews.com/>

Boylston Street, and many assume they made them, but the FBI explosives expert did not testify to that conclusion during Dzhokhar’s trial. Some experts, like Boston-based investigative journalist Michele McPhee, whose book on the bombing, *Mayhem*, is first rate, strongly suspects that the Tsarnaev brothers, at a minimum, had help in manufacturing the bombs used in the attacks.



In her book, McPhee identifies Daniel Morley of Topsfield, MA as the likely bomb maker.<sup>4</sup> Like Tamerlan Tsarnaev, Morley studied at Bunker Hill Community College. Coincidentally – or not – Morley had worked for seven years at MIT in a campus building close to the parking lot where

Tamerlan Tsarnaev murdered MIT police officer Collier on April 18, during the Tsarnaevs’ attempted escape three days after the Marathon bombing. Coincidentally – or not – sometime after the Boston Marathon bombing, local police, responding to a phone call from Morley’s mother reporting an emotionally disturbed person at her residence, conducted a safety check of the family residence in Topsfield, about 30 miles northeast of Boston. They found bomb-making materials in Daniel Morley’s bedroom, including the same Fagor brand and style of pressure cooker used in the Boston Marathon bombings. No criminal charges against Morley were ever filed; he spent over a year in a mental institution. He now drives a bus in Massachusetts.

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### THE UNABOMBER —TED KACZYNSKI—

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Theodore John “Ted” Kaczynski was a brilliant, troubled, and ultimately violent recluse. From a remote Montana cabin without electricity or running water, Kaczynski, a Harvard-educated mathematician, orchestrated a sophisticated nationwide bombing

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*storyline/boston-bombing-trial/prosecution-home-stretch-boston-marathon-death-penalty-trial-can-t-n330731* (FBI explosives expert David McCollam testified at the Dzhokhar Tsarnaev trial on March 26, 2015 that McCollam could not determine where the bombs were assembled. However, McCollam said that explosive residue consistent with the Boston Marathon bombs was found at the Tsarnaev family apartment in Cambridge and in a Honda CRV driven by Tamerlan Tsarnaev.)

4. Michele R. McPhee, *Mayhem: Unanswered Questions about the Tsarnaev Brothers, the U.S. Government and the Boston Marathon Bombing*, (Steeforth Press, N.H.) 2020.



campaign that killed three people and injured 23 others from 1978 to 1995. He targeted his attacks against people and institutions that he associated with advancing technology and destroying the environment. The UNABOMBER case, as it became known, remains the FBI's largest and most expensive investigation of the 20th Century.<sup>5</sup>

Born and raised in Chicago, Kaczynski came from a working-class Polish background and excelled



in academics, graduating from high school at age 15. He entered Harvard on a scholarship in 1958, before he had a driver's license. A 1996 *New York Times* article reported that Kaczynski's roommates regarded him as a brilliant loner and remembered him for "his annoying trombone blasts in the dead

of night, the primordial stench of rotting food that drifted from his room, his odd metronomic habit of rocking back and forth on a chair as he studied, and his icy aloofness as he strode through the suite, saying nothing, slamming his door to shut them out."<sup>6</sup> (In fairness, they made these personal observations after they knew he was a cold-blooded murderer.)

During Kaczynski's sophomore year, he participated as a test subject in an intensive psychological experiment conducted by the distinguished Harvard Professor Henry Murray. Murray had done pioneering work on personality assessment and had worked for the Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner to the CIA, during World War II. As part of his Harvard experiments to determine the effect of criticism on self-esteem, Murray would have Kaczynski and others write weekly essays on personal topics. An anonymous evaluator would then use that essay as ammunition to brutally critique, demean, and humiliate the test subject in person, as sensors monitored the subject's reactions. Kaczynski's defenders would subsequently allege that the CIA was behind these "mind control" experiments which, in their view, inflicted irreparable damage on Kaczynski's psyche.

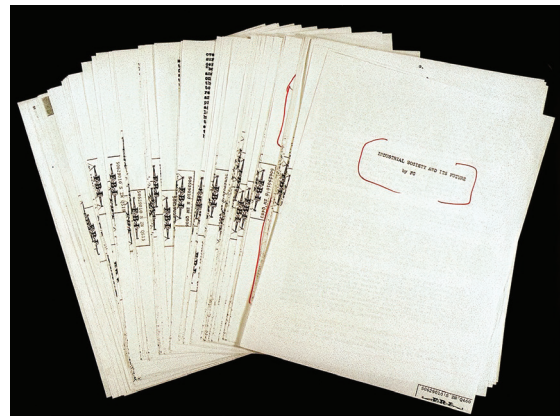
Kaczynski graduated from Harvard in 1962 with a bachelor's degree in mathematics, with a 3.12 GPA.

5. See generally History, "Unabomber (Ted Kaczynski)," Aug. 21, 2018, available at <https://www.history.com/topics/crime/unabomber-ted-kaczynski>

6. Robert D. McFadden, "Prisoner of Rage—A Special Report: From a Child of Promise to the Unabom Suspect," *New York Times*, May 26, 1996, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/05/26/us/prisoner-of-rage-a-special-report-from-a-child-of-promise-to-the-unabom-suspect.html>

He then received his master's degree and PhD in mathematics in 1967 from the University of Michigan, publishing impressive articles and winning the prize for the best mathematics dissertation. From Michigan, he accepted a position at the University of California at Berkeley, becoming the youngest (at age 25) assistant professor in UC's history.

While firmly on the path to tenure, Kaczynski "dropped out." He abruptly quit academia, and, after a two-year sojourn in Chicago where he did manual labor, ended up at his cabin in Lincoln, Montana. There he became a recluse, living simply, doing odd jobs, relying on cash hand-outs from his family, and increasingly fixating on technology as the real and unbridled enemy that was destroying people and society. He used a manual typewriter to assemble his thoughts in a 35,000-word manifesto, which he titled



"Industrial Society and Its Future." This work begins with his bottom line, "The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race." His goal became exacting bloody revenge on those he associated with technological advance.

Universities figured prominently in the UNABOMBER's violence: He sent bombs to individuals at Northwestern, Yale, the University of Utah, Michigan, where he did his graduate studies, and UC Berkeley, where he taught. He apparently spared Harvard his ire, but the nearby Massachusetts Institute of Technology came into his sights. In 1995, he sent an anonymous threatening letter to Professor Phillip Sharp, a pioneering expert in genetic engineering, at MIT.

Kaczynski also planted a bomb in the cargo hold on American Airlines flight #444 from Chicago to Washington, DC in 1979, hoping to explode the plane in mid-air. A faulty fuse caused massive smoke but no explosion, and the pilots made an emergency landing. This attack caused the FBI to take the investigative lead in the case and prioritize it.

Kaczynski demanded that his anonymous manifesto be published or more attacks would follow. With the approval of then Attorney General Janet Reno and then FBI Director Louis Freeh, the *Washington Post* published it in September 1995. The manifesto led to his undoing. His younger brother, David, who had already developed suspicions about his brother, recognized the work, hired an investigator and attorney to research the case, and eventually contacted the FBI with his concerns.



FBI agents arrested Kaczynski without incident at his cabin in April 1996. The typewriter and other items recovered at the site solidified the case.

The UNABOMBER eventually pleaded guilty to all charges in exchange for life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. He is currently a prisoner at the “Supermax” facility in Florence, CO. Coincidentally, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev is also incarcerated there.

In a controversial decision, Harvard included Ted Kaczynski in its 50th anniversary (2012) alumni directory. In his directory entry, Kaczynski reported his occupation as prisoner, his awards as eight life sentences, and his publication as “Technological Slavery,” a collection of works, based largely on his manifesto.

## The Jihadis—Al Qaeda and ISIS Terrorists

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### AAFIA SIDDIQUI (AQ)

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Born in Karachi, Pakistan, Aafia Siddiqui came to the United States as a teenager in 1990, residing with her older brother in Texas. She attended the University of Houston for one year and then transferred to MIT on a scholarship, earning a bachelor’s degree with honors, and awards for her public service. She went on to receive a PhD in cognitive neuroscience from Brandeis University.

While in the Boston area, she frequently visited and regularly raised funds for CARE International. This organization was established by members of an Al-Qaeda offshoot, the Al Kifah (“The Struggle”) Refugee Center in Brooklyn, New York—which was linked to the 1993 terrorist attack at the World Trade Center. From its location near Boston University’s

Charles River campus, CARE International (not to be confused with, and which has no relationship to, the worldwide organization of the same name) sent fighters and supplies to Bosnia and Chechnya. J.M. Berger, an expert on extremism, notes that CARE served propaganda and fundraising roles: “CARE’s tactics included dinner speeches and events at local mosques and universities, among them MIT, Boston College, and Boston University...”<sup>7</sup> Siddiqui was a prominent and effective speaker.

Siddiqui earned the sobriquet, “Lady Al-Qaeda” for her radical support for this terrorist organization, which complemented her extreme anti-Semitism. In 2003, the FBI named her as the only known female Al-Qaeda operative and she made the FBI’s “Most Wanted” list. Then FBI Director Robert Mueller stated at a press conference that “Aafia Siddiqui is an Al-Qaeda operative and facilitator.”

Siddiqui divorced her first husband and married into the family of Khalid Sheik Mohammed, the architect of the 9/11 attacks. He supposedly implicated her as an AQ operative during his interrogations under torture while in U.S. custody. She and her young children left the U.S. and returned to Pakistan, where she disappeared.



After an overseas odyssey spanning years, Siddiqui was eventually captured, tried, and convicted of seven counts of attempted murder and assault on U.S. military personnel in Ghazni, Afghanistan in July 2008. Afghan local authorities had taken her into custody, notified their American counterparts, and a U.S. team arrived in Ghazni to question her. As the U.S. team sat in one section of a room, Siddiqui managed to grab a gun and opened fire. The soldiers, in turn, returned fire, wounding her. Following her conviction, a federal judge sentenced her to 86 years. She is incarcerated at Federal Medical Center Carswell in Fort Worth, Texas, where she made news when she received minor injuries after being assaulted by a fellow inmate in July 2021.

She has many fervent supporters, especially in Pakistan, who believe that Siddiqui is an innocent mother and nonviolent Muslim caught up in a web of U.S. conspiracy and intrigue.<sup>8</sup> Her supporters believe

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7. See John D. Woodward, Jr., “The Spy’s Guide to Boston University,” *The Intelligencer: Journal of Intelligence Studies*, Winter 2017/18.

8. See, e.g., The Aafia Foundation, available at <https://aafia.org/dr-aafia-siddiqui/>

that the U.S. ordered her capture in Pakistan and held her incommunicado at a secret location, while torturing her.

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### AHMAD ABOUSAMRA (ISIS) AND TAREK MEHANNA (AQ)

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Born in France in 1981, Ahmad Abousamra was a Syrian-American dual citizen who grew up in the Boston suburb of Stoughton. He came from a prominent family; his father was an endocrinologist at Massachusetts General Hospital and the president of the Islamic Center of New England. Abousamra attended the male-only Xaverian Brothers Catholic High School in Westwood, MA until his senior year when he transferred to Stoughton High School, graduating in 1999. He went on to receive a degree in computer science from UMass Boston.



Abousamra became an Islamic militant who served as the chief editor of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISIS) *Dabiq* magazine, which began publication in 2014. Terrorist experts regarded him as playing a significant role in ISIS social media and its “most prolific English-speaking propagandist.”<sup>9</sup>

Abousamra, also known as “Abu Sulayman ash-Shami” and “Shaykh Ahmad ‘Abdul-Badi’ Abu Samrah,” was the subject of a feature story in one English language edition of ISIS’s *Rumiyah*.

According to the FBI, Abousamra made multiple trips to Pakistan and Yemen where he attempted to obtain military training for the purpose of killing U.S. soldiers overseas. He left the U.S. in 2006 shortly after being interviewed by U.S. Government officials (and lying to them), traveling with his wife and child to Syria. In November 2009, a federal court in Massachusetts issued an arrest warrant for Abousamra charging him with conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and several other felony counts. In 2013, the FBI placed him on its Most Wanted List with a \$50,000 reward. Abousamra supposedly died in an airstrike in Syria in January 2017. His case nonetheless remains active with the FBI.

Tarek Mehanna, an American-born pharmacist who graduated from the Massachusetts College of Pharmaceutical Science, where his father was a pro-



fessor, co-conspired to commit terrorist acts with Abousamra. Abousamra and Mehanna had traveled together to Yemen in 2004 to join jihad. After a week in Yemen, they were apparently not able to meet a terrorist facilitator; Abousamra traveled to Iraq and Mehanna returned to the U.S.

Upon his return to Massachusetts, while living with his family in Sudbury, Mehanna began translating and posting Al-Qaeda videos on the Internet. He strongly opposed the U.S. presence in Iraq and greatly admired Osama bin Laden. His association with Abousamra eventually led to an FBI terrorism investigation. As their investigation deepened, federal authorities found that Mehanna had lied repeatedly about his own trip to Yemen and about the activities of another one of his co-conspirators, Daniel Joseph Maldonado. In 2007, Maldonado pleaded guilty to separate charges in a federal court, admitting that he had traveled from the U.S. to Somalia in December 2006 to join elements of Al-Qaeda. Mehanna was also arrested and convicted of terrorism-related charges and other felonies.

In 2012, a federal judge sentenced Mehanna to 17 and a half years in prison on terrorism-related charges. Mehanna showed no remorse and claimed the FBI had tried to recruit him as an informant in exchange for not bringing charges. At his sentencing hearing, addressing the court, he said, “In your eyes, I’m a terrorist... But one day, America will change, and people will recognize this day for what it is.” He continued, “They will look at how hundreds of thousands of Muslims were killed and maimed by the U.S. military in foreign countries, yet somehow I’m the one going to prison for ‘conspiring to kill and maim’ in those countries—because I support the mujahideen defending those people.”<sup>10</sup>

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### REZWAN FERDAUS (AQ)

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Rezwana Ferdaus, born in 1985, is a Bangladeshi-American raised in Ashland, Massachusetts, a community thirty miles west of Boston. In Ashland High School’s graduating class of 2003, students voted Ferdaus “the most musical,” but considered him shy and not especially popular. While in high school, he

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9. See, e.g., Thomas Joscelyn, “How a U.S. citizen became a key player in the Islamic State’s rivalry with Al-Qaeda,” FDD’s *Long War Journal*, April 7, 2017 available at <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/04/how-a-us-citizen-became-a-key-player-in-the-islamic-states-rivalry-with-al-qaeda.php>

10. Quoted in Tahir Mahmud, “Tarek Mehanna and the Myth of Free Speech,” *Crescent International: Newsmagazine of the Islamic Movement*, May 01, 2012, available at <https://crescent.icit-digital.org/articles/tarek-mehanna-and-the-myth-of-us-free-speech>





had minor trouble with the law for marijuana possession and for a high school prank. Ferdaus studied at Northeastern University, receiving a physics degree in 2008. At Northeastern, he played drums in a college band and got tagged with the nickname, “Bollywood.” He became radicalized through online videos and writings and transformed into a fervent

Al-Qaeda supporter.<sup>11</sup>

In July 2012, Ferdaus pleaded guilty in federal court to attempting to bomb the Pentagon and the U.S. Capitol using drones, as well as attempting to give material support to Al-Qaeda. Ferdaus believed he was working with fellow Al-Qaeda supporters in planning and perpetrating terrorist attacks. In fact, he was dealing with FBI undercover operatives using a sting operation to make a terrorist case against him. In June 2011, Ferdaus gave improvised explosive device (IED) components to undercover FBI agents. When they falsely told him that his IEDs had killed U.S. soldiers, Ferdaus said he was “100% [at] peace,” and “so happy to hear that and so thankful,” according to the FBI.

Ferdaus traveled to Washington, D.C., to case federal buildings and conduct reconnaissance. He identified a site in East Potomac Park, near the Pentagon, as a possible launch site from for the drone strikes. After renting a storage space under a false name in September 2011, Ferdaus asked his undercover contacts to give him “C-4 explosives, three grenades, and six fully automatic AK-47 assault rifles,” according to the FBI. Authorities arrested him shortly thereafter. The court sentenced him to 17 years in prison and 10 years of supervision upon release. His advocates contended that Ferdaus suffered from mental illness, which the FBI knew early on in their investigation, and should have been given treatment.

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### DAVID WRIGHT (ISIS)

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A native Massachusettsan, David Daoud Wright attended Bunker Hill Community College in Boston from fall 2010 until spring 2011. Wright lived with his

mother in Everett, a Boston suburb, did not have steady employment, and grew morbidly obese at 500 pounds. Even his defense attorney told jurors at this trial that he was a “complete idiot.”

According to the U.S. Department of Justice account, beginning in at least February 2015, Wright began discussing ISIS’s call to kill non-believers in the United States with his co-conspirators, his uncle, Usaamah Abdullah Rahim, and his friend, Nicholas Alexander Rovinski of Warwick, Rhode Island. They began planning their terrorist operations. In March 2015, Wright wrote documents for a “Martyrdom Operations Cell” and conducted various internet searches related to firearms, the effectiveness of tranquilizers on human subjects, and the establishment of secret militias in the United States. Simultaneously, Rahim communicated about terrorism with an ISIS member overseas, Junaid Hussain, who subsequently died in an airstrike in Raqqah, Syria in August 2015.<sup>12</sup> Rahim then relayed those terrorist instructions to Wright and Rovinski. They conspired to commit attacks and kill persons in the U.S. on behalf of ISIS – notably targeting conservative blogger Pamela Geller, and then shifting their focus to beheading a police officer.

On June 2, 2015, authorities sought to question Rahim, however, he came at officers with a knife in a Roslindale, Massachusetts, parking lot, and was shot and killed. Within minutes of learning of Rahim’s shooting from a family member, Wright deleted data from his laptop computer by restoring it to factory settings and deleting call logs on his cellphone that showed he had spoken to Rahim that morning.

In 2017, a federal jury convicted Wright of conspiracy to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq (ISIS) and other felonies. He received a sentence of 28 years. Wright successfully appealed to have one of his convictions overturned and to be resentenced. Upon resentencing by different judge on the remaining convictions, Wright, to his great surprise, received a sentence of 30 years in prison.<sup>13</sup>

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12. See U.S. Department of Justice, “Massachusetts Man Convicted of Supporting ISIS and Conspiring to Murder U.S. Citizens,” *Justice News*, Oct. 18, 2017, available at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/massachusetts-man-convicted-supporting-isis-and-conspiring-murder-us-citizens>. See also U.S. Government’s Sentencing Memorandum available at <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/jf/David%20Wright%20Government%20Sentencing%20Memo.pdf> and see U.S. Department of Justice, “Massachusetts Man Sentenced to 28 Years in Prison for Supporting ISIS and Conspiring to Murder U.S. Citizens,” at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/massachusetts-man-sentenced-28-years-prison-supporting-isis-and-conspiring-murder-us-citizens> and see <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/david-wright-man-arrested-boston-terror-probe-make-court-appearance-n369051>

13. See MassLive, “Massachusetts man David Wright re-sentenced to 30 years in prison for plot to behead blogger Pamela Geller,” Sept. 28, 2020 available at <https://www.masslive.com/boston/2020/09/massachusetts>

11. See generally <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/rezwan-ferdaus>

BLACK PANTHERS  
SIXTIES RADICALS KATHERINE POWER,  
SUSAN SAXE, & STANLEY RAY BOND

## WANTED BY BOSTON POLICE

MURDER



KATHERINE ANN POWER



SUSAN E. SAXE

Katherine Power, born in 1949 and raised in a middle-class Catholic family in Denver, Colorado, entered Brandeis University on a full scholarship in 1967 as a sociology major and ardent anti-war activist. Susan Edith Saxe, also born in 1949, was a fellow student and protestor. There on the Brandeis campus in Waltham, MA, the two students participated in anti-war and anti-government demonstrations. They transformed into fervent Sixties Radicals and became acquainted with, and enraptured by, Stanley Ray



Bond, an ex-convict on parole from Walpole Prison and Vietnam veteran who also opposed the war in Southeast Asia. Bond attended classes at the university on a special government-sponsored program for parolees. Through Bond, Power

and Saxe became involved in a bizarre and violent plot to arm the Black Panthers and begin a revolution. Bond introduced Power and Saxe to former convicts, William "Lefty" Gilday and Robert Valeri, also students on a parolee program at Northeastern University. The five-person "guerrilla" group robbed a National Guard armory in Newburyport, MA, taking 400 rounds of ammunition and some weapons. They also set fire to the facility, causing about \$125,000 in damage.<sup>14</sup>

Three days later, on September 23, 1970, the heavily-armed group robbed a branch of the State Street Bank in Brighton, Massachusetts. A "gun happy robber gang," a local newspaper, the *Record* reported, entered the bank shortly after opening and immedi-

ately fired a shot into the wall "to show they meant business." In their escape, they fired 30 more shots.<sup>15</sup>

Responding to a silent alarm triggered at the scene, Boston Police Department Patrolman Walter Schroeder attempted to stop the robbery; Gilday shot him in the back with a rifle. The 42-year old Schroeder subsequently died from his wounds, leaving a widow and nine children.<sup>16</sup> The criminals escaped with \$26,000 in cash that they planned to use to finance an overthrow of the U.S. government. Power drove one of the two getaway vehicles.

While raiding her apartment after the bank robbery, police found evidence tying Power to both crimes. Police captured Gilday, Valeri, and Bond shortly after the bank robbery. Bond died in custody while making a bomb as part of an escape bid. Valeri cut a deal with prosecutors and testified against Gilday. Valeri received a jail term of 25 years for the robbery, and received an early release. Gilday received the death penalty, however, his sentence was reduced to life imprisonment due to a U.S. Supreme Court ruling. He served 42 years in prison until his death in 2011.<sup>17</sup>

Power and Saxe, however, eluded capture.

Saxe remained on the lam until 1975 when a Philadelphia police officer recognized her from a wanted poster distributed the same day and arrested her. She pleaded guilty and spent seven years in prison.

Power hid out for 23 years. She eventually settled under an assumed name in Oregon, where she had a son, and worked various jobs, including a cooking instructor at community college and part owner of a restaurant and bakery. She suffered from depression, received counseling, and in 1993 decided to surrender to authorities. She went to prison and was paroled in 1999.

While incarcerated, she completed her undergraduate degree in liberal studies from Boston University. Power has high praise for the BU program that enabled her to study. In 2013, she reflected, "One of the life-affirming things in prison is outside activities, such as the Boston University Prison Education Project. You can be seen beyond the worst moment in

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1993-10-03-1993276003-story.html>

14. See generally James Bock, "A Time When Ideals Turned Deadly; Powers Return Recalls '60s Tumult," *Baltimore Sun*, Oct. 3, 1993 at <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1993-10-03-1993276003-story.html>

15. <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1970/10/5/a-bank-is-robbed-a-cop/>

16. Walter Schroeder had previously received the BPD's highest decoration for valor in the line of duty when he stopped a bank robbery. Worsening the family tragedy, Patrolman Schroeder's brother, BPD Detective John Schroder, was shot and killed in 1973. Walter's son, Paul, joined the BPD and became a detective. The BPD headquarters is located at One Schroeder Plaza, named in their honor and in recognition of their line of duty deaths.

17. David Abel, "Apologetic in the end, William Gilray dies," *Boston Globe*, Sept. 16, 2011, available at [http://archive.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2011/09/16/william\\_lefty\\_gilday\\_dies\\_at\\_82/?page=2](http://archive.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2011/09/16/william_lefty_gilday_dies_at_82/?page=2)



your life. You have to be willing and introspective in order to benefit from all of the activities.”<sup>18</sup>

Power taught writing at Oregon State University in Corvallis, and then returned to the Boston area where she currently resides.

Interestingly, four female Brandeis students have appeared on the FBI’s Most Wanted List – namely Aafia Siddiqui for her Al-Qaeda involvement; Power, on the list from 1970 until the FBI removed her name as the case went cold in 1984; Saxe, on the list from 1970 until her arrest in 1975; and Angela Davis. Davis made the list in 1970 for her alleged involvement in the violent seizure of a Marin County, California courthouse, in which four people died, including the trial judge. Charged with aggravated kidnapping and first degree murder, Davis became a fugitive and went on the lam for two months. The FBI arrested her at a Howard Johnson’s motel in New York and she faced trial. A jury acquitted her of all of the charges, and Davis went on to a prominent, if controversial, career as a scholar and activist.

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### SHAHAN NATALIE “OPERATION NEMESIS”

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Shahan Natalie (1884–1983), was born into an Armenian family living in the village of Huseinig in the Kharpet province of the Ottoman Empire, near present-day Elazig, Turkey. When he



was 11 years old, his father died during the Ottoman massacres of the Armenians in 1895. He was sent to an orphanage and later to an Armenian school in Constantinople (Istanbul). In 1901, he returned to Huseinig as a teacher, and in 1904 joined

the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) and left for America where he worked in a shoe factory in Watertown, Massachusetts. He returned to the Ottoman Empire in 1908 after the proclamation of a constitutional government but left a year later when renewed massacres of Armenians took place. While living again in Watertown, he studied at Boston University from 1910 to 1912, taking courses in English literature, philosophy, and theater. He also became an influential party activist of the ARF and edited the party’s Boston-based newspaper, *Hairenik*, from 1915

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18. Yvonne Pesquera, “Katherine Ann Power’s radical transformation,” *Taos News*, Oct. 24, 2013, available at [https://www.taosnews.com/katherine-ann-powers-radical-transformation/article\\_0bc25a02-fb-fc-5fae-9171-761fdcf85fbc.html](https://www.taosnews.com/katherine-ann-powers-radical-transformation/article_0bc25a02-fb-fc-5fae-9171-761fdcf85fbc.html)

to 1917, during the period of the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Young Turk regime of the Ottoman Empire.

From an intelligence perspective, Natalie is remembered as the principal architect of “Operation Nemesis,” the aptly chosen code name for a global operation from 1919 to 1922 targeting for assassination the leadership of the Young Turks who had escaped justice for their genocidal crimes. (Nemesis in Greek mythology was the goddess of divine retribution.) In all, Natalie’s operatives killed seven suspected perpetrators in locations ranging from Berlin to Rome to Istanbul to Tiflis, Georgia, in addition to several Armenian traitors. Natalie planned and organized Operation Nemesis from the ARF’s U.S. headquarters at 212 Stuart Street, near the Boston Common.

Natalie spent much of the 1920s and 1930s in Europe as a leader in the Armenian nationalist movement, but these years were contentious as he had a falling out with the ARF and tried to organize a rival organization. He returned to the U.S. shortly before World War II and became the executive secretary of the New England branch of the Armenian General Benevolent Union. He remained active in Armenian causes before becoming a recluse in later life. He died in Watertown in 1983 at the age of 98. He never faced prosecution for his leading role in Operation Nemesis.

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### LORI BERENSON FROM MIT STUDENT ACTIVIST TO LATIN AMERICAN TERRORIST

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Lori Berenson grew up in New York City, the youngest daughter of two university professors.



Intellectually-gifted, musically-talented, and highly sensitive, she graduated from the LaGuardia School of Music and the Arts and matriculated at MIT in 1987. There she began

working for Prof. Martin Diskin, researching asylum issues in Central America and became disturbed by U.S. policy in the region.

After visiting El Salvador in her freshman year, she decided to redirect her life, dropping out of MIT and working for advocacy groups in Central America, including the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLN), at that time a collection of Cuban-backed Marxist guerrillas opposing the oligarchy that ruled El Salvador. She lived in Nicaragua and El Salvador,



before moving to Peru in 1994. There she regularly associated with members of the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, (Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru, known by the acronym MRTA), a small, violent Peruvian insurgency group, considered a terrorist organization by the Peruvian Government.<sup>19</sup>

Peruvian authorities arrested Berenson while she was on a bus in Lima in November 1995, and hours after her arrest, raided a house in Lima that she had rented. Police encountered heavily-armed MRTA members there and an intense gunfight ensued with MRTA members and a police officer killed. At Berenson's house, police found well-stocked arms caches. Berenson claimed that she had known her lodgers by different names and had sublet the space to them, denying that she knew weapons were stored there. The Peruvian Government regarded her as a liar and a witting conspirator with the MRTA.

She did not help her defense or her standing with the Peruvian public when the authorities presented her to the press and looking enraged, she screamed in Spanish to the assembled media, "In the MRTA there are no criminal terrorists! It is a revolutionary movement!" She had been sleep-deprived, badly stressed, and disoriented at the time of her outburst, but the cameras recorded a person who sounded and looked like a terrorist.

The Government of President Alberto Fujimori prosecuted Berenson on treason charges under anti-terrorism laws before a closed military proceeding in early 1996. The tribunal found her guilty and sentenced her to life in prison. According to the UK's *Guardian*, Berenson immediately became a "cause célèbre for human rights campaigners and a symbol for leftwing social activists around the world." The State Department, and other organizations, protested that she received an unfair trial.

In 1999, a UN investigation determined that Berenson had been deprived of her human rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of which Peru is a signatory. In 2000, after intensive international pressure and political changes in Peru, the government granted her a new trial, where she was convicted on lesser charges of collaboration with terrorists and given a 20-year sentence.

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19. The MRTA is best remembered for storming the residence of the Japanese Ambassador to Peru during a party in December 1996 and taking 72 people hostage for four months until security forces killed all 14 MRTA perpetrators in a rescue mission. However, by the time of this hostage taking, Berenson had already been imprisoned on other charges. In fact, the MRTA hostage takers unsuccessfully demanded the release of Berenson and other MRTA members from Peruvian jails. The U.S. State Department officially listed MRTA as a terrorist organization from 1997 to 2001.

After fifteen years of imprisonment, under harsh conditions, followed by house detention, and extensive legal and political maneuvering, Berenson finally left Peru and returned to the U.S. in 2015. She continues to be involved in social justice issues.<sup>20</sup>

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### STAR SIMPSON TERRORIST FALSE ALARM

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On September 21, 2007, Star Simpson, a 19-year-old MIT engineering student, entered Boston's Logan International Airport and asked an airport worker for



information about a friend's arriving flight. As she talked to the worker, Star was wearing an artistically-creative LED light-up sweatshirt which she had personally crafted. Not so long before brightly-lit Star's stop at the airport counter, the Logan staff had received counter-terrorism training. (Logan is the airport from which terrorists boarded two planes that they hijacked and flew into the World Trade Center Twin Towers on 9/11.) The staff training included, among other things, instruction on terrorist use of suicide vests and emphasis on reporting any suspicious activity to airport security. The nervous airline worker who spoke with Star Simpson immediately called security. In the meantime, Star realized that she had missed her friend and exited the airport counter area to stand outside by the bus stop.<sup>21</sup>

That is where Massachusetts State Police officers, responding to the alarm, swarmed her, seized her arms (so she could not detonate a suicide bomb), and threw her to the ground. They arrested her and took her into custody. Star eventually pleaded guilty to a disorderly conduct charge, which was dismissed a year later after she performed community service, kept a clean record, and expressed regret, which she did.

Star wasn't a terrorist. She was just an expressive, creative, and perhaps somewhat clueless MIT student. She now enjoys a successful career as an engineer and entrepreneur in California, including drone development work for the U.S. Department of Defense.

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20. After her return to the US, Berenson gave an interview to *Democracy Now*, in which she explained her views. See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2myg7E\\_zn3Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2myg7E_zn3Q)

21. See Xení Jardin, "Star Simpson, one year after Boston airport terror-scare: unedited BBTV interview transcript," *Boing Boing*, Sept. 22, 2008 available at <https://boingboing.net/2008/09/22/star-simpson-one-yea.html>

Boston College (BC), has made unique contributions to terrorist studies. Most notably, BC has encouraged individuals with knowledge of, or who participated in, the “Troubles” in Northern Ireland to contribute their recollections and confessions for the purpose of better educating historians about that period of unrest and violence from roughly 1968 to 1998.

BC began recording interviews with former terrorists, or paramilitaries, as part of its Belfast Project in 2001, three years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, a US-brokered peace accord which marked an end to the Troubles. With the 1998 agreement, hundreds of terrorist prisoners had been granted early release from jail.<sup>22</sup>

The Belfast Project provided an opportunity to obtain and record eyewitness accounts of the Troubles from individuals from both sides, Republicans and Loyalists, who had been directly involved in the bloody conflict. BC enlisted the services of the respected Irish journalist Ed Moloney to head the effort. To gain cooperation, BC promised the former participants that their recorded comments would remain confidential, with the understanding that the recordings and transcripts would only be made public after their deaths. However, BC's promise did not adequately factor in U.S. law, under which a U.S. court can order evidence for use in a criminal proceeding to be released. Wanting to use the interviews to bolster their criminal investigations, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) successfully went to U.S. court to force BC to hand over select materials.

The BC tapes have been used by the PSNI in the murder inquiry of Jean McConville, a widowed mother of ten children in Belfast, executed by the IRA for allegedly being a British spy. IRA operatives forcibly took her from her flat, drove her to a remote location, and executed her with a single gunshot to the back of the head. They then buried her in a rural area of County Louth in the Republic of Ireland. Her body was not found until 2003, when severe storms washed away dirt and sand, thus exposing it. Two Belfast Project participants admitted to their role in the murder. One of those participants, Dolours Price, explained how she drove McConville to the place where she was executed. Another participant, Brendan Hughes, claimed Gerry Adams, as the head of the Belfast IRA, ordered the killing. PSNI is also currently using the tapes to

prosecute a Loyalist terrorist, Winston “Winkie” Rea, for the murder of two Catholic workers.

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## CONCLUSION

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While it is difficult and perhaps not useful to try to make broad generalizations about the terrorists and events discussed above, some basic observations and questions for further thought, are in order.

- These terrorists never achieved their professed goals. The exception was Shahan Natalie, the architect of Operation Nemesis, which was a bold global effort with a tactical focus—the targeted killing of several of those responsible for the Armenian Genocide.
- Very few of these terrorists have shown any remorse for their actions. The exceptions would be Katherine Power and arguably Lisa Berenson and William Gilday (who on his deathbed offered condolences to the Schroeder family but insisted he did not kill Patrolman Schroeder).
- Most came from fairly well-off or middle-class backgrounds. The exceptions would include Ted Kacynski, David Wright, and the immigrant Tsarnaevs.
- What is it about Brandeis University and its producing four female students who made the FBI's Most Wanted list?
- Why would the U.S. Government consider the Boston Marathon bombing case as closed, when the U.S. Government has not identified the bombmaker or where the bombs were made?

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22. See BBC News, “Boston tapes: Q&A on secret Troubles confessions,” Oct. 17, 2019, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-27238797>.