

Reference Aid

(U) Violent Extremist Profile: Walter Edmund Bond^{USPER}

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(U) Prepared by the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A), Homeland Counterterrorism Division, Homegrown Violent Extremism Branch.

(U) Scope

(U) This is one in a series of case studies to improve homeland security stakeholder awareness of violent extremism and violent extremist radicalization.^{*} This profile supports efforts to counter violent extremism—as directed in the December 2011 National Security Staff “Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States”—by providing federal, state, local, and tribal governments with insight to assist them in identifying, deterring, preventing, or preempting violent extremist action within the United States.

(U) Characteristics of violent extremism are unique to each individual; single characteristics should not be considered indicators of a predisposition to terrorism. Indicators should always be considered in light of intelligence reporting and other information indicating a nexus to terrorism.

^{*} (U//FOUO) DHS defines radicalization as the process through which an individual shifts from a non-violent belief system to a belief system that includes the willingness to actively advocate, facilitate, or use violence as a method to effect societal or political change.

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(U) Walter Edmund Bond

(U//FOUO) Between April and July 2010, Walter Bond conducted arson attacks against three businesses he claimed were involved in the exploitation of animals: a sheepskin factory in Glendale, Colorado; a leather factory in Salt Lake City, Utah; and a restaurant in Sandy, Utah.

(U//FOUO) Bond in July 2010 was arrested after authorities were alerted to a Web posting in which he claimed responsibility for the fires as “ALF Lone Wolf.” Bond was sentenced to 12 years for the arsons in Colorado and Utah, and currently is incarcerated in the Communication Management Unit in Marion, Illinois.



(U) Summary

(U//FOUO) Walter Bond’s path to animal rights extremism was driven by witnessing what he perceived as animal abuse and by frustration stemming from his perception that lawful, nonviolent actions appeared to have little impact on advancing the goals of the animal rights movement.* Prior to becoming violent to advance animal rights, Bond showed a tendency to use violence to advance other beliefs, such as protesting illicit drug sales by committing arson against a drug trafficker’s home and protesting against religion by burning a pentagram symbol inside a church.

(U) Personal Background

(U) Bond claimed that his childhood was marked by parental instability and substance abuse, which probably drove the development of his ardent positions against social ills, such as drug abuse. According to articles Bond wrote for a sympathetic website, he was born 16 April 1976 in Iowa; his parents divorced when he was one year old; and his mother raised him in Iowa and Colorado. Bond’s biological father raised his two older brothers in Iowa.

- » (U) In a 2010 article, Bond wrote that his mother permitted drug use at an early age and his biological father was a drug addict. His adoptive father—albeit a “good man”—was an alcoholic. Bond claimed he was smoking marijuana with his mother by the time he was 12 years old.
- » (U) Bond in the same article said his biological father was addicted to cocaine and amphetamines and was involved with outlaw motorcycle gangs. Bond wrote that his father was arrested in one of the biggest drug busts in Iowa and sent to federal prison in Yankton, South Dakota. Bond said he once visited his father in prison to meet him and described him as a “deadbeat dad, a liar and a scumbag.”
- » (U) Bond earned his General Equivalency Diploma in prison, having dropped out of school in the eighth grade.

* (U//FOUO) DHS defines animal rights extremists as groups or individuals who facilitate or engage in acts of violence directed against people, businesses, or government entities perceived to be exploiting or abusing animals.

- » (U) His mother remarried in 1984 but divorced two years later and Bond moved with his mother to Denver. Bond stated that when he was 18 years old, he came home one day, discovered the house empty, and learned that his mother had moved with her third husband to the Pacific Northwest. Bond wrote that he moved back to Iowa and did not see his mother again for seven years.

(U) In his late teenage years, Bond adopted Straight Edge beliefs in an apparent effort to deal with his childhood, abstaining from using alcohol, tobacco, and recreational drugs. While Bond attempted to promote his beliefs through lawful means—attending concerts to teach others in the audience how to stand up against the drug culture—he also came to use violence as a means to achieving his goals.

- » (U) Based on Bond’s 2010 article and an anonymous interview with Bond in 2009, he became involved with the Straight Edge movement at 18 years old to rebel against his family’s alcoholism and drug use.
- » (U) According to open source information, Bond was convicted in 1996 for lighting a pentagram on fire inside a church as a statement against religion.
- » (U) The author of a book about animal rights who interviewed Bond in prison in 2010 reported that Bond admitted to conducting an arson attack in November 1997 at a suspected drug dealer’s home in Mason City, Iowa, which led to FBI finding nearly \$1 million in drugs at the dealer’s home and to the arrest of 13 drug dealers in four US states. Bond claimed in a 2009 interview that attempting to confront the drug dealer and contacting police were ineffective, so he “decided to take the law into my own hands” and that “my four years imprisonment was a small price to pay for such a positive result.”

(U) Straight Edge Movement

(U) “Straight Edge” is a subculture that emerged in the mid-1980s within the punk rock culture incorporating a variety of beliefs and ideas, but generally centered on abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, and narcotics and avoiding sexual promiscuity and other forms of hedonism associated with pop culture. Some adherents also associated veganism, pacifism, or other beliefs and practices with Straight Edge, and a few individuals engaged in violent clashes with skinhead extremists, claiming anti-racist beliefs as the motivation for the violence.

(U) As a young adult, Bond participated in the animal rights movement, promoting his beliefs largely through lawful activism, such as leafleting. Bond became a vegan and animal rights advocate after working in the construction industry building slaughterhouses in Iowa, according to a body of open source material. In a 2010 article, Bond reported that he would order pamphlets about vivisection, veganism, and factory farms and put them on windshields in parking lots and community bulletin boards.

(U//FOUO) As his involvement in the animal rights movement became more extreme, Bond came to view arson as a more effective means of advocating for animal rights than leafleting or writing a blog.

- » (U) In October 2011, Bond pled guilty to setting fire to a leather factory in Salt Lake City, Utah in June 2010 and a restaurant in Sandy, Utah a month later. Bond stated to the court that his actions were justified because the businesses profited from animal abuse.

- » (U) In November 2010, Bond pled guilty to setting fire to a sheepskin factory in Glendale, Colorado in April 2010. In a statement to the court, Bond reported that he set the fire to promote animal rights.

(U) Grievances

(U//FOUO) Bond's turn to animal rights extremism was driven by a perceived ill-treatment of animals that led him to advocate for "total animal liberation."

According to an interview of Bond by an author of a book on animal rights, Bond's experiences led him to advocate for the total exclusion of animals from human society—no pets, animal testing, or use of animals for food—and to support animal liberation “by any means necessary . . . so long as it's not violent to any human or animal.”

- » (U) In a 2010 article, Bond wrote that constructing slaughterhouses in Iowa as a teenager inspired him to become a vegan and an animal rights activist. Bond described a pivotal event at a slaughterhouse that left Bond “disgusted with myself . . . [and] . . . with humanity.” According to Bond, a hog was able to free itself from its foot hold but was chased down and beaten to death by three workers who cheered and high-fived each other after each strike.

(U//FOUO) Bond's writings indicate that he came to believe activism by legal means was fruitless and that—as veganism and animal liberation became the focus of his life—he became tired of feeling ineffective, “like [he] was just wasting air and not getting enough of results in return. [He] started to drift more and more towards a militant mindset.”

- » (U) In a 2010 article, Bond reported that after his release from prison for the arson attack on the drug dealer's home, he began to view the Straight Edge community as more about being a “Christian, Right-wing American Patriot” or “wanna-be Beatnik, Bohemian anarchist” than about working towards animal liberation and a drug-free lifestyle.

(U) Ideological Influences*

(U//FOUO) There is no evidence that Bond joined a violent extremist group or associated with violent extremists in conducting his arson attacks. Bond spent much of his time with non-violent animal rights activists; the fact that those activists were not willing to engage in violence appears to have frustrated him. According to a 2010 article, “I had known and been around many different local activists and there was not one of them I would have considered up to the challenge.”

(U//FOUO) Based on his own claims, Bond's personal experiences probably had the greatest impact on his radicalization to violence. He also claimed, however, to have been influenced by animal rights literature, some of which advocated violence.

* (U//FOUO) Bond's choice in publications is a protected exercise of the freedom of speech under the First Amendment, and ownership of the cited documents is not inherently an indication of violent extremist intent. Nevertheless, because press reporting and his own writings indicate that he drew upon particular sources to justify his criminal activities, including acts of violence, we describe these influences to help understand his motivations.

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- » (U) The Globe Gazette^{USPER} in July 2010 reported that when Bond was arrested, he was carrying in his backpack literature titled, “The Declaration of War: Killing People to Save Animals and the Environment.” According to the Chicago Tribune^{USPER}, “The Declaration of War” is an anonymously authored book that advocates sending mail bombs to universities and killing trappers and hunters. Although apprehended in possession of this book, Bond appears to have made some efforts to avoid injuring people in his arson attacks.

- » (U) In the interview with the author of a book on the animal liberation movement, Bond claimed he was influenced by Peter Singer’s^{USPER} book, *Animal Liberation*, which argues that animals should have rights based on their ability to feel pain and suffering, rather than based on intelligence. Although this text does not advocate the use of violence to achieve its ideological goals, Bond said the book reinforced his convictions on veganism and total animal liberation.

(U) Source Summary Statement

(U//FOUO) This product is derived from multiple open sources of information including court documents, news publications, and a book examining animal rights whose author conducted an interview with Bond in 2010 while Bond was in prison awaiting trial. A substantial portion of information was drawn from a website that hosts articles and essays submitted by Bond between September and December 2010. The website is operated by a friend of Bond’s who posts his writings to the site and organizes donations sent to Bond. DHS assesses the information obtained from court documents is **highly reliable**. DHS assesses the information obtained from the supportive website, which is provided directly by Bond, is **moderately reliable**. Information obtained from other open sources which is credibly sourced and plausible is **moderately reliable**, although some of these sources may reflect biases or contain unintentional inaccuracies.

(U) Report Suspicious Activity

(U) To report suspicious activity, law enforcement, Fire-EMS, private security personnel, and emergency managers should follow established protocols; all other personnel should call 911 or contact local law enforcement. Suspicious activity reports (SARs) will be forwarded to the appropriate fusion center and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for further action. For more information on the Nationwide SAR Initiative, visit <http://nsi.ncirc.gov/resources.aspx>.

(U) I&A would like to invite you to participate in a brief customer feedback survey regarding this product. Your feedback is extremely important to our efforts to improve the quality and impact of our products on your mission. Please see below to access the form and then follow a few simple steps to complete and submit your response. Thank you.

(U) Tracked by: HSEC-8.1, HSEC-8.2.1, HSEC-8.5.1, HSEC-8.6.2.1