

NIJ Grant 2003-DT-CX-0003
Executive Summary

**Pre-Incident Indicators of
Terrorist Incidents:**
The Identification of Behavioral,
Geographic, and Temporal Patterns of
Preparatory Conduct

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1.8 JEWISH DEFENSE LEAGUE

BACKGROUND

The Jewish Defense League was formed in 1968 by Rabbi Meir Kahane, who believed that the “major Jewish organizations in the United States” had “failed to protect America’s Jews from anti-Semitism,” which he saw as “exploding” all over the country. The JDL believed that “American Jews were living in a fiercely hostile society, facing much the same dangers as the Jews in Nazi Germany or those in Israel surrounded by 100 million Arab enemies.” The assassination of Kahane in 1990 reaffirmed the JDL’s belief that Jewish persons were under attack, even in the United States.

The FBI and CIA have investigated the JDL, a known terrorist organization, for over 30 different terrorist activities since 1969. It has many branches throughout the United States and each group operates separately from the main organization.

Irving David Rubin was born on April 12, 1945, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. As a boy he experienced anti-Semitism first hand and quickly began to use violence to remedy the situation. After immigrating to the United States with his family in 1961, Rubin joined the U.S. Air Force and served four years. In 1973, Rubin served in Israel's civil defense corps during the Yom Kippur War.

Rubin became involved in the newly formed Jewish Defense League in the early 1970s. He was inspired by a speech given by founder Rabbi Meir Kahane and joined the same day. Rubin identified with the militant goals of the group and became one of its most important members. Rubin quickly moved through the ranks of the organization, becoming the chairman of the JDL in 1985.

“Chairman” Rubin was arrested over 40 times, and the JDL was involved in numerous terrorist activities against Muslim and Arab Americans in the United States, though it was never proved that he was explicitly involved in or responsible for any of these activities.

Earl Krugel was born in April 1942. He served in the U.S. Navy for four years. He joined the JDL in the 1970s and became coordinator of the West Coast branch. He was quoted on tapes supplied by an FBI confidential source as saying that the Arabs needed a wake-up call and something had to be done about their filthy mosques. Krugel was reportedly involved in at least two previous bombing attempts in association with the JDL and helped to recruit the confidential source, Danny Gillis, into the JDL when Gillis was a teenager. Krugel recruited Gillis again in October 2001 to carry out the bombing plot against Arab-associated institutions.

Danny Gillis was a Petty Officer in the Navy. While in high school, Gillis was reportedly a member of a Jewish-pride gang in the Porter Ranch area of the San Fernando Valley. Though he often fought with white supremacist youths during this time, he had no arrest record. Gillis said he had taken part in two earlier JDL bombing attempts, one at a San Fernando Valley tattoo parlor and a plan to plant a bomb outside a Valley mosque. He had reportedly ended his contact with the JDL after his honorable discharge from the Navy in early 2001. Gillis claimed he became involved in the 2001 bombing

plot because he supported the JDL's attacks against skinheads, but did not support their attacks against Muslim- and Arab-Americans because he had many Arab-American friends.

TIMELINE

On or about October 17, 2001

Irving David Rubin and Earl Leslie Krugel recruited Danny Gillis to carry out a bombing plot against Arab-associated institutions and/or people in the Los Angeles area. Unbeknownst to Krugel and Rubin, their intended fall guy, Gillis, had defected to the FBI just days after being recruited. After Gillis agreed to help the FBI, he was wired and sent into meetings so the agency could build a case against the two men.

Krugel and Rubin intended to attack only Arab- and/or Muslim-associated buildings. Among the reported potential targets: the Muslim Public Affairs Council building on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles, the King Fahd Mosque on Washington Boulevard in Culver City, and the field office of U.S. Representative Darrel Issa, located in San Clemente.

October 29, 2001

Krugel met Gillis to discuss a list detailing various mosques he believed should be potential targets. Since the group had already decided to bomb the Muslim Public Affairs Council, Krugel instructed Gillis to photograph the offices of the Council. These photographs would be used to determine the best possible means to bomb the office. In an attempt to help Gillis with his research, Krugel gave him papers with descriptive information about the Los Angeles Council office.

November 4, 2001

Krugel and Gillis met again. Gillis had taken photographs of the Muslim Public Affairs Council office and brought the prints to Krugel for review. The men discussed how to build the bomb, and Krugel said they could build it in his garage. He already had three feet of fuse. Krugel told Gillis to transport the bomb to the Council Office in a paper bag, so as not to draw attention.

November 8, 2001

At his meeting with Gillis, Krugel turned his attention to the construction of the bomb. Krugel instructed Gillis to purchase a "unique" brand of gunpowder somewhere outside the Los Angeles area. He would show Gillis the type of pipe to purchase for constructing the bomb.

November 14, 2001

The plans for constructing the bomb were not complete, so Krugel met again with Gillis to discuss the materials needed. Krugel gave Gillis a sample of the fuse they needed and stressed he get the right gunpowder. Knowing that fingerprints on bomb components could tie Gillis, and therefore Krugel, to the planned bombing(s), Krugel instructed Gillis to wear gloves while handling the bomb components.

November 20, 2001

Krugel told Gillis not to buy any fuse, because they had enough.

December 7, 2001

In spite of Krugel's numerous meetings with Gillis, he still did not trust Gillis to buy the right components. Krugel said they would go shopping on December 10, he would construct the bomb by December 12, and Gillis could carry out the bombing on December 13. But Irving Rubin, who was in charge of finances, had to approve the plans. The meetings increased in frequency as the date for the bombing approached.

December 8, 2001

Irving Rubin got more involved with the plot and asked Gillis if he had purchased the "unique" gunpowder. Rubin had not seen the photographs of the Muslim Public Affairs Council office. When he reviewed them, he said he wanted to change the target of the bombing to a mosque in Culver City. He promised to provide the address of the mosque to Gillis in a few days so he could carry out the bombing on the scheduled date.

December 10, 2001

Krugel and Gillis went to a hardware store, and Krugel showed Gillis the right pipe to purchase. He left Gillis in the hardware store while he waited outside, unwilling to connect himself with the purchase. After the purchase, the men drove to Krugel's Reseda residence and stored the pipe in his garage. The two scheduled a meeting for the next day.

December 11, 2001

All three men met to finalize plans. Rubin brought information for the new target, the King Fahd Mosque. In addition to bombing the mosque, Gillis was to bomb the field office of United States Congressman Darrell Issa. Gillis was instructed to locate the field office and conduct surveillance. Gillis delivered the gunpowder to Krugel's home. Krugel now had all the necessary materials to construct a bomb: gunpowder, fuse material, pipe, and end-caps.

OUTCOME

- Irving David Rubin was arrested on December 11, 2001, when police officers pulled him over on his way from Jerry's Famous Deli in Encino to his Monrovia home. Earl Leslie Krugel was arrested on December 11, 2001, in his Reseda area home, prior to the arrest of his associate, Irving Rubin.
- On November 4, 2002, prior to standing trial, Rubin reportedly slashed his neck with a prison-issue razor blade and fell 18 feet over a railing at the federal Metropolitan Detention Center. Rubin died in the hospital 10 days later. As of January 2005, representatives of Rubin's family were still investigating his apparent suicide.
- Krugel was brought to trial on one count of conspiracy to violate the civil rights of the users of the Culver City mosque and one count of carrying an explosive device in connection with a conspiracy to impede or injure an officer of the United States. In exchange for his cooperation with authorities regarding several incidents believed to involve the JDL, Krugel faces a 10- to 20-year prison term; if he had been convicted at trial on the original charges, Krugel would have received a mandatory 40-year term.
- In June 2004, prosecutors petitioned to try Krugel on multiple counts listed in an indictment filed against him three years ago, arguing that Krugel breached terms of the plea deal. The case had yet to come to trial as of January 2005.
- The activities of the Jewish Defense League have been virtually non-existent since the indictments and convictions of Earl Krugel and Irving Rubin for their planned terrorist attacks in the Los Angeles area in 2001.

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