

THE HOAXER PROJECT REPORT

Racist and Anti-Semitic Graffiti, Harassment and Violence:
An Essay on Hoaxes and Fabricated Incidents

An Analysis by Laird Wilcox, December 1990

Laird Wilcox Editorial Research Service
P.O. Box 2047
Olathe, KS 66061
Phone/Fax: 1-913-829-0609

Foreword

Like many young Americans who came of age in the 1960's I was active in the civil rights movement. I served as vice-chair of a chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality, and I was a member and active participant in the activities of the Civil Rights Council at the University of Kansas in 1964 and 1965. I also served on the board of the Lawrence, KS, chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union and I've continued to be a member of that organization, with increasing reservations, to this day.

My commitment to civil rights was based upon the assumption that all people should be free to become whatever they're capable of becoming; that all citizens of the United States were equal before the law; and that legal distinctions based on race were simply unfair. I remain committed to those principles.

However, beginning as far back as 1968 it became obvious to me that many people who had attached themselves to the civil rights movement had another agenda altogether, and it had nothing to do with freedom, equality before the law, or fairness. It was an ideological agenda that embraced, among other things, the very essence of racism itself. It was committed to a massive increase in the power of the state and a corresponding decline in individual freedom, civil liberties and political and economic rights for all races.

This was no conspiracy. It was simply unscrupulous individuals latching on to a noble and idealistic social movement and turning it to serve their own interests. Nothing, I have learned, is quite as corruptible as idealistic sentiment. One can do things in the name of helping "others" that would be unthinkable otherwise, and noble causes quickly compromise themselves by letting the end justify the means.

"Reverse racism" was quick in forming, and in the sense of releasing suppressed anger and resentment, it was understandable to a certain extent. It became institutionalized and legitimized in the form of "affirmative action" in 1968, however, and today we're on the verge of a complete role reversal, where the victims and the victimizers once again change places and victimization itself continues unabated.

Literally millions of people, including many government employees on every level, have a stake in the continuation, and not the alleviation, of "discrimination" and "bigotry." On the campus, careers

are developed around "identifying" and managing problems of "prejudice" towards every identifiable group except white males. An entire body of law has developed around issues of gender and race, as well as other designated victims and minorities. Advocacy organizations, journalistic careers, and political reputations depend upon continuing religious, racial and gender problems.

As specific problems move toward amelioration they are simply redefined, and the definitions are broadened to take in more and more personal and private behaviors. What constitutes "discrimination" now embodies behaviors which, objectively, are without any discriminatory intent, and a vast and pervasive double standard has become institutionalized. Our deepest and most personal attitudes, opinions and beliefs are becoming subject to scrutiny and censure by a predatory and unscrupulous "though police."

One example of this is the incredible over-reaction to unfounded claims of racist and anti-Semitic harassment and violence. Simple human failings, such as unkind graffiti or bothersome telephone calls, are treated with disproportionate gravity, and ethnic and religious special interest groups are demanding, and receiving, preferential treatment under the law --- which is itself a form of prejudice and bigotry. This report deals with that phenomenon, and I hope you will give serious thought to what you will learn, and to my request for assistance in collecting information.

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THE "RISING TIDE" OF RACISM, ANTI-SEMITISM

Are you disturbed by the "rising tide" of allegedly racist and anti-Semitic incidents? Have you wondered how come of these incidents seem to occur at the time when they're most effective for propaganda, institutional blackmail, "consciousness raising," or to promote repressive legislation and censorship? In fact, a significant percentage of these incidents are hoaxes, and these hoaxes can promote real "copy-cat" incidents which would not otherwise have occurred.

We use the word "hoax" to generally refer to a misleading or deceptive event which has the effect of attributing "blame" or causality to persons other than those who are actually responsible. In some cases, this may not be the express intention of the perpetrator. "Fabrication" generally refers to a somewhat elaborate and involved falsehood. The individuals discussed in this essay are not necessarily bad people, only people who may have exercised bad judgement or made a mistake. I think it best serves the interests of all Americans to avoid excessively harsh judgements in considering this issue.

MOST INCIDENTS ISOLATED, INVOLVE JUVENILES

The great majority of bonafide racist and anti-Semitic incidents are essentially "ad hoc" phenomena, usually involving juveniles entirely unaffiliated with any "hate group", and do not represent any plot, trend or conspiracy. Incidents involving significant physical injury or property damage are rare, given the large population involved. We often forget that we live in a country of a quarter billion (250 million) people of wide ethnic and cultural diversity, and a certain number of incidents of this type are bound to occur, as they do in other multi-ethnic societies. In fact, when the United States is compared with the rest of the world we tend to experience less of this behavior than many other countries.

The majority of Americans see racial and ethnic hatred and violence as simply unfair, and reasonably so. It's in the interest of all Americans that we enjoy equal justice under the law. The kind of unfairness engendered by organized bigotry, whether directed at blacks, whites, Jews or any other group subverts that process and must be opposed. No one should be subjected to illegal activity, violence or unfair treatment on account of race, religion or creed. Hoaxes fabricated to manipulate institutions, acquire victim status, or intimidate critics and opponents serve only to threaten civil liberties.

The issue of racist and anti-Semitic hoaxes is extremely controversial. The organized special interest advocacy groups that claim victimization, often with valid reason, view attention to hoaxes as a threat to their credibility. This is not entirely unrealistic on their part. The hoax controversy draws attention to two important issues: 1) The actual degree of victimization, which may be less than claimed, and 2) the utility or usefulness of hoaxes to serve their agenda, even if discovered. Both of these issues will be addressed in this essay. A consequence of this, however, is that to raise this issue can bring a torrent of defamatory and degrading abuse down upon one's head, including charges of racism and anti-Semitism!

ONE ANTI-SEMITIC INCIDENT PER 185,000 CITIZENS PER YEAR

The 1,350 or so anti-Semitic incidents recorded by the ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE last year amount to approximately one incident per 185,000 Americans! No disrespect is intended, and I'm sure these were distressing to those who experienced them, but these figures do not support the claim of a serious and significant trend toward anti-Semitic violence. Most of these incidents are on the order of graffiti, verbal altercations or telephone harassment by kids and many remain unsolved. A single hoaxer with a can of spray paint or a pocket full of quarters can inflate these statistics considerably.

In fact, the ADL itself may have been party to such misrepresentation on the cover of the March 1985 issue of the ADL Bulletin where a photograph designated "Desecration of a Jewish home in Kings Point, NY" was a fake. The swastika depicted does not follow the contours of the paneled door and appears to stand out and away from it. It was painted onto a photo or transparency and then

rephotographed. The issue of the Bulletin featured a major article entitled, "Anti-Semitic Vandalism: 2-Year Trend Reversed." The article noted that California, with a population of 23,000,000 had experienced 99 incidents in 1984, or one incident per 230,000 citizens.

The ADL actually solicits its own statistics on anti-Semitic incidents by circulating questionnaires to its mailing list (a population sensitized to the victimization to begin with). This practice raises serious doubts about statistics compiled by an interested to promote its own agenda. According to LEONARD LARSEN, syndicated columnist for Scripps Howard News Service, the ADL's statistics may be questioned on other grounds as well. LARSEN notes that among the "anti-Semitic" incidents listed is a case where individuals in Boston set out for public display "pro-Palestinian/ anti-Israel graffiti" in the subways. LARSON adds that the ADL considered these and other incidents "anti-Semitic" because they "recount brutal acts of repression against Palestinians by the Israeli government." The ADL publication clearly implies that to voice opposition to Israel's political and military policy and to support a Palestinian viewpoint is "anti-Semitic." "An obvious intent here is to use intimidation to silence criticism of Israel's political and military conduct," he says.

Similar compilations of "racially-motivated" incidents compiled by other interested parties, such as KLANWATCH, are also flawed, and perhaps the most glaring flaw in these statistics is the practice of counting unsolved incidents. Doubtless, numerous hoaxes are included among them. Other crime statistics help to put these figures in perspective. For example, 570 individuals -- mostly young minority males -- have died in violent gang warfare in Los Angeles in 1989. In addition, there were 3,819 reported assaults with deadly weapons, 93 rapes and 1,851 robberies (New York Times, 27 January 1990). The perpetrators of this carnage, which probably surpasses the death toll from racist and anti-Semitic "hate crimes" in the 20th century, have also been mostly young minority males.

Writing about this problem in his nationally syndicated column in January 1988, conservative columnist PATRICK J. BUCHANAN referred to Prof. WILLIAM WILBANKS, professor of criminal justice at Florida International University and author of The Myth of a Racist Criminal Justice System. Here is what the professor found, buried in the nation's crime statistics:

"There is interracial violence in America. In 1985, 629,000 interracial crimes were reported (where victims survived to identify the criminal); but nine out of ten were committed by blacks against whites. Where white criminals, 98 percent of the time, prey on other whites -- to rape, rob and assault -- black criminals chose fellow blacks as victims less than half the time. Black criminals seem to prefer attacking white people. While only 2 percent of the victims chosen by white criminals are black, more than 50 percent of the victims targeted by black criminals -- to rape, rob and assault -- are white."

Buchanan's column, entitled The Big Lie In America, was in

response to a report issued by the CENTER FOR DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL, a Georgia-based group that evolved out of the ANTI-KLAN NETWORK, a network of far-left and Marxist-Leninist groups that came together in 1979 following a shoot-out in Greensboro, NC, where Ku Klux Klansmen got the best of a group of leftists in a shoot-out and six communists were killed.

A report on the CENTER FOR DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL, and its past and present leaders, including LENNY ZESKIND, a former member of the Marxist-Leninist SOJOURNER TRUTH ORGANIZATION, and LYN WELLS, well-known as a past leader of the GEORGIA COMMUNIST LEAGUE and the COMMUNIST PARTY, MARXIST-LENINIST, and its predecessor, the OCTOBER LEAGUE, appeared in the 10 April 1989 issue of *Counter-Terrorism and Security Intelligence* newsletter, and also in the *Security Intelligence Sourcebook* (Silver Spring, MD: Interests, Ltd, 1990) detailing the extremist background of the CDR.

The decision to even classify incidents as "racially-motivated" is fraught with issues of subjectivity and bias. Although "racially-motivated" seems to be a neutral term, it is not. In practice, it's a code phrase for crime by white (and not black) racists. Only rarely are assaults by blacks upon whites classified as racially motivated, whereas it's one of the first things considered when assaults by whites upon blacks occur. The least suspicion of "bias" must be accounted for. It creates the anomaly of a white youth receiving a stiffer sentence for mere graffiti on a black business than a black youth might receive for the robbery of its owner!

"Racially-motivated" is a legal distinction that justifies preferential status and discriminatory punishments. In some cases, the law actually provides for civil penalties and damages, which actually encourages hoaxes and fabrications. More importantly, we are in grave danger of institutionalizing a *double standard* where some citizens are accorded special protections based entirely on their race while others are penalized for theirs -- a problem the Civil Rights movement originally sought to redress.

A dramatic example of that double standard was illustrated in the "dart man" case in New York City. "Dart man" was a black man who went around Manhattan shooting blowgun darts into women's behinds. Although *all* of "dart man's" two dozen plus victims were white (including two light-skinned hispanics), the *New Daily News* of 4 July 1990 reported that "authorities do not think race is a factor." Police are quoted as saying that they "have no reason to believe the attacks are racially motivated." However, in New York City's diverse racial mix the odds of picking two dozen white women at random are on the order of winning Lotto America! Imagine for a moment what the conclusion would have been if "dart man" was white and all of his victims would have been black. Quite another story, isn't it?

Most Americans take a very uncritical and unquestioning attitude toward this problem. For example, the entirely fabricated rape story told by TAWANA BRAWLEY, her mother and REV. AL SHARPTON was accepted at face value by politicians and the media. Finally, an intensive investigation revealed the hoax that should have been suspected early

on. There are still people who believe that the story "must have something to it." It became a question of the _identity_ of the victim and alleged victimizers, and not one of facts or evidence. For many people, that TAWANA BRAWLEY was black was all they needed to know. Nothing else carried the significance of the fact of her minority status.

In terms of cost-benefit analysis, the actual payoff for victimhood can be very high and the risk of discovery of a hoax is very small. This issue of "secondary gain" plays an important part in racist and anti-Semitic hoaxes, and the search for an answer to this troubling phenomenon is well served by the question, "Who benefits?" Also, when a hoaxer gets caught, which isn't often, there are "fall back" positions which can put a positive "spin" on the incident. The hoaxer's status may be reframed so that "blaming the victim" can be invoked, whereby the hoax is understandable. Or, he may become "mentally ill," which also removes any responsibility for the hoax. In the case of BARRY DOV SCHUSS psychiatric treatment was the major part of his "punishment" for several felony arsons. The rest was probation and a suspended sentence. In the case of SABRINA COLLINS, the county prosecutor said she needed "counseling and treatment, not prosecution" for her hoax. I did not uncover a case where a white, non-minority defendant in a "hate crime" prosecution was treated so generously or relieved of responsibility in such a manner.

TEMPTATION TO FABRICATE HOAXES IS STRONG

Because bonafide organized racist and anti-Semitic incidents are relatively unusual today, and because they serve numerous valuable functions for the victims when they occur, the temptation to fabricate them is strong. The benefits of "victimization" are well established, and "victims" are often treated as heroes who have been ennobled by their experience. The social utility of victimization is considerable. In terms of sheer effectiveness, nothing works quite as well as a racist or anti-Semitic incident to intimidate an institution, draw attention to a problem, or silence critics. As we shall see from the examples in this report, alleged victimization can accomplish more in minutes than months of agitation.

LAURIE RECHT became a celebrity for her victimhood, and actually wound up with a scholarship and an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree before her hoax was discovered. QUENTIN BANKS became a hero on his college campus and all his friends at home took notice, too. The news media helped make him a national figure before skillful police interrogation discovered the web of lies and fabrications he had created. BARRY SCHUSS wanted to keep awareness of anti-Semitism alive and, until he was caught, accomplished it through a series of arsons in Hartford's Jewish community. Many hoaxers have received substantial assistance from sympathizers and well-wishers, as in the case of PATRICIA ANDERSON and LEE WILLIAMS, who received offers of clothing, gifts and money. The most important benefits of victimization are psychological, however.

The sense of importance and meaning that victimization brings is often overlooked as a motive in hoaxes of the kind illustrated here,

but I suspect it plays a very significant role. Some people are important for what they do; others for what is done to them. Both racism and anti-Semitism are especially well-adapted to this function in that they focus on issues of identity. Whatever shortcomings or character flaws one has are eclipsed by the wickedness of one's alleged persecutors.

In a perceptive article on victimization appearing in *The New York Times Magazine* a few years ago, JOSEPH EPSTEIN discussed the issue of motivation quite perceptively: "...victimhood has not only its privileges but its pleasures. To begin with, it allows one to save one's sympathy for that most sympathetic of characters -- oneself. Of the various kinds and degrees of pity, easily the most vigilant is self-pity. To stake out one's own territory as a victim, or member of a victim group, also allows one to cut the moral ground out from under others who make an appeal on the basis of their victimhood..." He continues, "The pleasures of victimhood include imbuing one's life with a sense of drama. The drama of daily life is greatly heightened if one feels that society is organized against one. To feel oneself excluded and set apart is no longer obviously or even necessarily a bad thing ..." EPSTEIN also notes, "People who count and call themselves victims never blame themselves for their condition. They therefore have to find enemies..." suggesting the role paranoia plays in victimization fantasies.

So damaging to real anti-Semites and racists are desecrations and graffiti that one bonafide anti-Semite, JOZEF MLOT-MROZ of Salem, MA, was arrested for attempting to *paint over* anti-Semitic graffiti on a local synagogue. He claimed that the graffiti was intended to create an false impression of anti-Semitic harassment in the community. MLOT-MROZ was charged with malicious destruction of property over \$250.00 and a civil rights violation, both felonies, according to newspaper reports.

BONAFIDE INCIDENTS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE TO REAL RACISTS, ANTI-SEMITES

There's a very important point that needs to be understood here, and that is that bonafide racist and anti-Semitic harassment is invariably counter-productive for real racists and anti-Semites. The quickness and skill with which racist and anti-Semitic incidents, including hoaxes, are used to galvanize anti-racist support in a community is amazing. Very few real racists or anti-Semites would use these tactics any longer. No benefit accrues from them, and the costs are enormous. Not only does law enforcement immediately start rounding up white racists for questioning, but efforts to entrap them in other offenses step up. "Who benefits?" Not white racist and anti-Semitic groups!

In 1990, the various Ku Klux Klan organizations have a combined membership between 3,000 and 4,000 down from 45,000 in 1964 and 12,500 in 1981. Hard-core neo-Nazis number around 200 with perhaps 500 camp followers scattered about. The much publicized "skin-heads", recently estimated at 5,000 nationwide are almost certainly of no more than that. Determining who is and who isn't a neo-nazi racist skinhead involves a lot of pure guessing. A recent probable hoax in Denver

initially focused on the local skinhead population and an estimate of 200 was made, a great surprise to other local racist groups. Many bikers adopt the skinhead appearance while having no serious affinity for their views, and there are "anti-racist" skinhead groups around. The actual number of bonafide racist, neo-nazi skinheads in Denver is probably under 25. At the time a Kansas City KKK "group" made national news in 1988 with its plans for a public TV show, it had only two members.

Groups like the "Posse Comitatus" attained almost mythical proportions in the early 1980's, with estimates as high as 40,000 given by irresponsible writers. This is absolute fantasy, although Jim Wickstrom, Posse "leader," claimed the incredible figure of a million and a half! Having talked with police agencies, journalists, farmers and local officials, and with Posse members themselves, I seriously doubt if more than 1,000 genuine, involved Posse activists ever existed at one time. The Posse was never tightly organized and the national "group" was primarily a literature distributing operation. Local groups were autonomous and virtually anyone could claim membership and be believed.

In Kansas, for example, State police officials monitoring farm auctions in the early 1980's made the incredible mistake of estimating Posse presence in one case by noting that a "Posse" activist was present and he had thirty or so people gathered around him reading the literature he passed out. Hence, there was a Posse presence "in the neighborhood of thirty" at the auction! A single individual distributing Posse literature in service station and restaurant restrooms caused near panic in one county.

This situation got so far out of hand that in 1985 three Kansans filed a civil rights lawsuit against Kansas Attorney General ROBERT STEPHAN for "creating" the Posse Comitatus to further his political career. A suit brought on behalf of FREDA STEELE, JAMES STEELE and HAROLD HOVANDER, all rural Kansas residents, charged that unnecessary police powers were utilized during a repossession action against Mr. STEELE, which included "air support and a small army of Kansas Bureau of Investigation agents, Kansas Highway Patrol troopers, sheriff's deputies and local police personnel, all heavily armed as for combat, who descended on said farm like an invasion force."

Among the various problems in determining membership in groups is the fact that group claims can't be believed. Invariably, they will exaggerate their own strength. Also, the membership list and the mailing list are usually two distinct entities. Ku Klux Klan organizations have maintained large complimentary mailing lists in the past, although that practice has faded for reasons of economy. I've been on literally hundreds of such lists over the years. Some groups don't have "members" as such, only people who receive their mailings, others make no distinction between members and people who write and ask for information. A few groups even send out blank membership cards with their solicitation letters. The F.B.I. has estimated membership by obtaining postal documents on second and third-class mailings and these have invariably led to distorted figures.

An organization with the creative name of the "Farmer's Liberation Army" in Halstead, KS, was finally determined to have one member, its founder KEITH SHIVE. Anti-racist groups took the organization very seriously and references to it appeared in the national press. ROBERT DePUGH's Kansas City area-based paramilitary "Minutemen" organization of the late 1960's suffered from similar distortions. Primarily a paper operation with a handful of activists, DePUGH topped out at 400 "members," most of whom were essentially inactive and several of whom were government agents. Media estimates ranged in the thousands. During the McCarthy era, by the way, the membership of leftist groups was similarly exaggerated.

If membership figures for organizations are hard to determine, statistics on racist and anti-Semitic hoaxes are problematic as well. While recent legislation calls for reporting "hate crimes," (including unsolved cases) hoaxes and fabrications are not required to be reported as such. When an incident is discovered to be a hoax it might be dropped from the statistics, but maybe not. Many incidents are only reported in the local media and die when they reach the wire services. I've also been told that a fair number are simply "spiked" once their nature is ascertained, out of "sensitivity" to minority concerns, or not to "give ammunition" to racists. Absent some kind of clipping service, a network of local "monitors" or the intelligence capability of the American law enforcement community, one is at a considerable disadvantage researching the subject. There could be a much bigger story here than initially appears.

In Kansas City, for example, TERRANCE WEAVER defaced a wall near a major art museum with racist and anti-Semitic graffiti last year. He was observed, chased, and apprehended. The local newspaper reported the incident as a "hate crime," along with the interesting fact that the perpetrator had checked himself into a local mental hospital immediately after his arrest. The incident quickly faded and no more was heard of it. The Kansas City Star has declined to pursue the matter.

My own investigation developed that this young man was well-known to local leftists, and that he had talked of a plot to entice all Ku Klux Klansmen and neo-Nazis to a meeting and then blow up the building and kill them. He was, in fact, not racist but anti-racist. Kansas City police are sitting on the case and local anti-fascist activists seem to be holding their breath. If you didn't live here and read the local paper, you wouldn't know it happened, and if you hadn't investigated it as I have you wouldn't know it's a probable hoax incident. Are there more cases like this? I think so.

VALID OBJECTIONS TO "HATE CRIMES" REPORTING LAW

Many valid criticisms of the "hate crime reporting" concept exist but by far the most legitimate is that it exaggerates a phenomenon by calling selective attention to it. If statistics were kept of crimes committed by Methodists, or left-handed Democrats, or by service station employees, or of crimes against these groups, it would quickly seem that we have a serious crime problem in these areas. To answer an objection to this argument from a Jewish

friend, I asked what the probable consequences of compiling statistics on crimes by Jews in the United States might be, so as to draw attention to them. He quickly conceded that it would seriously distort the picture and lead to "dangerous false conclusions" by "singling out a particular group" and would be "unfair selective attention." Enough said.

So, how big a problem are hoaxes? Civil rights, Jewish and anti-racist groups stress the view that hoaxes are unusual and represent the isolated work of disturbed individuals. Racist groups, on the other hand, essentially believe that an incident is probably a hoax until proven otherwise. The truth, as might be expected, lies somewhere between these two extreme positions.

The actual extent of racist and anti-Semitic hoaxes may be unknown, but police who investigate these incidents privately report that a surprisingly large percentage of incidents are fabricated. In talking with college and university security officials I encountered responses ranging from "a few, not too many," to "dmanded near half of them!" In talking to police who investigate these incidents the figure of 25% comes up again and again. This figure has a kind of reasonableness about it, allowing that it probably doesn't hold true for every environment.

Hoaxes are probably more likely to occur on college and university campuses and several have been reported. They're probably less likely to occur in the "battle zone" area that separates black and white neighborhoods in urban areas because tensions are sometimes high there and juvenile gangs common. In that environment racist graffiti is so prevalent that it isn't necessary to fake it. The most probable place for hoaxes to occur, of course, is any environment where obsessive attention is paid to issues of victimization and where the payoff, psychological or otherwise, is high.

With hoaxes, the nature of the offense makes discovery difficult. Telephone harassment, for example, usually leaves no forensic evidence, unless the problem is severe enough for police to order a monitoring device. This happened in several of the hoaxes mentioned in this essay. A telephone message service by the OKLAHOMA WHITE MAN'S ASSOCIATION was being sabotaged by endless incoming calls tying up the line. The group complained to the police and the telephone company who installed tracing equipment on the line. An investigation showed that the local JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER where a computer was apparently automatically dialing call after call, was the very source of the problem. In spite of hard evidence to the contrary, JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER director DAVID BERNSTEIN said, "We have no computers here and we're not jamming any phones." No criminal charges were filed. In other cases, both BUZZ CODY and LAURIE RECHT were caught through the use of telephone tracing equipment.

In the case of defacing property with racist and anti-Semitic graffiti investigation is made only slightly easier. Spray painted graffiti, unlike handwriting or typewritten material, cannot be pinned down. In the case of JAMES OPPENHEIM, however, the discovery of the very spraycan in his desk led to his prosecution.

The eye-witness account is often an important factor in hoax investigation. In many cases it was this which led authorities to suspect a fabrication. The factor here was inconsistent testimony or different stories by different witnesses, or physical evidence of lying. Where the possibility of a hoax exists the witness (who is often the victim) should be interrogated by a person skilled in that area. Surprisingly, the cover story often isn't very well prepared and can be "cracked" with reasonable effort. In the case of QUENTIN BANKS it was a skilled interrogator who caught him in a number of contradictions and broke the case.

One issue that needs to be addressed is whether or not there's an organized campaign to commit racist and anti-Semitic hoaxes. For years rumors have circulated that a particular organization was engaged in this activity. Right-wingers are particularly fond of this notion in that it tends to confirm their conspiracy theories. I found no hard evidence of any kind of organized campaign, although there were a few tantalizing clues that could use some further investigation. The best evidence is that these incidents are most probably unconnected and the product of individuals and not organizations.

There is some evidence of a coordinated effort to cover up incidents that prove to be hoaxes, usually to avoid "giving racists ammunition." Some hoaxes have involved "plots," in a manner of speaking, and several of them have involved recognized "conspiracies," as in the TAWANA BRAWLEY case, but linkage with other hoaxes is very unlikely, except in the limited psychological sense of the "copy-cat" phenomenon. This "copy-cat" effect is important because it can account for not only bonafide racial and anti-Semitic incidents, but for additional hoaxes as well.

CONSPIRACY THEORY NOT REQUIRED TO EXPLAIN PATTERN OF HOAXES

I don't think a conspiracy is required to explain a pattern of hoaxes of this type. The advantages to anti-racist activists of racist incidents are obvious, so much so that it would reasonably occur to potential hoaxers upon simple reflection, with no communication between them. There's a tendency for a kind of paranoid thinking to enter into considerations of this kind, as though every wrongful event must have wicked people behind it, and a "series" of such events must be the product of the coordination and direction of a conspiracy. Extremists on both sides of this issue tend to think in these terms with predictably unfortunate results.

One police detective I spoke with said that the "pressure is extremely intense whenever anything even remotely resembling a hate crime comes up." Simple racist graffiti is almost at a par with serious felonies in terms of importance. The U.S. Department of Justice has made "hate crimes" a "number one priority." This elevation to felony status of what would have been simple misdemeanors a few years ago drains resources from important investigations. When hoaxes are suspected, which is often, police have been required to continue pursuing them as bonafide racial incidents until the evidence against them is almost overwhelming. This was true in the BARRY SCHUSS case.

SCHUSS was an early suspect but enormous efforts were made to apprehend someone else, including massive police stakeouts involving large use of police manpower and resources. In the BUZZ CODY case early suggestions by police that a hoax might be in evidence were treated as indicating "insensitivity."

In a bonafide "hate crime," the motive is presumably hate. In a hoax the motive is to create the appearance of hate. There is a difference. Hate can be acted out without symbols and it can be done anonymously with no symbols or graffiti. A real hater doesn't require that he or his cause be identified, and it's usually counter-productive when it happens. To create the appearance of hate, and to attribute it to a person or a cause requires identifying symbols and slogans. An incident in which the symbols of hate -- swastikas, KKK initials, racist and anti-Semitic slogans and so on -- are graphically present suggests the desire for maximum psychological impact, to dramatically illustrate the racism and anti-Semitism that is "behind" the event. Occasionally, this is either overdone or carelessly conceived. In the case of DAVID GOLDMAN and GERSHON TENNENBAUM, who jointly defaced some 250 Jewish graves in Israel, the anti-Semitic graffiti was in perfect Hebrew, a rather incredible oversight on their part.

TRAITS THAT SUGGEST COMMISSION OF A HOAX

What, if anything, distinguishes hoaxes and fabrications from real racist and anti-Semitic incidents? Are there "patterns" to be on the watch for? What are the clues that a hoax might be afoot? Consider these:

1. An incident that can't be corroborated with reasonable evidence or disinterested witnesses, or is accompanied by an account which contains inconsistencies, or where the alleged victim suddenly refuses to talk to police.
2. An incident that occurs just when it's "needed" to promote awareness or sensitivity to racism or anti-Semitism, to disarm critics and make them reluctant to "talk back." The conveniently occurring incident should be carefully investigated. Often the perpetrator will confide in others or even brag about the event.
3. Repeat incidents, especially with "difficult," resentful and easily offended individuals who frequently complain of disrespect, slights, insults or harassment. Bear in mind, however, that these individuals often create a "self-fulfilling prophecy" with their behavior and actually antagonize others to the point where they will retaliate in some manner, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the "victim."
4. An incident that is skillfully exploited by the alleged victim to attain victim status, to manipulate institutions, to obtain concessions from others, to obtain special consideration or privileges, or to obtain money.
5. Incidents which occur in improbable circumstances, such as racist graffiti in a mostly black dormitory or neighborhood, assaults that allegedly occurred in normally crowded areas with no witnesses, graffiti or vandalism in a room occupied by the victim, and so on.
6. In the case of graffiti, carefully drawn symbols or slurs suggest

that the author really wants to get a point across -- precisely what is meant and the repulsive character of the persons behind it -- and this suggests a hoax. Most real incidents represent impulsive striking out, not careful planning.

7. Another trait that suggests a hoax surfaced in several of the cases mentioned here. Where authorities suspect a hoax and this fact becomes known, the likelihood is enhanced somewhat when local anti-racist and radical anti-fascist groups defame and villify "doubters." In fact, they may suspect it themselves.

EXAMPLES OF ACTUAL HOAXES

+ A black student at Northwest Missouri University in Maryville reported a "racially motivated" assault and death threats to university officials. According to DEAN HUBBARD, NMU President, the student became "the center of much attention" following the incidents. Newspaper accounts portrayed the campus as a hotbed of racism. On the strength of the complaint by QUENTIN E. BANKS, 18, the university summoned assistance from the F.B.I., a special unit of the Justice Department, and a special investigator from the Missouri Highway Patrol. During the course of an interrogation by Sgt. LARRY R. STOBBS of the Highway Patrol, BANKS admitted that the complaints were a total fabrication. He was subsequently suspended from school for two years.

+ A New York City teenager, TAWANA BRAWLEY, claimed to have been kidnapped for several days, raped by white men, smeared with dog feces, placed in a plastic garbage bag and marked with racial slurs. The case became a cause celebre' in New York City, with editorials, marches, and media personalities deploring the incident and the "racist climate" that obviously led to it. REV. AL SHARPTON became spokesman for the BRAWLEY family and insisted that "justice be done" and the white men responsible be prosecuted. The incident fueled support for "hate crime" legislation around the nation.

TAWANA BRAWLEY basked in nationwide media attention and acquired victim status on a scale rarely seen. Discrepancies in her story were evident from the very beginning. A detailed police investigation determined that she was seen by friends during the period and that she spent much of the time in an apartment previously rented by her family. Other elements of her story were gradually eliminated one by one and police subsequently reported that the BRAWLEY case was a massive fabrication and hoax.

+ In St. Charles, MO, BRIDGET CLARK, a 14-year old black girl told her parents that two white men had thrown acid on her and shouted racial slurs as she was on her way home from school. The black community was in an uproar. Shortly thereafter, however, a police investigation revealed that the acid was actually the result of an accident at a summer job.

+ An attempted racist frame-up occurred at Ohio Dominican College in Columbus, OH, when white student MICHAEL A. SMITH, 22, found himself under arrest for sending threatening letters to 13 black students and faculty members. The threats were worded in the same way as was a section of a term paper on prejudice he had submitted to JANICE D. HAMLET, a black teacher at the school. HAMLET had pointed out the similarities in the documents which immediately implicated SMITH.

However, two Columbus police detectives who had taken a class from HAMLET took an interest in the case. HAMLET had been outraged by SMITH's use of the word "nigger" in his term paper and had tried to get him expelled. Forensic examination of the envelopes the threatening letters had been mailed in turned up HAMLET's fingerprints and an examination of her typewriter determined that the letters had been written on it. In fact, she had copied part of SMITH's essay and mailed it to the 13 Blacks and then "discovered" that they were worded in the same manner. Ethnic intimidation charges against SMITH were dropped and HAMLET was charged with two felony counts of ethnic intimidation and two misdemeanor accounts of aggravated menacing. At last report she had returned to Kent State University to complete a PhD. SMITH, in the meantime, has filed suit against the University and it is expected that he will get a substantial settlement.

+ Three men and a youth, all black, were arrested in connection with three cross burnings in Prince George's County, MD. ROSS FAIRWELL, 18; GERALD SIMONS, 20; and REGINALD STEWARD, 21; and the juvenile, were charged with the offenses. Earlier that evening three of the men had donned white sheets to pose as Ku Klux Klansmen and set fire to a cross in front of a black home in Forrestville, MD. They were joined by the occupant in other bogus "hate crime" incidents, one of which involved throwing a brick through a window. The group is suspected in other incidents in the area.

+ In Lawrence, home of the University of Kansas, a small cross was burned in one location and "KKK" was spray-painted in several buildings in Lawrence neighborhoods. Police investigated and determined that the culprit(s) were probably juveniles. The two-foot high cross was made from pieces of wood taken from a discarded sofa in a dumpster, the wood was tied together with fabric from the sofa, wedged against the ground and building, and set afire. In another case, a cross was burned in front of an all-white fraternity accompanied by a note containing anti-white comments. Militant anti-racists have been active in the community and university, and ANGELA DAVIS, member of the central committee of the COMMUNIST PARTY USA and militant anti-racist activist had recently spoken at K.U. Other suspected hoaxes have occurred, too.

What makes the Lawrence case interesting is that obvious hoaxes are treated as bonafide incidents by the media, which gives hoaxers encouragement. _Wichita Eagle_ writer DAVE HENDRICK wrote a lengthy article entitled "Racial Tensions Taint Lawrence's Image" in which he never mentioned that the cross-burnings and graffiti were probably

hoaxes. He did note that "Reports about the cross-burnings and graffiti have been filed with Klanwatch, a division of the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala." These "incidents" become part of the statistics they issue periodically.

+ In Atlanta, GA, a black freshman at Emory University claimed she had been the victim of racist attacks in her school dorm. She had discovered the phrases "Hang Nigger" and "Die, Nigger, Die" under a rug in her closet, as well as on her tampons in a drawer. SABRINA COLLINS, 18, also claimed to have received two letters threatening to lynch her. University officials and police investigators quickly determined that she had faked the threats. The incident had triggered a march by 700 students and a sit-in in front of the administration demanding a "crackdown on campus racism." DeKalb County Solicitor, RALPH BOWDEN, said that he felt Miss COLLINS needed "counseling and treatment, not prosecution." No charges have been filed in the case.

The COLLINS case is interesting in a number of respects. A 26 June 1990 column by Harvard Law Professor ALAN DERSHOWITZ noted that OTIS SMITH of the Atlanta chapter of the NAACP had this to say about COLLINS' hoax: "It doesn't matter to me whether she did it or not, because of all the pressure these black students are under at these predominantly white schools. If this will highlight it, if it will bring it to the attention of the public, I have no problem with that." Mr. SMITH admitted the utility of hoaxes in this statement. An article in the Atlanta Constitution did one better. It said, "What happened to SABRINA COLLINS may never be known. She is a victim no matter which version of the story is true!" According to DERSHOWITZ, "Miss COLLINS first submitted her reports of racial harassment shortly after she was formally accused of cheating on a chemistry test."

+ An unnamed black teen-ager in Queens, NY, told authorities that a white man had set him on fire. Police at first believed the account and reported it as the third "racially-motivated" attack in Queens in a week, contributing considerably to racial tensions in the city. But, when detectives found inconsistencies in his story, the 15-year-old and three of his friends admitted the fabrication. The boy had accidentally burned himself by lighting gasoline in a fireplace.

+ PEDRO HOUSE, JR., of Cranford, NJ, was caught in the very act of painting a series of racist and anti-Semitic slurs on a bathroom wall inside a building on Union County College's Cranford campus. HOUSE, who is black, is a postal employee in South Orange, NJ, and a part-time student at the college. Cranford Police Captain HARRY WILDE said that offensive graffiti was found in the same bathroom on eight different days within the past two months. Police also seized materials allegedly used to mark the drawings and epithets, which included swastikas and quotations about white power, Adolph Hitler, Jews and blacks. House had been active in militant anti-racist movements.

+ In Bensalem, PA, ALBERT A. DAWSON, a 28-year-old black man was arrested and charged with "ethnic intimidation" for allegedly setting crosses afire on lawns of four interracial couples, according to police. FLOYD DARDEN, 33, who is black, and his wife Janet, who is white, woke up with a burned cross in their yard. "The fact that he's black brings a totally different dimension to the thing," DARDEN said.

+ A Philadelphia police officer was charged with writing anti-black slurs on a six-foot banner in a district police station. Police patrolman ROSS BARNES, who is black, confessed to the act. RONALD OLIVER, president of the 1000-member Guardian Civic League, Philadelphia's minority police organization, said, "When I talked with him before he confessed he suggested that perhaps a black might be responsible for doing it. But when I asked him point blank if he did it, he said "no." "The same treatment should be meted out to him as would be a white officer guilty of the same behavior," OLIVER said.

+ One of the most widely publicized cases of terroristic bombing in U.S. history, occurring as it did on the very eve of a congressional vote on "hate crimes reporting" legislation and blamed on right-wing racists, may in fact be a hoax. Newspapers and editorials throughout the nation spoke of the connection between a series of letter bombs which have killed a U.S. District Judge and a lawyer who had handled civil rights cases, and the "rising tide" of "hate crimes."

An early suspect in the case, WAYNE O'FARRELL of Enterprise, AL, proved to be unproductive. Hundreds of federal agents descended upon O'FARRELL's home and salvage store in what turned out to be an embarrassment for the government, for they failed to find any conclusive evidence linking him with the bombings. Later, federal agents arrested WALTER LEROY MOODY on several unrelated charges and he is now the focus of the bombing investigation. MOODY had been convicted for bomb possession in 1972. It is now thought that MOODY may have mailed the bombs and included racist commentary in his letters to create the impression that the bombings were "racially-motivated" when, in fact, they were not, in order to throw investigators off his trail. MOODY has been arrested and charged with seventy counts, including mailing the bombs. No suggestion of racial enmity is indicated in the indictment.

An interesting aspect of this case is that MOODY became a suspect shortly after O'FARRELL did, although federal agents did not divulge this fact to the media. While O'FARRELL had some racist connections, MOODY did not. The focus on the allegedly racist motivation of suspect O'FARRELL kept that association alive in the public mind, whereas attention to MOODY would have exposed the hoax. There was apparently no law-enforcement interest in the deception, for MOODY knew he was a suspect as soon as he was placed under surveillance. The "hate crime" angle was allowed to percolate through public consciousness for fully eleven months, including the period when "hate crime reporting"

legislation was before congress, which subsequently passed.

+ A Maryland House of Delegates candidate returned to his Ft. Washington, MD, home to find two of his campaign signs burning in his yard and racial epithets painted on his garage. DAVID VALDERRAMA, a former Prince George's County Orphan's Court Judge of Filipino descent, was running on a slate of candidates called the "Democratic Unity Team," which included five blacks, the judge and one white person. VALDERRAMA commented that the incident was the "work of a bigot or political opponent." Investigators working on the case became suspicious when VALDERRAMA began avoiding their questions and finally declined to give a statement on the advice of his attorney. Later, police officials announced that a campaign staffer was suspected.

+ LAURIE A. RECHT, a legal secretary who had vigorously supported court-ordered desegregation in Yonkers, NY, reported receiving death threats over several months following a meeting where she had been booed by angry white families opposed to the plan. RECHT, who is Jewish, had become a media heroine for her courage and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree by the College of New Rochelle. To catch the perpetrators, the F.B.I. had installed a TV camera outside her apartment and attached security equipment to her telephone line. The equipment showed that no threatening calls had been received, and the hidden camera recorded Ms. RECHT writing a threat on the wall next to her apartment. Ms. RECHT has been indicted on several federal charges as a result of her hoax.

+ In San Francisco, talk-show host MORTON DOWNEY, JR, is "assaulted" in an airport restroom. A swastika is marked on his face and patches of hair are torn from his scalp, supposedly by neo-nazi "skinheads." Later that day he appears on TV with a much larger swastika painted on his face than was there when he first reported the incident, and related his shocking account of bigotry and racism. Airport security officers by the door reported no unusual traffic in or out of the restroom, and individuals in the restroom denied that any such incident took place. Although DOWNEY refused to back down, the incident is reported as a fabrication and a hoax by the police. Later, Downey said he was "drunk" and didn't even remember the incident.

+ In Arvada, CO., a black family's home was burned and burglarized exactly two weeks after it had been ransacked and the inside covered with 29 swastikas in what police investigated as a racist "hate crime." LARRY WILLIAMS and his common-law wife, PATRICIA ANDERSON were the only black people who live on the street. During the swastika raid nothing was stolen or broken and the later fire produced mostly smoke damage. WILLIAMS and ANDERSON were deluged with an outpouring of public sympathy. People called to donate clothes and money, and a contractor donated his services to repair the damage.

But within a few days ANDERSON and her brother-in-law, LEE WILLIAMS were under arrest for arson and insurance fraud. Investigators were suspicious from the outset when inconsistencies developed in the cover story, and then they found evidence of arson. Police Chief PAUL AHLSTROM said, "We have a very solid case against the pair." LARRY WILLIAMS was not arrested or charged.

+ In Portsmouth, VA, black community leaders began receiving vitriolic racist "hate mail." The issue polarized the black community and calls for action against the white "hate groups" were heard. The incident took a dramatic turn when a police investigation found that the fingerprints on the letters belonged to JAMES W. HOLLEY, III, the city's first black mayor, who denied the charges and claimed that he had been framed. Fortunately for HOLLEY, at the time of the incident there were no "hate crime" statutes so he broke no laws. However, voters held a recall election and 57.7 percent of the electorate voted to retire the 60-year old dentist and long-time civil rights leader.

+ An _Associated Press_ dispatch reported, "Vandals threw rocks through windows of eight Jewish-owned shops....Mayor EDWARD KOCH said the city would offer \$10,000 reward..." The Jewish Community Relations Council offered a \$5,000 reward as well. The windows were broken in the predominantly Orthodox Jewish areas of Boro Park and Flatbush in Brooklyn NY. Around the nation newspapers reacted with shock and outrage and compared the incident to Kristallnacht, when Nazis terrorized Jews in pre-World War II Germany. Pressure from the Jewish Community brought increased police patrols and calls for greater vigilance against anti-Semitism. Within a month police had their man in custody. He was GARY DWORKIN, a 38 year-old Jewish resident of Boro Park. DWORKIN was charged with 14 counts, including felonies and misdemeanors. He was ordered to undergo psychiatric examination.

+ A series of fires in Harford, CT, frightened the Jewish community and evoked media comparisons with the "Night of Broken Glass" when Nazis terrorized Jews in pre-World War II Germany. The fires occurred at Young Israel Synagogue, Emmanuel Synagogue, the home of RABBI SOLAMAN KRUPKA, and at the home of State Representative JOAN KEMLER, who is Jewish.

Police involvement in the matter was intense, as nationwide media attention focused on the incident which had become the impetus for various legislative proposals to curb "bigotry and violence." Police staked out entire square blocks of Hartford, hoping for a copy-cat incident to occur in order to charge someone with arson. An early suspect in the case, BARRY DOV SCHUSS, a 17-year old Jewish student, finally confessed to all four arsons. Although the total penalties for four counts of arson could have amounted to virtually life in prison had a real anti-Semite been apprehended, SCHUSS was given a suspended sentence, ordered to undergo psychiatric treatment, and placed on five years probation. SCHUSS had been an avid reader of holocaust

literature and admitted that he had set the fires to enhance public awareness of anti-Semitism.

+ In New York City residents of Co-Op City, a massive housing cooperative in the Bronx, found anti-Semitic graffiti and swastikas daubed on 51 apartment doors and walls. The incident received wide publicity and a \$3,500 reward was offered for the perpetrators. Later, two Jewish teenagers, whose names were withheld and who had actually tried to collect the reward by turning in someone else, were determined to have lied to police and were subsequently arrested. The two youths, aged 14 and 15, have been charged as juveniles with conspiracy, criminal mischief and falsely reporting a police incident. They are also suspected of other racist and anti-Semitic incidents dating back over a several month period, all of which had been attributed to "racists."

+ In Rockville, MD, two young men were charged with arson for burning a swastika on the lawn of a Jewish woman and her Catholic husband. GARY STEIN, who is Jewish, and JOHN E. FINNEGAN, a friend, were charged with pouring gasoline in a swastika pattern and setting it on fire. According to police, STEIN claimed that "his buddy did it." STEIN's father, DONALD STEIN, is the funeral director of the Hebrew Memorial Home in Takoma Park, MD. Had STEIN and FINNEGAN not been apprehended, the incident would have been recorded as a "hate crime" involving arson and neo-nazis would have been suspected.

+ A 23-year old Jewish medical student arrested in Basel, Switzerland was described by police as the perpetrator of a campaign of virulent anti-Semitic graffiti, harassment and death threats. Police disclosed that PHILIP GOTCHEL, son of a prominent family, was solely responsible for the acts, which were called unprecedented in Switzerland. Most of the anti-Semitic acts were directed against fellow Jewish students, their families and their non-Jewish friends.

+ Rabbi ISRAEL SCHORR of Congregation Beth-El in Brooklyn has informed the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that members of a Jewish "cult" that is a "fragment of Hassidim" were responsible for desecrating his synagogue in the Borough Park Section. He identified the culprits as belonging to the Satmar Hassidic group and attributed the swastikas, Stars of David and Hebrew and Yiddish epithets scrawled on the walls of his synagogue to them. According to SCHORR, police arrested five persons who pasted slogans on his synagogue and that they had been released with summonses. Harassment from the Jewish extremists has included telephone bomb scares, false fire alarms and an undertaker who showed up one day to get his body. In his sermons, SCHORR had inveighed against use of such terms as "Nazis," "Kristallnacht" and "Holocaust" to describe alleged actions by Israeli authorities against Orthodox Jews.

+ Two unnamed Jewish teenagers spray-painted swastikas and anti-Semitic remarks on the home and car of a Jewish family in Marlboro Township, NJ. The two had been arrested for throwing firecrackers at passing cars and a subsequent investigation linked them with the anti-Semitic writing and a series of burglaries. Charges included seven counts of criminal mischief, four counts of burglary and two counts of theft. The two teens were not prosecuted for "hate crimes," however. Marlboro Township Detective Sgt. ROBERT HOLMES said, "It's tough to prove their actions are anti-Semitic if they're both Jewish."

+ Three men allegedly entered Congregation Amanu-El B'Ne Jeshurun in Milwaukee, and poured a caustic substance on BUZZ CODY, the sexton, who had converted to Judaism twelve years ago. The incident came just a few hours before the start of Hanukah, a major Jewish holiday. CODY said that one of the men demanded that he unlock the sanctuary's Ark, where four of the synagogue's eleven main Torahs are kept. He said the men demanded, "Open it up. We want your Holy Koran!", and referred to a group with the initials "P.D.L." CODY described the men as being dark-complexioned and speaking with Middle East accents. The synagogue's senior rabbi, FRANCIS BARRY SILBERG, said that CODY was obviously "willing to sacrifice himself for his faith and his duty and the integrity of the synagogue." Earlier, Milwaukee had experienced a plague of anti-Semitic graffiti with red paint.

Alert police detectives suspected a hoax from the beginning, which prompted the Milwaukee Journal to editorialize that, "...the police uncertainly seemingly demeaned the episode's seriousness...", which "could be interpreted...as reflecting police insensitivity." The incident was followed by anonymous telephone calls in the area, one of which said that, "...the defense league is at war with the Jewish community," presumably referring to a Palestine Defense League (P.D.L.), and also by an alleged vandalization of CODY's apartment, which included spray-painting anti-Semitic symbols in red paint, including the initials "P.D.L." Police could find no forced entry. Rabbi SILBERG said, "The victim has been re-victimized." An investigation has turned up no such organization as the "Palestine Defense League" or "P.D.L."

Six months later CODY was charged with two counts of obstructing an officer in connection with reports he had made to police about receiving threatening telephone calls, which police had determined were not true. A tracer installed by the phone company had shown that at least two of the calls were placed from CODY's private line. A few days later, possibly fearing discovery and disgrace, CODY tragically committed suicide.

+ Sixteen months after a fire ruled to be arson destroyed Woodside Synagogue in Silver Spring, MD, no arrests had yet been made. At the time of the fire community leaders rallied to the aid of the Orthodox Jewish congregation and supported a wave of demands that urgent action

be taken to stem anti-Semitism and "hate crimes." LT. CARVEL HARDING, a Montgomery County fire investigator, believes he knows the culprit's identity, although he lacks "sufficient probable cause" to arrest the subject. HARDING told Washington Jewish Week that "We feel we know the motive, but if we tell you, you'll know who the person is."

HARDING also said that the arson was not "an act against people of the Jewish faith." Synagogue sources said one shul member who has since left the area was brought in for questioning and is still a suspect."

+ Students at the State University of New York in Binghamton were shocked to find anti-Semitic slogans spray-painted inside the door of the Jewish Student Union office. The slogans, "Kill Kikes" and "Zionazi Racists" were sprayed the day after the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht, when Nazis terrorized Jews in 1938 Germany. Authorities investigating the incident soon zeroed in on a suspect. He was JAMES OPPENHEIM, former President of the Jewish Student Union.

The manner in which this case was handled is a fascinating study. State Police investigator CHARLES GOULD, who was responsible for filing the charges, said, "He's not a bad kid!" The Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin quoted investigators as saying, "OPPENHEIM was trying to broaden recognition of anti-Semitism following a mediocre showing at a memorial to the victims of the Nazi Kristallnacht program." Student Association President CRAIG SPIEGEL read a statement that warned against judging OPPENHEIM before due process takes its course, and reminding students that "anti-Semitism, racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of oppression existed on our campus." RABBI ARNOLD FERTIG described OPPENHEIM as an "emotional, highly-committed young man devoted to Jewish causes on the campus." OPPENHEIM was indicted on a fourth-degree criminal mischief and third-degree falsely reporting an incident, both relatively trivial misdemeanors in the chance he should actually be convicted. No felony "hate crime" charges were filed.

In addition to being portrayed as sincere, if misguided, OPPENHEIM had another advantage. His father was an attorney and knew that the evidence against his son could be challenged. Aside from non-specified circumstantial evidence, the primary item was the very can of spray paint with OPPENHEIM's fingerprints found hidden in his desk at the Jewish Student Center. This would seem incriminating enough, but the case was made that OPPENHEIM had just picked up the can and hid it so it wouldn't get lost! The Judge accepted his account and OPPENHEIM was acquitted. In all fairness, an acquittal should be respected as a determination of not guilty, suspicions aside.

+ In Haifa, Israel, two Jewish men, DAVID GOLDMAN, 41, and GERSHON TENNENBAUM, 32, were arrested following the desecration of two Jewish graveyards, an event which received worldwide attention. Slogans in perfect Hebrew calling for the destruction of Judaism and for the founding of a Palestinian state were found on more than 250 headstones. One inscription read, "Arabs will kill the Jews." Israeli Religious Affairs Minister ZEVOLON HAMMER, said that there may have been a connection with this incident and the desecration of Jewish graves in

France which were widely blamed on right-wing hate groups. Goldman said he had hoped Arabs would be blamed for the incident.

+ Also in Israel eight Jewish settlers have been charged in the firebombing of Israeli property and stoning Jewish settlers to stir up anti-Arab sentiment. In one instance, Israeli radio said, settlers hurled a firebomb at an Israeli-owned car near Ginot Shomron settlement in the West Bank and in response, settlers from the Jewish enclave of Ariel raided a nearby Arab village and vandalized property. Ariel had earlier required Arab workers to wear tags identifying themselves as "alien workers." There have been numerous instances of Israeli extremists staging hoaxes to implicate Arabs in terrorism.

+ In Berlin, West Germany, a group of "neo-nazi raiders" set fire to the home of a Jewish restaurant owner and scrawled swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans on the walls ("Juden Raus" - Jew Get Out). The attack in Berlin's elegant Grunewald residential district revived fears of a Nazi revival and was widely reported as evidence for such. Following an investigation, however, the police determined that the incident was an arson plot to collect insurance on the building and that the business man, GUNTER ALLON, whose house was burned, was in on the plot. One of the hired arsonists was badly burned when gasoline blew up in his face.

+ Swastika-painting vandals were suspected of setting fire to the basement of a downtown restaurant whose Jewish owners were beside themselves with outrage at the ugly graffiti. LEE WALDMAN, owner of the Egg Shell Restaurant, also noted that business was down 40%, according to the Rocky Mountain News. Denver police intelligence officers suspected Skinhead involvement. Denver Mayor FREDERICO PENA ordered an investigation into recent racist acts in the city and the News carried several alarmist articles on growing racism and anti-Semitism. Denver city leaders responded with outrage, stepped up police activity and calls for new anti-racist legislation. As the investigation proceeded, however, it became more and more apparent that Skinheads were not involved in the event.

Denver police have heavily infiltrated local gangs and Skinhead groups. The News noted that most incidents were "committed by adolescents - perhaps bored and ignorant of the consequences of their acts - and not organized hate groups...", a fact that is often forgotten. A one-paragraph article finally noted that "Swastikas spray-painted on the walls of the restaurant may have been an effort to mislead." In a later article, News reporter KEVIN FLYNN noted that, "After all the grandstanding and headlines, the spray-painting of swastikas in the Egg Shell arson is now believed to have been a hoax, and not to have involved neo-Nazi skinheads at all. Investigators believe the swastikas were meant to divert suspicion."

+ Residents of Yorba Linda, CA, awoke one Sunday morning to find hundreds of anti-semitic leaflets in a neighborhood surrounding an ultra-orthodox synagogue and a Methodist church. The leaflets, admonishing the reader to "Kill Every Jew," also stated that they were "distributed by the Methodist fellowship." Rev. Kenneth Criswell, pastor of the United Methodist church said the leaflets were "false and fraudulently" attributed to the Methodist Church.

+ Sometimes racist and anti-Semitic hoaxes involve parties we would never suspect. During the Olympic games in Los Angeles in 1984 a number of Asian and African Olympic committee offices found themselves recipients of racist literature. The Zimbabwe committee, for example, received flyers containing threatening language and illustrated with a drawing of a whitehooded Klansman on a rearing horse and a monkey with a rope around its neck. Other delegations received similar literature.

An investigation followed and the culprit was determined in short order. U.S. Attorney General WILLIAM FRENCH SMITH confirmed that the racially defamatory materials were not the work of the Ku Klux Klan but rather the K.G.B.! The effort was part of a disinformation campaign to mislead public opinion and create the impression of widespread racism. K.G.B. involvement was also confirmed by F.B.I. director WILLIAM WEBSTER. Informed sources close to the F.B.I. report that many other incidents may also be K.G.B.-related.

+ Another case involving the K.G.B. surfaced recently with defection of East German intelligence agents. The West German newspaper _Die Welt_ reported that West German security authorities determined that the K.G.B. or other Soviet state security services were responsible for numerous desecrations of synagogues in West Germany over the past forty years. The article also noted that the K.G.B. worked in close cooperation with neo-nazi groups. JOHN BARRON, in his book, _K.G.B. - SECRET WORK OF SOVIET SECRET AGENTS_, discusses Communist complicity in anti-Semitic hoaxes. He says, "Under K.G.B. guidance the Czech S.T.B. started mailing virulent anti-Semitic tracts to French, British and American officials in Europe." They bore the imprimatur of a non-existent Nazi group.

+ In yet another case, an official of a West German neo-nazi party was arrested on charges of having spied for communist East Germany. Chief Federal Prosecutor KURT REBMANN said that the 34-year old man, an official of the National Democratic Party, had regular contact with East German intelligence officials.

+ Another case having international implications occurred when a fake letter circulating in the U.S. and purporting to come from a bogus United Nations group in New York City surfaced. The bogus organization, the _United Nations Extraordinary Commission on Zionism

and Racism_, asked theatrical agents to help draw up a list of entertainers who supported Israel so that they can be boycotted. The letter was signed with an Arab-sounding name, and asked details of "artists" who have worked in Israel, have helped to raise funds for Israel, "openly espouse Zionist view-points," and so on. In order to get off the list, the letter continued, one would have to demonstrate his penance by a "substantial financial donation to the Palestine Liberation Organization."

+ Although blacks and Jews account for most of the hoaxes, members of other ethnic groups have also been responsible. A recent story from Seattle, WA, involving an Asian man also demonstrates how complicated hoaxes can become.

The Seattle Chinese Post of 24 November 1990, an ethnic weekly, carried the headline: "UW Rally Against Racism, In Support Of Park," referring to DARRES PARK, who had claimed he was attacked by three white men wielding baseball bats and tire irons. PARK was quoted as saying, "Hate crimes -- that is, usually racially motivated crimes -- have been on the rise..." PARK claimed that three whites had held off his two caucasian friends while a small crowd gathered to cheer the attackers on, some of them yelling, "Brain the gook." He also said that without his knowledge of martial arts his attackers would have succeeded. Clearly, DARRES PARK had become a local hero in the fight against bigotry and prejudice. Chanting "Hey ho, hey ho, racism has got to go!" and waving banners, some 150 University of Washington students marched on the University President's office demanding justice. Accounts of the alleged attack appeared nationwide, including in the International Herald Examiner.

On 13 December DARRES PARK and a confederate were charged with three armed robberies of banks in Seattle and Battle Ground, WA. Seattle police, who were jolted by PARK's assertion that they had bungled an investigation into the alleged assault on PARK that had occurred in October, said that PARK's story was now unraveling. Charged in the bank robberies with PARK was JOSEPH FRITZ, a white, who had "witnessed" the attack on PARK and supported his account in a statement to police at the time.

Upon investigation it turned out that friends and classmates of PARK's had doubted his racial attack story from the beginning. Seattle police spokesperson TINY DRAIN said that the investigation of the incident was "hindered by a number of discrepancies." For instance, a witness who was supposed to have accompanied PARK when he filed the police report now said no report was made. Police also learned that PARK's wrist was not broken, as he had claimed, but only bruised. On 18 December Seattle Police reported that his account was a fabrication. Amazingly, PARK's lawyer, ROBERT LEEN, said he might have robbed the banks because of brain damage from the "racial assault."

FALSE CHARGES OF RACISM & ANTI-SEMITISM

Related to racist and anti-Semitic hoaxes are false charges of racism and anti-Semitism, the difference being that with false charges past events are distorted and reframed to create the illusion of an offense while with hoaxes actual events are constructed and then blamed on innocent parties, either by direct accusation or by inference.

Generally speaking, there are no more damaging charges that can be leveled against a person in today's climate. "Racist" and "anti-Semite" have replaced such epithets as "pervert" or "subversive" in terms of their power to inflict damage on the reputation and psyche of the victim. Neither charge need be proven to be effective in defaming and degrading an individual. They are believed simply because they have been said. Representing what Robert Jay Lifton has called "thought-stopping cliches" such charges invoke powerful images usually far removed from the reality of the particular case, and the mind then focuses on those images and not the facts. The issue shifts from whether or not the charge is true to what is to be done about it. Although the terms describe a kind of abuse, their imprecise and promiscuous use has become a form of abuse itself. Here are some examples where individuals have fought back and won.

+ SIMON WIESENTHAL, famed Nazi hunter, is a man of stature and great reputation, and when he accused Chicago resident FRANK WALUS, 61, a retired factory worker, of collaborating with the Gestapo in World War II everybody thought another Nazi war criminal had been apprehended. WALUS subsequently stood in a U.S. denaturalization court to hear 12 professional "eyewitnesses" identify him as a notorious mass-murderer who allegedly stomped a young, pregnant Jew to death. The ensuing court battle cost WALUS \$60,000, with both his name and possibly his life at stake. In fact, he lost the first round, was stripped of his citizenship and ordered deported.

There was just one problem. WIESENTHAL, Israeli Police, the U.S. Justice Department and the news media were wrong. "SIMON WIESENTHAL fabricated the whole story," WALUS said bitterly. "Nine of the twelve witnesses who said they had been born in Poland and lived there, never did," he said. Among the discrepancies in WIESENTHAL's case against WALUS were the facts that WALUS would have been 17 years old when he was a "Gestapo officer," he had been described as being 6 feet tall and he's only 5'-4", and his is Polish, and the Nazi regime would never have allowed him to even join the Gestapo. The U.S. Department of Justice dropped the suit and paid WALUS \$34,000 in legal costs. WIESENTHAL paid WALUS nothing, and sued WALUS and the _Cleveland Plain Dealer_ for having the timidity to complain about WIESENTHAL's tactics. The suit said that the comments had caused WIESENTHAL to fall "into discredit with those persons with whom he has had contact and has been held in public contempt, hatred and ridicule." This, of course, is an exact description of what WIESENTHAL's charges had caused for FRANK WALUS.

+ Canadian teacher LUBA FEDORKIW, while running for election to the

Canadian Parliament, discovered to her utter amazement that B'NAI B'RITH CANADA, a major Jewish "anti-defamation" organization, had circulated an internal memo which accused her of "Jew-baiting!" The allegation was repeated in the Winnipeg Sun and the resulting defamation cost her the election. Mrs. FEDORKIW sued B'NAI B'RITH CANADA for libel and she was finally awarded \$175,000 in actual damages and \$225,000 in punitive damages against the organization. The jury found that the charges of anti-Semitism were unfounded and malicious. B'NAI B'RITH CANADA officials suggested that the verdict itself was vaguely suggestive of anti-Semitism.

+ A customer in DENIS RETY'S restaurant in Bay Harbor, FL, ARTHUR GREEN, witnessed a complaint by another customer over a veal chop and wrote RETY a letter concerning the incident. RETY telephoned GREEN in response to the letter and a heated exchange over the telephone ensued. GREEN, a leader in the Jewish community, wrote RETY a letter accusing him of anti-Semitism and threatened to put him out of business. As it happened, GREEN never sent his letter to RETY, but instead circulated it throughout the Jewish community. In his letter, GREEN accused RETY of calling him a "rotten, stinking Jew." As a result of GREEN's defamation, DENIS RETY was forced into bankruptcy within a year.

RETY engaged an attorney, sued, and won a judgement of \$5.5 million against ARTHUR GREEN. In the words of the court, DENIS RETY was entitled to an unprecedented compensatory and punitive damage award so as to fit the "vicious arrogance of the defendant's conduct." The court also noted that the evidence indicated the "anti-Semitic" statements attributed to Mr. RETY were "completely fabricated."

+ An incident which demonstrates the credulousness of both the news media and politicians occurred when World War II veteran DAVID RUBITSKY claimed that he had single-handedly wiped out up to 600 Japanese soldiers in the battle for New Guinea on 1 December 1942, a transparently fantastic allegation. He also claimed that he had been denied a Congressional Medal Of Honor solely because of anti-Semitism. For several years RUBITSKY diligently pursued the issue, largely through a sympathetic news media and the assistance of the ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE. Due to pressure generated on RUBITSKY's behalf by the ADL, including a resolution signed by 92 members of congress, the Army undertook a two-year review of his claim in 1987. In the meantime, it was learned that RUBITSKY had signed a book contract with WARREN KOZAK, a reporter for NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO.

On 8 December 1989 the Army concluded that RUBITSKY's claim was unfounded, having obtained evidence from forensic specialists and taken statements from RUBITSKY and 20 others who were at the scene. In addition to its fantastic nature, RUBITSKY's claim had been racked with controversy from the beginning. The Madison, WI, Capitol Times published an article headlined, "WWII Soldier Started Anti-Semitism Battle Early In Life." Stories dramatizing the anti-Semitism angle appeared in publications ranging from Time magazine to the New York Times.

Even members of RUBITSKY's old World War II unit disputed his claim and called it a hoax. GEORGE HESS, a member of RUBITSKY's infantry regiment said, "It is the biggest fairy tale anybody has ever told to the U.S. Army to get a medal." CLAIRE O. EHLE said the claim was "one big hoax" and that RUBITSKY was "hiding behind a smokescreen of anti-Semitism to cover up his flimsy, unsubstantiated fairy tale." On 9 February 1990, two months after the Army report, Jewish Week reported that the ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE had finally conceded the Army's position. With that, the story disappeared. Undaunted, RUBITSKY vowed to fight on.

The effectiveness of false charges of anti-Semitism or Nazi sympathies is widely known, as is the fact that the accusation itself has a way of outlasting even an entirely plausible denial. DOUG A. YATES, a candidate for City Council in Costa Mesa, CA found that a forged "campaign flyer" that claimed he was a member of a secret underground Nazi party experienced this effect. YATES, who was supported by Mesa Action, a Costa Mesa-based political action committee that supports slow growth and has aroused the ire of developers, found that someone had forged the signature of a Mesa Action director JIM AYNES on stationery bearing a facsimile of their letterhead in order to give the fabrication credibility. Mesa Action has filed a complaint with the U.S. Postal Service.

+ Often, a false charge of anti-Semitism or racism is made because of values, opinions or beliefs expressed in a public forum. In the case of THOMAS SPEERS of Waterbury, CT, however, his expression of free speech landed him in court -- and at the behest of the very host of the radio talk show he appeared on. SPEERS was arrested after radio talk show host JAY CLARK, who is Jewish, filed a complaint with police. Among the accusations made against SPEERS was that he was guilty of "Jew baiting" because he frequently criticized Israel. CLARK also testified that he frequently made personal attacks against SPEERS on the air. SPEERS contended that he was not anti-Semitic and that he was merely anti-Zionist and anti-Israel. In ordering the acquittal of SPEERS Superior Court Judge ANTHONY V. DEMAYO, said, "What upsets me most about the state's position is that the reason we are prosecuting this defendant is that his views differ so vehemently from those of the talk-show host."

+ In the case of THOMAS RUPPERT, who was falsely convicted at the age of 18 of setting a fire in 1965 that killed 12 people at the Yonkers Jewish Community Center in 1965, the consequences were terrible, and ultimately lethal, although he was eventually exonerated of the crime. After serving five years of 24 life sentences and a sentence of 10 to 25 years for arson, Mr. RUPPERT was ordered released after the New York State Court of Appeals ruled that he had been coerced into making a confession. The fire, which was largely suspected of being motivated by anti-Semitism, brought enormous pressure on police to produce a suspect, and RUPPERT happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, so to speak. He steadfastly maintained his innocence. Although

released from prison, his life was horribly damaged by the event and he died in 1984 at the age of 34 of liver disease and other ailments.

+ Former Illinois Congressman PAUL FINDLEY, a 22-year veteran in the U.S. House of Representatives, was defeated in his last election bid following an intense and inflammatory campaign against him by various pro-Israel groups. They regarded FINDLEY as highly critical of Israel's policies. Two of FINDLEY's fellow politicians were also defeated for re-election on the same grounds: Senator CHARLES PERCY and Senator ADLAI STEVENSON III. Incensed by the power of the forces arrayed against him, FINDLEY wrote a definitive expose' of the Israeli lobby entitled, 'They Dare to Speak Out'. The book is in no way hateful or even remotely anti-Semitic. It was on best-seller lists for several weeks.

This, however, did not keep the ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE, through its Nebraska regional director ROBERT WOLFSON, from conducting a blatant defamation of the book and its author. A local activist, WILLIAM A. CURRY of Atkinson, NB, mailed out several thousand copies to Nebraska professionals, such as "secondary-school teachers, university professors and attorneys." In a statement, WOLFSON said that FINDLEY's book "is a work of Holocaust revisionism seeking to spread the claim that the Nazi slaughter of Jews was a hoax." FREDERICK CASSMAN, chairman of the Omaha ADL chapter, said "Although purporting to criticize the 'Israel Lobby,' they are actually distributing plainly anti-Semitic material." 'They Dare to Speak Out' makes absolutely no such claim. FINDLEY does not support, nor does he even mention any form of "holocaust revisionism" in his book. WOLFSON's claim was an absolute lie. Nevertheless, his comments, as an official of a major Jewish "human rights" organization were widely reported in the press.

Another kind of false racism and anti-Semitism charge arises from deliberate sabotage and forgery. In the following case, even when exposed for what it was, the forgery continued to be treated as if it were the real thing.

+ The 'Dartmouth Review', a politically conservative student weekly newspaper has been a thorn in the side of high-ranking administrators, some professors, and campus leftists for years. Its editors have been harassed and villified for their stands and their more extreme critics have gone so far as to accuse them of racism and anti-Semitism. These critics had their fondest dreams fulfilled when a copy of the 'Review' appeared on the very eve of Yom Kippur with their usual credo, a quotation from former U.S. President THEODORE ROOSEVELT, replaced with a quotation from no less than ADOLPH HITLER himself. Interestingly, like many conservative campus publications, the 'Review' has been exceedingly strong in its support of Israel against the Palestinians, but that brought them no protection from false anti-Semitism charges.

The substitution was immediately recognized as sabotage. 'Review' editors and staff quickly apologized, even taking out ads in the campus

newspaper, and began searching for the culprit. Amazingly, Dartmouth University President JAMES FREEDMAN along with numerous leftist student groups and off-campus journalists, persisted in treating the quotation as if it actually represented the policies of the paper and was the collective responsibility of everybody who wrote for it. KEVIN PRICHETT, black and rather sensitive to racism, _Review_ Editor in Chief was not amused. "Our knowledge is that it was an inside job" by one or more staff members. Police are now investigating.

As a result of the furor, and as a result of complaints about the _Review's_ editorial content from anti-racist groups, BARRY PALMER, chairman of the New Hampshire's Human Rights Commission, undertook a review of two year's back copies of the paper. Said Palmer, "I read every single thing they wrote about teachers. I reviewed editorials and editorial cartoons. And I didn't find any hint of bigotry or prejudice." Anti-racist groups are now suggesting that PALMER is racist.

+ Hoaxes often take bizarre forms. GARY A. TUCKER gave law enforcement officials quite a buzz when he gave a virtual death-bed confession that he and a friend had taken part in a 1963 church bombing in Birmingham, AL, that had killed four young black girls. According to federal officials, TUCKER "really knew his dates and places and he knew the players in the bombing." Later, DAVID BARBER, Jefferson County, AL, District Attorney said that TUCKER was "a confessor to a crime that he did not commit." BARBER and FRANK DONALDSON, U.S. Attorney for Northern Alabama, said their only explanation for the hoax was TUCKER's physical and mental condition. TUCKER was a cancer patient at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Tuscaloosa, AL at the time of his confession. His relatives said that he had been diagnosed several years earlier as a "paranoid schizophrenic."

+ Not all hoaxes involve racist or anti-Semitic themes. A lesbian minister who said she was the victim of two anti-gay attacks changed her story when police confronted her with evidence that some of her injuries were self-inflicted. LYNN GRIFFIS, assistant pastor of the predominantly homosexual METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH in San Francisco, resigned two hours after being placed on administrative leave.

Miss GRIFFIS said she was hit on the head with a shovel after surprising an assailant who broke into her garage and scrawled anti-gay graffiti on the wall. She later alleged that she had been abducted in the Haight-Ashbury area by two so-called "skinheads," who threw her into a car, beat her up and threatened to kill her before releasing her. San Francisco Medical Examiner BOYD STEVENS determined the injuries she allegedly suffered from the skinheads were self-inflicted. San Francisco Police Chief FRANK JORDAN said damage to LYNN GRIFFIS' clothing and a subsequent description of how the injuries occurred were inconsistent with the evidence and her account. "There was no attack as described," he said. Miss GRIFFIS has gone elsewhere to pursue her career.

+ The issue of AIDS surfaced in another hoax. In Charleston, WV, residents of rural Campbells Creek were shocked to learn that the local florist may have completely fabricated accounts of alleged beatings and threats against him because he was rumored to have AIDS. BILL GREALIS, 41, had checked into the psychiatric ward of a local hospital. He said he had been terrorized by people in the small mining community. Later, state and county officials said that GREALIS may have fabricated the stories. Prosecutor BILL FORBES disputed GREALIS's accusations and said that he had wounded himself.

+ The radical homosexual group, ACT UP, had their New York City office torched by an arsonist. The fire caused \$10,000 in damage and destroyed an \$80,000 copy machine. The arsonist burned several boxes containing archives sitting in the center of the floor, ignoring all the computers and files. New York City Fire Marshall DAN BROWN said, "It doesn't make any sense." A message left on one ACT UP member's answering machine said, "This is the White Aryan Resistance. Next time it's going to be a bomb." Fire Marshalls focused on ACT UP members because there was no forced entry and not even the building superintendant had the three keys needed for access. Only six ACT UP members had keys and the intruder had locked the door on the way out.

+ Occasionally one member of a "victimized" class will perpetrate a hoax or fabrication against a member of another "victimized" class. This happened at George Washington University when a student, MARIAM KASHANI, reported to the campus paper, appropriately named _The Hatchet_, a rape incident which never occurred. The student told of an incident in which two young black men "with particularly bad body odor" had raped a white female student at knifepoint, and _The Hatchet_ reported the incident without sufficiently confirming the authenticity of the various sources.

Ms. KASHANI, an active feminist who had been involved in rape crisis counseling at Tulane University, had also said that the rapists had told the victim, "You were pretty good for a white girl." When confronted about the incident, Ms. KASHANI used an excuse often invoked in hoaxes. She said that she "had hoped the story, as reported, would highlight the problems of safety for women." RONNIE THAXTON, campus black activist, said, "I was outraged. I think it was just another attempt by some white people to discredit young black males in this country." Black activists took particular exception to the comment about the body odor of the alleged perpetrators.

Hoaxes are sometimes almost incidental to other crimes. Although the motive was the covering up of a crime and the designation of a black man as a culprit was incidental to the event, such a case occurred in Boston on 23 October 1989 when CHARLES STUART called police to report that his wife, CAROL, had been killed and he had been shot by

a black assailant in the Mission Hill district. The gruesome scene, including a dramatic tape of rescue efforts by police and paramedics, stirred a volatile mixture of fear and outrage. As a victim, STUART became a media hero. In the meantime, WILLIE BENNETT was arrested after STUART identified him as looking "most like" the murderer. The case began to unravel when skillful police investigation surfaced evidence that pointed to him as the killer out to collect on an insurance policy of \$600,000. With police closing in, STUART committed suicide by jumping off a bridge into the Mystic River.

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT HOAXES?

The hoaxes and fabrications detailed in this report are only the tip of the iceberg. They represent only a very small fraction of a probable several hundred incidents of this type that occur annually. My prediction is that this behavior will remain a serious problem as long as society places such inordinate premium on "victimhood" of certain kinds. To use an economic metaphor, as long as hoaxes and fabrications pay off they will continue to be utilized. Yet one more typical example of this occurred when a 15-year-old black Hillsboro, Oregon, high school student was awarded tuition to a community college after finding the drawing of a swastika inside her locker! No culprit was found but victimhood was established merely by the circumstances.

The relative ease of fabricating hoaxes and the unlikelihood of getting caught compounds the situation, as does the ease with which excuses are made when hoaxers are occasionally caught. In the meantime, Americans of all races, religions and creeds are victimized by misrepresentations and exaggerations, including the "witch hunt" mentality that occurs when these incidents -- bonafide or hoaxes -- occur.

Probably the only way hoaxes and fabrications can be discouraged is through public awareness and regarding them as a serious offense in their own right, an unlikely possibility under present circumstances. Most often when discovered, hoaxers are treated as merely disturbed people who need help, while bonafide culprits, who may just as easily be in that category as well, are treated like major criminals and may even face devastating felony charges.

When the public realizes that special interest groups are actually benefitting by hoaxes and fabrications, and that other agenda issues are being covertly advanced by its over-reaction to and unskeptical attitude toward so-called "hate crimes," perhaps a more realistic perspective will develop concerning the actual seriousness of this problem -- one that neither exaggerates nor minimizes its significance in the total picture. A beginning is to establish a clearinghouse for this kind of information. As difficult as hoaxes are to find and document, a coordinated effort is essential.

I would advise anyone researching this area to confirm the incidents mentioned in this report. What you have read here is admittedly one point of view and there are many others. The information "source" to be highly suspicious of is the one that uses bullying or implied threats, who is quick to call names and attack the

character of those with whom they disagree. Also, please read the accompanying essays, _What is Political Extremism?_ and _The Practice Of Ritual Defamation_ appended to this report.

KILLING THE MESSENGER

The response from many ethnic and religious special interest groups on the hoax issue is simply to defame and degrade whoever brings it up. However, "killing the messenger" does not eliminate the message, although it certainly discourages public awareness and discussion, which is what often may be intended. It's a terrible paradox that those who speak out against the damaging effect of false charges of racism and anti-Semitism may bear the onus of being called racist and anti-Semitic themselves, but this merely illustrates the horrible distortions and misconceptions that surround this issue in our society.

WHERE TO REPORT HOAXES:

Community monitors are badly needed. Individuals who are regular readers of local newspapers or who monitor various media on a steady basis are ideal for this purpose. If you become aware of a hoax or a suspicious case in your community or elsewhere, please communicate this information, complete with documentation (newspaper clippings, police reports, etc.) to:

LAIRD WILCOX
EDITORIAL RESEARCH SERVICE
P.O. Box 2047
Olathe, KS 66061

Phone/FAX: 1-913-829-0609
24 Hours Daily

Individuals contributing significant information will receive future reports. You can help by purchasing additional copies of this report at \$6.00 each or four copies for \$20.00. Prices for larger quantities available upon request. For permission to reprint this report please contact Mr. Wilcox at the address above.

CONFIDENTIAL RACIST AND ANTI-SEMITIC HOAX REPORT FORM

Date hoax occurred: _____ . Brief description of hoax: _____

What suggests that this is a hoax?: _____

Documentation or evidence (should accompany report): _____

Your name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Documentation

(Photocopies of newspaper articles appear in the space below in _The Hoaxer Project Report_, some with photos. Only the headline, source, date of publication, and for some a brief description of each appears below.)

"The Toronto Star," April 13, 1983: "A life ruined by Nazi hunt" (Case of Frank Walus's wrongful prosecution by Simon Wiesenthal)

"New York Times," September 15, 1989: "Jewish Student Accused of Faking Anti-Semitism" (James Oppenheim case)

Paper in Atlanta, GA, June 4, 1990: "Student concocts racial threats" (Sabrina Collins case)

"Newark Star-Ledger," December 13, 1989: "Roselle man is accused of racist graffiti" (Pedro House Jr. case)

"Madison (WI) Capital-Times," November 29, 1989: "WWII soldier started anti-Semitism battle early in life" (David Rubitsky case)

"The Janesville (WI) Gazette," January 31, 1990: "Study rejects Rubitsky's claim of anti-Semitism" (More on the David Rubitsky case)

"The Washington Times," August 27, 1990: "Cross burnings not hate-crimes; 4 blacks arrested"

"Asbury Park Press," July 18, 1989: "Jewish teens are charged in spray-painting -- Swastikas put on home, car"

"The Province," August 7, 1984: "KGB TRIED TO MOUNT GAMES PLOT"

"New York Times," November 30, 1988: "Yonkers Housing Advocate Held in Fake Death Threats"

"Lawrence Correspondent," October 9, 1990: "Children, not Klan, blamed for vandalism -- Initials painted, small cross burned in Lawrence."

"New York Times," July 9, 1990: "Book on Brawley Case Details Victim's Invention of Rape Story" (Tawana Brawley case)

"Columbus (OH) Dispatch," December 20, 1988: "Hate-mail case sends teacher to court today -- Ohio Dominican staffer booked at jail, released" (Janice D. Hamlet case)

"St. Joseph (MO) News-Press Gazette," December 7, 1988: "Student admits he lied about racial threats" (Quinton L. Banks case)

"The Associated Press," December 28, 1986: "Report of youth's burning false, police say"

"The Washington Times," September 7, 1990: "Police suspect ploy by insider -- 'Bigot' may be campaign staffer"

"New York Times," December 14, 1983: "Fires at Connecticut Jewish Sites Laid to a Synagogue Member, 17"

"Tulsa World," December 24, 1988: (The Jewish Community Center, caught using a computer to jam the phone lines of a group they don't like, denies even having a computer)

"Post-Dispatch," 1986: "Assault With Acid Story Called Hoax"

"Washington Times," August 7, 1989: "Lesbian pastor admits she lied about attacks" (Lynn Griffis case)

"American Jewish World," March 18, 1983: "Anti-Semitic Acts In Basel Traced To Jewish Student"

"The Dartmouth Review," October 5, 1990: "Apology at Dartmouth over Hitler quote"

"Winnipeg Free Press," November 26, 1987: "B'nai B'rith guilty of libel, jury finds -- \$400,000 awarded in damages" (B'nai B'rith wrongly smeared former political candidate Luba Fedorkiw as an anti-Semite)

"New York Daily News," November 28, 1988: "Swastika raid on a deseg supporter" (Laurie Recht case)

"New York Daily News," December 1, 1988: "Deseg figure is arrested" (Laurie Recht case)

'NEW YORK (AP),' November 24, 1985: "Jewish shops struck" (Gary Dworkin case)

'NEW YORK (JTA),' December 20, 1985: "NY Jewish Vandal Nabbed" (Gary Dworkin case)

'MIAMI (AP),' February 19, 1989: "\$5.5 Million Awarded for Anti-Semitism Claim" (Arthur Green case)

"The Kansas City Times," September 22, 1989: "Teen charged in wall defacement -- He allegedly painted racist message near Nelson Gallery" (Terrence G. Weaver case)

"Seattle Post-Intelligencer," December 13, 1990: "Alleged attack victim arrested -- Asian man who says he was beaten by whites is charged in robberies" (Darres Park case)

"Seattle Post-Intelligencer," December 18, 1990: "Hate-crime story faked, says Seattle Police Dept." (Darres Park case)

'From the Lawrence Bureau,' November 8, 1990: "Cross is burned on fraternity lawn"

"The Register," March 26, 1990: "Anti-Semitic fliers scattered in Yorba Linda -- Leaflet says it was distributed by Methodists"

'HAIFA, Israel (AP),' May 27, 1990: "Israeli is Given 3 Years For Desecrating Graves" (David Goldner case; spray-painted over 300 grave-stones, hoped that Jews would blame Arabs and unite against them)

"The Associated Press," April 8, 1987: "Caller is acquitted of harassing talk show" (Jay Clark/Thomas Speers case)

"Rocky Mountain News," December 16, 1990: "Racism ruled out in Arvada arson -- Wife of homeowner, relative arrested"

"The Associated Press," October 10, 1985: "Neo-Nazi official held in spy case" (Communist spy evidently posing as a Neo-Nazi)

Cherry Hill, New Jersey paper, May 1, 1987: "Cherry Hill vandals face jail, fines" (Matthew Tannenbaum (a Jew) and two others arrested for their "anti-Semitic" attack on the predominantly Jewish Woodcrest Country Club)

"D.C. Observer," June 13, 1988: "ADL report diminished its reputation" (ADL (the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith) fights to censor any and all criticism of Israel, labeling it "anti-Semitic")

"The Kansas City Times," December 16, 1987: "Voters oust mayor linked to racist mailings" (Portsmouth, Virginia's first black mayor removed from office in a recall election for sending racist hate mail to community leaders)

(?) August 6, 1987: "Woodside Rebuilds, Arsonist 'Known' But Still at Large" (Woodside synagogue arson case; fire investigator Lt. Carvel Harding said incident was not motivated by anti-Semitism, but would not reveal the individual or the motive because case was "touchy"...)

"Washington Jewish Week," August 6, 1987: "Jewish Youth Charged in Swastika Burning" (Gary L. Stein case)

"Associated Press," (?): "3 JDL leaders held in religious center blast"

"ADL Bulletin," (?): "Anti-Semitic Vandalism: 2-Year Trend Reversed In 1984" (Picture is faked; swastika overlaid on photo of door of "Jewish home in Kings Point, NY")

"The Register," September 26, 1984: "Fraudulent flier claims Costa Mesa candidate is member of Nazi group"

"The Associated Press," August 3, 1985: "Lawsuit says Stephan invented radical sect to further his career" (Kansas Attorney General Robert T. Stephan case; accused of "creating" the Posse Comitatus)

"The Times," September 9, 1989: "Mlot-Mroz faces charges" (Jozef Mlot-Mroz arrested for trying to *paint over* anti-Semitic graffiti that he believed Jewish leaders themselves were responsible for as a way of bringing media attention to themselves)

'From a Correspondent, New York,' March 15, 1985: "Hoax letter in US uses UN name"

(?), November 26, 1984: "Thomas Ruppert, 35; Cleared of Yonkers Fire"

What Is "Political Extremism"?

Laird Wilcox

If it's a despot you would dethrone, see first that his throne erected within you is destroyed. -- Kahlil Gibran, 1923

Rober Scruton, in the Dictionary of Political Thought defines "extremism" as:

1. Taking a political idea to its limits, regardless of unfortunate repercussions, impracticalities, arguments, and feelings to the contrary, and with the intention not only to confront, but to eliminate opposition.

2. Intolerance toward all views other than one's own.
3. Adoption of means to political ends which show disregard for the life, liberty, and human rights of others.

This definition basically reflects my own experience, that extremism is more an issue of style than of content. In the twenty-five years that I have been investigating political groups of the left and right, I have found that most people can hold radical or unorthodox views and still entertain them in a more or less reasonable, rational, and nondogmatic manner. On the other hand, I have met people whose views were fairly close to the political mainstream but were presented in a shrill, uncompromising, bullying, and distinctly authoritarian manner. The latter demonstrated a starkly extremist mentality while the former demonstrated only ideological unorthodoxy, which is hardly to be feared in a relatively free society such as ours.

This view of extremism, which may seem novel to many people since in today's climate the term is usually used as an epithet, is held by many writers and authorities, especially those who approach the issue from a relatively even-handed and nonideological point of view. Milton Rokeach, whose book *The Open and Closed Mind* is a classic in the field of dogmatic thinking, prejudgement, and authoritarianism, has this to say about it:

To study the organization of belief systems, we find it necessary to concern ourselves with the structure rather than the content of beliefs. The relative openness or closedness of a mind cuts across specific content; that is, it is not uniquely restricted to any particular ideology, or religion, or philosophy, or scientific viewpoint. A person may adhere to communism, existentialism, Freudianism, or the "new conservatism" in a relatively open or relatively closed manner. Thus, a basic requirement is that the concepts to be employed in the description of belief systems must not be tied to a particular belief system; they must be constructed to apply equally to all belief systems.

Rokeach goes on to say "authoritarianism and intolerance in belief and interpersonal relations are surely not a monopoly of Fascists, Anti-Semites, Ku Klux Klanners, or conservatives." I agree, and would add that the same behaviors merely take different forms and utilize different vocabulary on the "left" side of the political spectrum. The essential characteristics remain quite similar. The choice of adjectives used to describe the behavior in question often derives far more from the biases and interests of the observer than from the objective facts of the situation. Daniel Bell, the eminent sociologist and author of *The Radical Right*, tends to support this view. He says, "The way you hold beliefs is more important than what you hold. If somebody's been a rigid Communist, he becomes a rigid anti-Communist -- the rigidity being constant."

In my opinion, most strident opponents of right-wing or left-wing "extremism" exhibit significant ideological bias, and many are actually representatives of the opposing extreme. The fact that an extremist hates and agitates against other extremists doesn't mitigate his or her own character in this regard. In fact, opposing extremists often form

a vague bond or symbolic relationship with one another, each justifying the others' existence.

In focusing on the style rather than the content of a belief system, I don't mean to imply that content is entirely irrelevant. People who tend to adopt the extremist style most often champion causes and adopt ideologies that are essentially "fringe" positions. But mere advocacy of "fringe" positions gives our society the variety and vitality it needs to function as an open democracy, to discuss and debate all aspects of an issue, and to deal with problems that otherwise have been ignored. The extremist style is another issue altogether, however, in that it hampers our understanding of important issues, it muddies the waters of discourse with invective, defamation, self-righteousness, fanaticism, and hatred, and it impairs our ability to make intelligent, well-informed choices.

Another point is that the extremist style is not only found at the fringes of the political or religious spectrum, but sometimes in the "middle" as well. An individual who is uncompromisingly and intolerantly "centrist" may be far more dogmatic and prejudiced than someone who adopts more radical views but does so in an open and tolerant manner. Consequently, a guarded middle-of-the-road position doesn't necessarily provide a solution to extremism, and in some cases can only serve as a mask to conceal it. In fact, it could be argued that those beliefs that are accorded legitimacy by consensus, which is to say that everyone unthinkingly accepts them, may even be more prone to appear on the extremist agenda and more difficult to challenge or effectively debate.

When the word "extremist" is used as an epithet it usually represents points of view with which we disagree, advocated by someone we dislike (but usually don't know) and whose interests are contrary to our own. Political ideologues and special interests often attempt definitions of "extremism" that specifically condemn the views of their critics and opponents while leaving their own equally strident and intolerant behavior untouched. In the debate over abortion, for example, one side or the other will condemn opponents as "extremists" while describing themselves as valiant defenders of human life or champions of freedom. In fact, bona fide extremist elements exist on both sides of this controversy, as do relatively calm, fairminded, honest, even-handed, and rational advocates. It is not the position they take, but HOW they take it that matters. It has been said that "whoever defines the terms wins the argument." The use of loaded terms and selective vocabulary that are biased toward certain forms of authoritarianism, bigotry, and prejudice but not others, is another example of the pervasive double standard one encounters in this area.

The traits of "extremists"

Robert F. Kennedy wrote:

What is objectionable, what is dangerous about extremists is not that they are extreme, but that they are intolerant. The evil is not what they say about their cause, but what they say about their opponents.

In analyzing the rhetoric and propaganda of several hundred militant "fringe" political and social groups across the political spectrum, I have identified a number of specific traits or behaviors that tend to represent the extremist "style." Other writers have delineated various extremist traits and where their criteria have been objective I have included them. I am especially indebted to professors John George and Gordon Hall for their suggestions. Please let me caution you with the admonition, that we are all fallible human beings and anyone, without bad intentions, may resort to some of these behaviors from time to time. With bona fide extremists, however, these lapses are not occasional. Rather, they are a habitual and strongly established part of their repertoire, so much so that in some cases their entire belief system is expressed in these terms, including a polemical style that is fairly easy to identify.

1. CHARACTER ASSASSINATION. Extremists often attack the character of an opponent rather than deal with the facts or issues raised. They will question motives, qualifications, past associations, alleged values, personality, looks, mental health, and so on as a diversion from the issues under consideration. Some of these matters are not entirely irrelevant, but they should not serve to avoid the real issues. Extremists object strenuously when this is done to them, of course!

2. NAME CALLING AND LABELING. Extremists are quick to resort to epithets (racist, subversive, pervert, hater, nut, crackpot, degenerate, un-American, anti-semitic, red, commie, nazi, kook, fink, liar, bigot, and so on) to label and condemn opponents in order to divert attention from their arguments and to discourage others from hearing them out. These epithets don't have to be proved to be effective; the mere fact that they have been said is often enough.

3. IRRESPONSIBLE SWEEPING GENERALIZATIONS. Extremists tend to make sweeping claims or judgments on little or no evidence, and they have a tendency to confuse similarity with sameness. That is, they assume that because two (or more) things, events or persons are alike in some respects, they must be alike in most respects. The sloppy use of analogy is a treacherous form of logic and has a high potential for false conclusions.

4. INADEQUATE PROOF FOR ASSERTIONS. Extremists tend to be very fuzzy about what constitutes proof, and they also tend to get caught up in logical fallacies, such as POST HOC ERGO PROPTER HOC (assuming that a prior event explains a subsequent occurrence simply because of their before-and-after relationship). They tend to project wished-for conclusions and to exaggerate the significance of information that confirms their beliefs while derogating or ignoring information that contradicts them. They tend to be motivated by feelings more than facts, by what they want to exist rather than what actually does exist. Extremists do a lot of wishful and fearful thinking.

5. ADVOCACY OF DOUBLE STANDARDS. Extremists generally tend to judge themselves or their interest group in terms of their intentions, which they tend to view generously, and others by their acts, which they tend to view very critically. They would like you to accept their assertions on faith, but they demand proof for yours. They tend to

engage in special pleading on behalf of themselves or their interests, usually because of some alleged special status, past circumstances, or present disadvantage.

6. TENDENCY TO VIEW THEIR OPPONENTS AND CRITICS AS ESSENTIALLY EVIL.

To the extremist, opponents hold opposing positions because they are bad people, immoral, dishonest, unscrupulous, mean-spirited, hateful, cruel, or whatever, not merely because they simply disagree, see the matter differently, have competing interests, or are perhaps even mistaken.

7. MANICHAEAN WORLDVIEW. Extremists have a tendency to see the world in terms of absolutes of good and evil, for them or against them, with no middle ground or intermediate positions. All issues are ultimately moral issues of right and wrong, with the "right" position coinciding with their interests. Their slogan is often "those who are not with me are against me."

8. ADVOCACY OF SOME DEGREE OF CENSORSHIP OR REPRESSION OF THEIR OPPONENTS AND/OR CRITICS.

This may include a very active campaign to keep opponents from media access and a public hearing, as in the case of blacklisting, banning, or "quarantining" dissident spokespersons. They may actually lobby for legislation against speaking, writing, teaching, or instructing "subversive" or forbidden information or opinions. They may even attempt to keep offending books out of stores or off of library shelves, discourage advertising with threats of reprisals, and keep spokespersons for "offensive" views off the airwaves or certain columnists out of newspapers. In each example the goal is some kind of information control. Extremists would prefer that you listen only to them. They feel threatened when someone talks back or challenges their views.

9. TEND TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES IN TERMS OF WHO THEIR ENEMIES ARE: WHOM THEY HATE AND WHO HATES THEM.

Accordingly, extremists may become emotionally bound to their opponents, who are often competing extremists themselves. Because they tend to view their enemies as evil and powerful, they tend, perhaps subconsciously, to emulate them, adopting the same tactics to a certain degree. For example, anti-Communist and anti-Nazi groups often behave surprisingly like their opponents. Anti-Klan rallies often take on much of the character of the stereotype of Klan rallies themselves, including the orgy of emotion, bullying, screaming epithets, and even acts of violence. To behave the opposite of someone is to actually surrender your will to them, and "opposites" are often more like mirror images that, although they have "left" and "right" reversed, look and behave amazingly alike.

10. TENDENCY TOWARD ARGUMENT BY INTIMIDATION.

Extremists tend to frame their arguments in such a way as to intimidate others into accepting their premises and conclusions. To disagree with them is to "ally oneself with the devil," or to give aid and comfort to the enemy. They use a lot of moralizing and pontificating, and tend to be very judgemental. This shrill, harsh rhetorical style allows them to keep their opponents and critics on the defense, cuts off troublesome lines of argument, and allows them to define the perimeters of debate.

11. USE OF SLOGANS, BUZZWORDS, AND THOUGHT-STOPPING CLICHES. For many extremists shortcuts in thinking and in reasoning matters out seem to

be necessary in order to avoid or evade awareness of troublesome facts and compelling counter-arguments. Extremists generally behave in ways that reinforce their prejudices and alter their own consciousness in a manner that bolsters their false confidence and sense of self-righteousness.

12. ASSUMPTION OF MORAL OR OTHER SUPERIORITY OVER OTHERS. Most obvious would be claims of general racial or ethnic superiority -- a master race, for example. Less obvious are claims of ennoblement because of alleged victimhood, a special relationship with God, membership in a special "elite" or "class," and a kind of aloof "highminded" snobbishness that accrues because of the weightiness of their preoccupations, their altruism, and their willingness to sacrifice themselves (and others) to their cause. After all, who can bear to deal with common people when one is trying to save the world! Extremists can show great indignation when one is "insensitive" enough to challenge these claims.

13. DOOMSDAY THINKING. Extremists often predict dire or catastrophic consequences from a situation or from failure to follow a specific course, and they tend to exhibit a kind of "crisis-mindedness." It can be a Communist takeover, a Nazi revival, nuclear war, earthquakes, floods, or the wrath of God. Whatever it is, it's just around the corner unless we follow their program and listen to the special insight and wisdom, to which only the truly enlightened have access. For extremists, any setback or defeat is the "beginning of the end!"

14. BELIEF THAT IT'S OKAY TO DO BAD THINGS IN THE SERVICE OF A "GOOD" CAUSE. Extremists may deliberately lie, distort, misquote, slander, defame, or libel their opponents and/or critics, engage in censorship or repression, or undertake violence in "special cases." This is done with little or no remorse as long as it's in the service of defeating the Communists or Fascists or whomever. Defeating an "enemy" becomes an all-encompassing goal to which other values are subordinate. With extremists, the end justifies the means.

15. EMPHASIS ON EMOTIONAL RESPONSES AND, CORRESPONDINGLY, LESS IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO REASONING AND LOGICAL ANALYSIS. Extremists have an unspoken reverence for propaganda, which they may call "education" or "consciousness-raising." Symbolism plays an exaggerated role in their thinking, and they tend to think imprecisely and metaphorically. Harold D. Lasswell, in his book *Psychopathology and Politics*, says, "The essential mark of the agitator is the high value he places on the emotional response of the public." Effective extremists tend to be effective propagandists. Propaganda differs from education in that the former teaches one what to think, and the latter teaches one how to think.

[An illustration appears in the booklet which shows a shadowy figure painting on a brick wall, "NO FREE SPEECH FOR ANYONE WHO DISAGREES WITH US," with two police officers looking down from over and behind the wall. The caption below the illustration reads, "A diligent student."]

16. HYPERSENSITIVITY AND VIGILANCE. Extremists perceive hostile innuendo in even casual comments; imagine rejection and antagonism concealed in honest disagreement and dissent; see "latent" subversion,

anti-semitism, perversion, racism, disloyalty, and so on in innocent gestures and ambiguous behaviors. Although few extremists are clinically paranoid, many of them adopt a paranoid style with its attendant hostility and distrust.

17. USE OF SUPERNATURAL RATIONALE FOR BELIEFS AND ACTIONS. Some extremists, particularly those involved in "cults" or extreme religious movements, such as fundamentalist Christians, militant Zionist extremists, and members of mystical and metaphysical organizations, claim some kind of supernatural rationale for their beliefs and actions, and that their movement or cause is ordained by God. In this case, stark extremism may become reframed in a "religious" context, which can have a legitimizing effect for some people. It's surprising how many people are reluctant to challenge religiously motivated extremism because it represents "religious belief" or because of the sacred-cow status of some religions in our culture.

18. PROBLEMS TOLERATING AMBIGUITY AND UNCERTAINTY. Indeed, the ideologies and belief systems to which extremists tend to attach themselves often represent grasping for certainty in an uncertain world, or an attempt to achieve absolute security in an environment that is naturally unpredictable or perhaps populated by people with interests opposed to their own. Extremists exhibit a kind of risk-aversiveness that compels them to engage in controlling and manipulative behavior, both on a personal level and in a political context, to protect themselves from the unforeseen and unknown. The more laws or "rules" there are that regulate the behavior of others -- in particular their "enemies" -- the more secure extremists feel.

19. INCLINATION TOWARD "GROUPTHINK." Extremists, their organizations, and their subcultures are prone to a kind of inward-looking group cohesiveness that leads to what Irving Janis discussed in his excellent book *_Victims of Groupthink_*. "Groupthink" involves a tendency to conform to group norms and to preserve solidarity and concurrence at the expense of distorting members' observations of facts, conflicting evidence, and disquieting observations that would call into question the shared assumptions and beliefs of the group. Right-wingers (or left-wingers), for example, talk only with one another, read material that reflects their own views, and can be almost phobic about the "propaganda" of the "other side." The result is a deterioration of reality-testing, rationality, and moral judgement. With groupthink, shared illusions of righteousness, superior morality, persecution, and so on remain intact, and those who challenge them are viewed with skepticism and hostility.

20. TENDENCY TO PERSONALIZE HOSTILITY. Extremists often wish for the personal bad fortune of their "enemies," and celebrate when it occurs. When a critic or an adversary dies or has a serious illness, a bad accident, or personal legal problems, extremists often rejoice and chortle about how they "deserved" it. I recall seeing right-wing extremists celebrate the assassination of Martin Luther King and leftists agonizing because George Wallace survived an assassination attempt. In each instance their hatred was not only directed against ideas, but also against individual human beings.

21. EXTREMISTS OFTEN FEEL THAT THE SYSTEM IS NO GOOD UNLESS THEY WIN.

For example, if they lose an election, then it was "rigged." If public opinion turns against them, it was because of "brainwashing." If their followers become disillusioned, it's because of "sabotage." The test of the rightness or wrongness of the system is how it impacts upon them.

Thus, extremists tend to have these things in common:

1. They represent some attempt to distort reality for themselves and others. Extremism tends to be "feeling-based" rather than "evidence-based," although the selective use of evidence may obscure that fact.
2. They try to discourage critical examination of their beliefs by a variety of means, usually by false logic, rhetorical trickery, or some kind of censorship, repression, or intimidation.
3. Extremism usually represents some attempt to act out private personal grudges or to rationalize the pursuit of special interests in the name of public welfare, morality, duty, or social consciousness. Extremists often have motives they themselves do not recognize.

Human beings are imperfect and fallible. Even an honest, rational, and well-intentioned person may resort to some of these traits from time to time. Everyone has strong feelings about some issues and anyone can become excited and "blow up" once in awhile. Most of us still retain our basic common sense, good will, and sense of humor. My purpose is not to establish some impossible standard that almost no one can meet, but simply to suggest a better direction. The difference between bona fide extremists and others is that this general kind of behavior is the extremists' normal and usual way of relating their values and feelings, and they usually feel no guilt or sense that anything is wrong when they behave this way. The extremist subculture rewards and reinforces these behaviors, while the society of thoughtful and fair-minded people discourages it.

One final note

The truth of a proposition cannot be inferred merely from the manner in which arguments in its behalf are presented, from the fact that its adherents may censor or harass their opponents, or because they practice any other behavior or combination of behaviors suggested in this article. Ultimately, the truth of any proposition or claim must rest upon the evidence for it. Moreover, the intensity of a conviction has nothing whatsoever to do with whether or not it is true. To dismiss a proposition out of hand merely because it is advocated by obvious extremists is to dismiss it ad hominem, that is, because of WHO advocates it. In point of fact, extremists are sometimes correct. They often deal with the "hot" issues, the controversial issues many people choose to avoid. Before you write people off as extremists, take a look at their evidence. It might be that they're actually on to something important. *

How Values, Opinions, and Beliefs are
Controlled in Democratic Societies

By Laird Wilcox
1990

Foreword

Defamation is the destruction or attempted destruction of the reputation, status, character or standing of the community of a person or group of persons by wrongful, unfair, or malicious speech or publication. For the purposes of this essay, the central element is defamation in retaliation for the real or imagined attitudes, opinions or beliefs of the victim, with the intention of silencing them and neutralizing his or her influence, and/or making an example of them so as to discourage similar independence and "insensitivity" or non-observance of taboos. It is different in nature and degree from simple criticism or disagreement in that it is aggressive, organized and skillfully applied, often by an organization or representative of a special interest group, and in that it consists of several characteristic elements.

"Ritual" defamation is not ritualistic because it follows any prescribed religious or mystical doctrine nor is it embraced in any particular scripture. Rather, it is ritualistic because it follows a predictable, stereotyped pattern which embraces a number of typical elements, as in a ritual.

The Elements of a Ritual Defamation are these:

1. In a ritual defamation the victim must have violated a particular taboo in some way, usually by expressing or identifying with a forbidden attitude, opinion or belief. It is not necessary that he "do" anything about it or undertake any course of action, only that he engage in some form of communication or expression.
2. The method of attack in a ritual defamation is to assail the character of the victim, and never to offer more than a perfunctory challenge to the particular attitudes, opinions or beliefs expressed or implied. Character assassination is its primary tool.
3. An important rule is to avoid engaging in honest debate over the truthfulness or reasonableness of what has been expressed, only condemn it. To debate opens the issue up for examination and discussion on its merits, which is just what the ritual defamer is trying to avoid. The primary goal is Censorship and repression.
4. The victim is very often someone in the public eye, although perhaps only in a modest way. It could be a school-teacher, a writer, a businessman, a minor official, or merely an outspoken citizen. Visibility enhances vulnerability to ritual defamation.
5. An attempt, often successful, is made to involve others in the defamation. In the case of a public official, other public officials will be urged to denounce the offender. In the case of a student,

other students will be called upon, and so on.

6. In order for a ritual defamation to be effective, the victim must be dehumanized to the extent that he becomes identical with the offending attitude, opinion or belief, and in a manner which distorts it to the point where it appears at its most extreme. For example, a victim who is defamed as a "subversive" will be identified with the worst images of subversion, such as espionage or treason. A victim defamed as a "pervert" will be identified with the worst images of perversion, including child molestation. A victim defamed as a "racist" or "anti-Semitic" will be identified with the worst images of racism or anti-Semitism, such as lynchings or gas chambers, and so on.

7. Also to be successful, a ritual defamation must bring pressure and humiliation from every quarter, including family and friends, who may begin to shun him. If the victim has school children, they may be taunted and ridiculed as a consequence of adverse publicity. If he is employed, he may be fired from his job.

8. Anyone who defends a victim runs the risk of being associated with him and similarly defamed. Even if their own reputation is beyond question, their judgement and involvement with the victim may become an issue. Often, the victim of a ritual defamation becomes isolated and abandoned.

9. Any explanation the victim may offer, including the claim of being misunderstood, is considered irrelevant. To claim truth as a defense is interpreted as unrepentance and only compounds the problem. Ritual defamation is not necessarily an offense of being wrong or incorrect, but rather "insensitivity" and failing to observe social taboos.

10. Many victims succumb early on and go through a "confessional" stage complete with apologies and remorse. They may even denounce friends associated with the forbidden values, opinions and beliefs, or claim that they were "duped," as was the case with many suspected "subversives" during the McCarthy era. If the charges against them involve "morals," they may claim stress or mental illness as a defense.

11. The viciousness of ritual defamation is inspired not merely by revenge, although that is an important factor, but also to create an example so others will know of the savaging they can expect for stepping out of line. Ritual defamation is an important means of social control.

12. An interesting aspect of ritual defamation is its universality. It is not specific to any particular value, opinion or belief or to any group or subculture. It may be used either for or against any political, ethnic or religious minority and also by any political, ethnic or religious minority.

13. Ritual Defamation often appears in paradoxical forms, as in the case of organizations claiming to oppose defamation itself, even using the term "anti-defamation" in their name. Psychologically, this may represent a projective mechanism, in which the organization attempts to camouflage its own propensities in the form of an official

myth, a kind of agreed-upon fiction that perfumes its actual activities, which are often transparently evident from its publications.

14. The power of ritual defamation lies entirely in its capacity to intimidate. It embraces some elements of primitive superstitious belief, as in a "curse" or "hex." It also plays on the subconscious fear most people have of being rejected by the "tribe" and being cut off from social and psychological support systems. Only the truly courageous and independent person can withstand the full force of a ritual defamation, and occasionally they may even survive such an attempt relatively unscathed.

15. The weak points of ritual defamation lie in its tendency toward overkill and in its rather transparent maliciousness. Occasionally, a ritual defamation will fail because of inadequate planning and failure to correctly estimate the vulnerability of the victim. Ritual defamers often exhibit extensive projective mechanisms and delusions of persecution themselves. Although it may appear to be an offensive maneuver, it's actually quite defensive in nature. As Eric Hoffer said: "You can discover what your enemy fears most by observing the means he uses to frighten you." (*The True Believer*, 1951.)

16. Paradoxically, a ritual defamation often brings about the very values, opinions and beliefs that it condemns, as in a self-fulfilling prophecy. It enhances paranoia and hatred and generally serves to divide and alienate. It hardens positions and polarizes a situation as nothing else can. A person accused of supporting a particular belief may find themselves propelled into that position. Politically, for example, it's quite effective in creating rebels and dissidents. It has been used in various forms by dictatorships and totalitarian systems all throughout history. In democratic societies it has become a favorite tool of special interest groups to vilify and neutralize their critics and opponents.

It's important to recognize and identify the pattern of a ritual defamation and call attention to it whenever the opportunity presents itself. Ritual defamation is accomplished entirely through the manipulation of language and symbols, and when one understands that then it becomes recognized for the hypocritical, slanderous assault on human dignity that it really is.

Laird Wilcox

QUOTATIONS

"Politics, as a practice, whatever its professions, has always been the systematic organization of hatreds." HENRY BROOKS ADAMS.

"A lively, disinterested, persistent liking for truth is extraordinarily rare. Action and faith enslave thought, both of them in order not to be troubled or inconvenienced by reflection, criticism or doubt." HENRY FREDERICK AMIEL, *Amiel's Journal*, 1849-71.

"The trouble with lying and deceiving is that their efficiency depends

entirely upon a clear notion of truth that the liar and the deceiver wants to hide." HANNAH ARENDT, *Crisis Of The Republic*, 1972.

"There is a tonic in the things that men do not love to hear. Free speech is to a great people what the winds are to oceans...and where free speech is stopped miasma is bred, and death comes fast." HENRY WARD BEECHER.

"The first sign of corruption in a society that is still alive is that the end justifies the means." GEORGES BERNANOS, *Last Essays*, 1949.

"Experience should teach us to be most on guard to protect liberty when the government's purposes are beneficent....The greatest dangers to our liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding." LOUIS BRANDEIS, U.S. Supreme Court Justice.

"The dearest ambition of a slave is not liberty, but to have a slave of his own." SIR RICHARD BURTON.

"Slogans are both exciting and comforting, but they are also powerful opiates for the conscience." JAMES BRYANT CONANT, Baccalaureate Address, Harvard University, 1934.

"It is a capital crime to theorize before one has data. Insensibly, one begins to twist facts to suit theories instead of theories to suit facts." SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE, *The Adventures Of Sherlock Holmes*, 1891.

"When there is a choice about how to lie, liars usually prefer concealing to falsifying. There are many advantages. For one thing, concealing is easier than falsifying. Nothing has to be made up. There is no chance of getting caught without having the whole story worked out in advance." PAUL EKMAN, *Telling Lies*, 1985.

"Propaganda is persuading people to make up their minds while withholding some of the facts from them." HAROLD EVANS.

"There is no zeal blinder than that which is inspired with the love of justice against offenders." HENRY FIELDING, *Tom Jones*.

"There is perhaps no phenomenon which contains so much destructive feeling as moral indignation, which permits envy or hate to be acted out under the guise of virtue." ERICH FROMM, *Man For Himself*, 1947.

"I doubt if the oppressed ever fight for freedom. They fight for pride and for power -- power to oppress others. The oppressed want above all to imitate their oppressors; they want to retaliate." ERIC HOFFER, *The Passionate State Of Mind*.

"There is no method of reasoning more common, and yet none more blamable, than, in philosophical disputes, to endeavor the refutation of a hypothesis, by a pretense of its dangerous consequence to religion and morality." DAVID HUME, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 1748.

"The propagandist's purpose is to make one set of people forget that the other set are human." ALDOUS HUXLEY, *The Olive Tree*, 1937.

"...every crusade tends, by the very difficulty of its struggle and the fervor of its hope, to develop overdrive -- a determination that may go

too far." ORRIN E. KLAPP, *The Collective Search For Identity*, 1969.

"The language of the totalist environment is characterized by the thought-terminating cliché. The most far-reaching and complex of human problems are compressed into brief, highly reductive, definitive-sounding phrases, easily memorized and easily expressed." ROBERT J. LIFTON, *Thought Reform And The Psychology Of Totalism*, 1961.

"For the majority of mankind are satisfied with appearances, as though they were realities, and are often more influenced by the things that seem than by those that are." NICOLO MACHIAVELLI, *Discourses*, 1513-17.

"The historians first duties are sacrilege and the mocking of false Gods. They are his indispensable instruments for establishing the truth." JULES MICHELET, *Historie de France*, 1833-67.

"Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back at you." FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1878.

"What gives the new despotism its peculiar effectiveness is indeed its liaison with humanitarianism, but beyond this fact its capacity for entering into the smallest details of human life." ROBERT NISBET, *Twilight Of Authority*, 1981.

"A person growing up with Newspeak as his sole language would no more know that equal had once the secondary meaning of 'politically equal,' or that free had once meant 'intellectually free,'...." GEORGE ORWELL, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1948.

"You are never dedicated to something you have complete confidence in. When people are fanatically dedicated to political or religious faiths, or any other kind of dogmas or goals, it's always because these dogmas or goals are in doubt." ROBERT M. PIRSIG, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*.

"Our experience is composed rather of illusions lost rather than wisdom acquired." JOSEPH ROUX, *Meditations Of A Parish Priest*, 1886.

"Intelligence is quickness in seeing things as they are." GEORGE SANTAYANA, *Little Essays*, 1920.

"To claim 'humanitarian motives,' when the true motive is envy and its supposed appeasement, is a favorite rhetorical device of politicians today..." HELMUT SCHOEK, *Envy: A Theory Of Social Behavior*, 1966.

"The power of accurate observation is commonly called cynicism in those who have not got it." GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, *Man & Superman*, 1903.

"Policies are judged by their consequences but crusades are judged by how good they make their crusaders feel." THOMAS SOWELL, *Compassion vs. Guilt*, 1987.

"If we value the pursuit of knowledge, we must be free to follow wherever that search may lead us." ADLAI STEVENSON, Speech, University of Wisconsin, 1952.

"The basis of fascism is blind belief and a contempt for reason... Fascism exploits the fear of reason which lives secretly in the conscious and sub-conscious minds of many people. Reason means facing

up to life and facts." ERNEST TOLLER.

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Editorial Research Service
PO Box 2047
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