

# DID THIS MAN KILL



Andy Green

## ALEX ODEH? *On the Trail of the JDL Terrorists*

**F**EDERAL INVESTIGATORS have identified three American-born members of Rabbi Meir Kahane's violently anti-Arab Kach Party in Israel as key suspects in a string of 1985 terrorist bombings that killed two people, including an Arab-American official in California.

The suspects, who currently reside in Jerusalem and Kiryat Arba, the large ultra nationalist Jewish settlement on the West Bank, are Keith Fuchs, 24, from Los Angeles, Andy Green, 30, from Co-op City in the Bronx, and Robert Manning, 36, also from Los Angeles, according to Justice

Department officials and the suspects' New York lawyer. The men are known in Jewish activist circles for their uncompromising militancy and devotion to Rabbi Kahane. Each has been convicted of previous terrorist crimes either in Israel or America, where they were members of the Jewish Defense League.

A Justice Department antiterrorism task force is currently probing the JDL in connection with bombings, homicides, extortion, and kidnapping, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Charles Rose. The *Voice* reported last November that the government's investigation was being obstructed because of the reluctance of Israeli authorities to assist the United States in following up investigative leads that point to JDL founder Rabbi Meir

Kahane's followers in Israel and the Occupied Territories. The government's assertions were detailed in an internal Justice Department memo obtained by the *Voice*.

An attorney in New York representing the three men denied that his clients have any involvement in the crimes.

An apparent break in the JDL investigation occurred on June 22 when Manning's wife, Rochelle, 48, was arrested in Los Angeles as she disembarked from a plane arriving from Israel and was charged with conspiracy in the 1980 mail-bomb death of a California woman. An arrest warrant was also issued for Robert Manning in connection with the California letter-bombing. According to court documents, fingerprints of both the Mannings were found on a cardboard box that contained the bomb, which was addressed to Brenda Crouthamel, owner of Prowest Computer Corporation, in Manhattan Beach, California. Disguised as a new invention, the bomb exploded when a secretary, Patricia Wilkerson, plugged the device into a wall socket. Government officials have said in the past that the 1980 bombing does not appear to be politically motivated.

Manning, who like his wife has dual American and Israeli citizenship, has said through his New York attorney, Samuel A. Abady, that his wife's arrest in Los Angeles is an attempt to lure him back to the United States to face charges for terrorist bombings the FBI has attributed to the JDL.

Federal authorities believe that Manning, Fuchs, and Green and at least one other person conducted a year-long bombing spree in 1985 that included the October 1985 pipe-bomb murder of Alex Odeh, an official of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, in Santa Ana, California; the August 1985 house-bomb slaying of Tscherim Soobzokov, an alleged Nazi war criminal, in Patterson, New Jersey; the September 1985

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Alex Odeh

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS



The body of Alex Odeh is removed from his California office after the bombing.

BY ROBERT I. FRIEDMAN





July 1983 for standing in the middle of a West Bank highway and drilling a passing Arab car with his Soviet-made AK-47. Fuchs later said he did a "tova" (Hebrew for an act of kindness) by not killing the Arab driver. On December 27, 1984, Fuchs was released early from prison, taken to Ben-Gurion Airport in handcuffs and placed aboard a jet bound for New York. Israel's Supreme Court decreed that Fuchs was not to return to Israel until such time as he would have completed his original sentence. In recent years, he has shuffled back and forth between Israel and America on business for Rabbi Kahane.

Abady, the lawyer for the three men, says the government is hounding JDL members because it is opposed to the group's political views. Kahane has told Abady, who has represented him in the past, that he feels he's the real target. "He believes his followers are being targeted by the FBI because of his philosophy," says Abady, who adds that no one has been indicted in the bombings, "because the government doesn't have a case."

But on August 9, 1987, Larry E. Wack, the New York-based FBI case officer assigned to the JDL investigation, wrote Manning in Kiryat Arba warning him the bureau had a strong case against him and his colleagues. The letter appears to have been written in an attempt to pressure Manning into cooperating with the FBI. "Our investigation has uncovered numerous areas of interest to both state and federal law enforcement surrounding your activities and the activities of your associates," the letter said. "In addition to allegations of bombing/murder, attempted murder and bombings in general, there are now allegations and evidence available revealing a pattern of racketeering activity which activity is covered under the Federal RICO statute. There are severe penalties for anyone convicted of violations of this statute."

Wack boasted about the Joint Terrorist Task Force's prowess, saying it has an "extremely incredible record for putting domestic terrorist groups out of business." Assuring Manning that the FBI was "not in the business of sending innocent people to prison, or in this case to death row," he nevertheless warned that "the fact that Jewish extremists resorted to murder in 1985 in this country has intensified the investigation. I wonder what the Jewish community will say when the truth about the activities of their 'patriots' finally is exposed?"

Indeed, the FBI has apparently gathered a great deal of evidence linking Manning and his associates to the Odeh bombing, as well as to other alleged JDL crimes. According to police sources in California directly involved in the investigation, federal agents followed Fuchs and Manning from New York to St. Paul, Minnesota, on October 10, where they changed planes for a flight to Los Angeles. The men were later observed leaving the plane in Los Angeles, where the feds lost their trail. One of the men was spotted flying out of Los Angeles at 7 a.m. the next day, shortly before Odeh was blown in half by a pipe bomb at the ADC office in Santa Ana.

Within hours after the October 11 bombing, the charred ADC office was swarming with FBI and Treasury agents, the Los Angeles Anti-Terrorism Task Force, and the Santa Ana Police Department. "The names of Fuchs, Green, and Manning were mentioned as the bombers while we were still in front of the bombed-out building," says a police official who requested anonymity. "The information that Manning and Fuchs had flown out [to Los Angeles] on Green's credit card was available that first day."

According to the police official, the FBI seemed impressed by the sophisticated nature of the pipe bomb—a tripwire device rigged inside Odeh's office door. "A timer on the bomb gave the terrorists one minute to set the device and close the door," says the official. According to the FBI, the bombings of

Odeh, Sprogis, and Soobzokov were carried out with similar devices. "Other characteristics that were similar in the three bombings indicate... the same person or group did it," Thomas L. Sheer, then head of the New York FBI field office, told the Voice in an interview that was quoted in a May 6, 1986, story.

Federal law enforcement sources say that Kahane was seen in the U.S. with the suspects not long before two of the blasts, including the Odeh bombing.

The House subcommittee on criminal justice chaired by Michigan congressman John Conyers Jr. is preparing to hold open hearings on the status of the FBI's JDL investigation this summer. In light of the evidence apparently assembled against the suspects, the committee wants to examine why the Justice Department hasn't charged the men and requested extradition. One theory, according to a committee insider, is that the Justice and State departments are afraid to strain relations with Israel prior to the November presidential elections.

Subcommittee officials recently have held several private meetings with FBI representatives about the FBI's JDL investigation. At those meetings, FBI officials have complained that their progress is being impeded by Israel's lack of cooperation. Nevertheless, the FBI has asked

the committee to forego public hearings since they claim to be making significant progress in the investigation.

"We have concluded they [the FBI] are stalling us," says the subcommittee insider. At a speech to the Dearborn chapter of the ADC on June 3, Congressman Conyers amplified that view. Conyers told the group that the spate of recent racial discrimination suits brought by black and Hispanic FBI agents are further evidence that the FBI is a "racist" institution "which hasn't changed since Hoover's day." Given that fact, Conyers said, it would not be surprising if the FBI were not vigorously pursuing the murder of an Arab American. An FBI spokesman in Washington said the bureau would have no comment.

Another problem in the JDL case appears to be the difficulty in extraditing individuals from Israel. The U.S. hasn't successfully extradited anyone from there since 1967. Though Assistant U.S. Attorney Nancy Widen Stock told the Voice that her office is "still considering the possibility of an extradition," it is well known that the JDL has long used Israel as a safe haven from prosecution in America. In March 1973, for example, the U.S. government requested the extradition of Jerome Zeller, who was wanted in connection with the death of Iris Kones,

a 27-year-old Jewish secretary who choked to death from the fumes of a JDL firebomb set off in the Midtown Manhattan office of impresario Sol Hurok. The JDL, which was then at the height of its campaign to dramatize the plight of Soviet Jews, had targeted Hurok because Hurok was bringing Soviet performing artists to the U.S. Zeller was arrested and imprisoned in Tel Aviv, but was released on \$1200 bail. Soon after, he was wounded in a tank on the Golan Heights during the Yom Kippur War. The U.S. government made another request for Zeller after the war. "The reply was you can make it and hold your breath until you die 'cause you ain't going to get him because he's a national hero," says Joseph Jaffe, the former U.S. attorney who prosecuted the case. Zeller is today living in a West Bank settlement with his family.

Although U.S. officials have good reason to fear what would surely be a messy extradition hearing in Israel—where in certain nationalist circles crimes against both Arab-American supporters of the PLO and Nazi war criminals are viewed favorably—FBI agent Wack seems convinced that Manning and his friends will not escape justice. "Justice itself is slow..." he wrote to Manning last August, but "please don't believe ANYONE will escape extradition."



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