

Tall Structure Terror

<http://www.contracabal.org/801-05.html>

The National Council of Jewish Women built and refurbished the Council House, a residence for senior citizens on Capitol Hill, Seattle. They obtained federal financial assistance through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the original construction and rehabilitation. The Directors currently employ an Administrator (Stephen Mitchell) who must comply with HUD Directive #4381.5 when managing the building and dealing with residents.

Previous editions of *Disconnected* have detailed the lack of security that exists at Council House. Both the board of directors and the administrator have continued to ignore security breaches reported to them. This has resulted in a dangerous situation: so dangerous that Nmesis has delayed publication of this essay for five months. Professional ethics require journalists to refrain from publishing details of crimes that would cause harm to innocent people. Releasing this information could have provoked the people involved and caused death or injury. The danger to residents has probably now lessened which permits publication. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI-Seattle) has not declared that a direct connection between the Ahmed Ressam case and the employment of Simon Rishel as a security guard at Council House exists. However, parallel time-frames and similar ideology gave reasonable cause to inform FBI-Seattle of Rishel's allegedly seditious behavior.

US District Chief Judge John Coughenour, presided over the case of bomb-smuggling suspect Ahmed Ressam (7 Nov 00). He denied a defense motion to strike the sole charge of international terrorism against that Algerian national for a third time. US Customs agents arrested Ressam, 32, in Port Angeles after US Customs agents said that they discovered bomb-making chemicals and equipment in a rented car (14 Dec 99). Prosecutors believe Ressam was part of a conspiracy by Algerian nationals living in the United States and Canada, to disrupt millennial celebrations in Seattle and other cities.¹

Another suspect in Yemen has provided unverified but credible information about the USS Cole attack (12 Oct 00) which killed seventeen US sailors. According to a report by ABC, that suspect asserts that suicide bombers originally planned an attack on the USS Sullivan refueling in Aden during January. This plan apparently formed part of a coordinated terrorist plot during the millennium holiday that included a planned attack on Seattle's Space Needle. Allegedly, militants linked to Osama Binladen coordinated these plots. The US had previously accused Binladen of bombing US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.²

Nmesis warned Richard R. Beresford, Council House Attorney-at-Law, and Donald R. Silverman MD, Director, about Simon Rishel's allegedly seditious behavior while on security duty at Council House. The term "seditious" applies to obtaining communications that have as their objective promotion of treason or certain lesser commotions and defamation of the government.³ Particularly, using government-funded computers to download information about terrorist activity.

Beresford and Silverman evidently took no notice. They did nothing and their apparent neglect placed residents in danger. Their indifference prompted Nmesis to inform Charles E. Mandigo, Special Agent in Charge, FBI-Seattle. Mandigo agreed to review the situation and said that his staff would make contact if he needed more information.

One neither expects the FBI to explain their actions nor to reveal the facts of a case under investigation. Consequently the statements made here result from verified and validated information received from Council House residents, employees, and other sources. The directors and administrators apparently did not act upon the information provided to them and to the FBI. They did nothing to reduce the danger to residents. Instead acting administrator Stephen Mitchell adopted a policy of appeasement and cover up. He used an absolutist panacea: either kill the messenger or appease the malfasant then cover up the crimes.

Former administrator Mark Mullen employed Rishel as a "security person" apparently without a background check or bonding. A check would probably have revealed his unlawful activities. An avowed Muslim, Rishel subsequently used Council House computers to download myriad fundamentalist and terrorist tracts from the Internet and saved them on the computer hard drive. He openly declared an affinity with the Afghan Mujahideen and said that he would like to join in their jihad. He used federally-funded computers in a US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) financially-assisted property to pursue potentially subversive activities.

The report about Rishel's activities could construe minimally as unconstitutional and in an extreme as terrorist related. It did not call for a judgment

upon the individual but suggested that in the interest of all residents he should receive a thorough investigation. The directors neglected either to investigate or to take action on the alleged offenses although they had prior knowledge of them from the volunteer computer assistant Knate Stahl. Stahl evidently discussed Rishel's behavior with his manager Audrey Dunbar, the person responsible for the computer lab and for complying with HUD directives. She evidently took no action.

All citizens must respect the First Amendment rights of individuals. However, Rishel's behavior disqualified him from those rights and protections. Congress has decreed that no law can take effect that does not respect religion and that abridges freedom of speech. However, exemptions to that statement apply when an individual acts in a way that suggests terrorism or could threaten citizens or the state.

Before FBI involvement, Neika Rishel, Rishel's wife, evidently renounced her connection with the fundamentalist Muslim organization to which Rishel belongs. She decided not to wear Muslim garb and allegedly ceased to cohabit with her husband. Neika and her children found alternative living accommodation.

During his estrangement from his wife, Simon Rishel slept in the Council House penthouse next to the computer laboratory. A resident locked out of an apartment called the emergency number and spoke with the estranged wife. She told that person to go to the penthouse where the resident found him asleep. Evidently, Rishel entered the area after the official closing time with master keys entrusted to him by Mullen and later by Mitchell.

Rishel frequently associated with other individuals involved in allegedly seditious behavior and admitted them to the building and the computer lab during the night. He used the master keys to let them in and did not require them to sign the visitors' register. He then allowed them to use the computers to download seditious material from the Internet.

The National Council of Jewish Women built and refurbished the Council House, a residence for senior citizens on Capitol Hill, Seattle. They obtained federal financial assistance through HUD for the original construction and rehabilitation. A reasonable person would expect the administrator to provide security commensurate with risk. A logical person would presume that the property presents a potential target for Islamic extremists. Its Israeli connection in a time of Middle East turbulence and undeclared war commonly suggest those risks. Moreover, the Council House directors, probably unlawfully, exhibit an Israeli flag that could provoke people who do not concur with Zionist aspirations.⁴

In any event, one would expect Mitchell to provide security at least equal to that provided by the local temple for the people who attend their services and functions. Council House, a thirteen storey building, has a synagogue in the basement and stands one block from Temple De Hirsch Sinai which makes it particularly vulnerable. Virtually no security exists. Both Mullen and Mitchell employed a physically and psychologically disabled person and an Islamic fanatic as their "security" force. In addition they had security cameras that did not work. They did not expect either of these "guards" to patrol at night or to make the reports normally expected from security guards.

Four weeks after knowing about the problem, the directors had still done nothing. Rishel and his non-resident associates continued to download the allegedly seditious materials on the Council House computers during the night. Moreover, Rishel also accessed an administration computer while supposedly on "security duty." Other office computers and files to which he had access contained confidential information about residents protected by the Privacy Act of 1974.

The Council House community already seethes with ethnic prejudice. Council House directors and staff use racially motivated terms when addressing issues. This type of unconscionable behavior by supposedly responsible people leads a group of residents to express themselves ethnically according to their special group interests. That ethnic vernacular construes as hate speech. When combined with Islamic fundamentalist fanaticism it presents a potentially explosive situation.

Finally, Mitchell moved by obtaining a "resignation" from Rishel on a Thursday (13 Jul 00). Outrageously, he allowed Rishel to work his notice and to stay in his apartment until the end of the month and to keep the master keys. The master keys for the building disappeared during Rishel's watch on the Thursday that he resigned.

The assistant administrator, Sharon J. LeMire, apparently learned of the incident early Friday (14 Jul 00). At the insistence of a resident, she unsuccessfully tried to contact Mitchell who had taken the day off. The following Monday (17 Jul 00), Mitchell allegedly swore the staff to secrecy. Reportedly, he said that to change the locks would cost about \$4,000.00 and that he did not want residents to know about the theft of the keys. He put the disabled security person on patrol for several nights then allegedly told his staff that he had found the keys. If one believes Mitchell then one must have reached the quintessence of gullibility.

Whether Mitchell did in fact find the keys or not seems immaterial. Council House employees did not have custody of the keys for several days in which time the thief could easily have made copies. A logical person will recognize the seriousness of this situation and the administrative irresponsibility and possible cover up.

Mitchell and the directors have again placed residents at risk. They have done nothing about changing the locks or strengthening security. Residents probably now stand in greater danger than before because Rishel has left. Islamic extremists may still have master keys to the building and the utility rooms.

In the days following Ressam's arrest, President Clinton and US authorities warned Americans cautiously to proceed with their New Year's plans because of terrorist plots. Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder told citizens to remain vigilant especially those attending large millennial activities planned in many cities. Foreign intelligence services told US authorities that terrorists may have planned attacks against three US cities, New York, Washington and Seattle. The US Customs immediately strengthened security at 300 border crossings.⁵

Seattle's Mayor Paul Schell had grand ideas about welcoming the new millennium. However, in consultation with the City Council and in fear of terrorism he promptly canceled the city's New Year's Eve bash at the Space Needle.⁶ Schell took drastic, costly, and unpopular steps to protect Seattle's citizens. However, the Council House administrator, Mark Mullen, despite warnings directed to him about imminent danger, did nothing. He left residents totally exposed and allowed terrorist sympathizers unlimited access to the building.

The security problem has reached alarming proportions and residents should ask whether someone else must suffer a violent death before the board of directors takes action. Disturbances have already erupted that have caused the police to take people away in handcuffs. Residents do not report rule infractions because they know that Mitchell will do nothing. Their reticence probably also relates to his hostile reaction to complaints and a history of procrastination and kill-the-messenger techniques that make appeals fruitless (See *The Mullen Legacy*).

The board of directors has similar responsibilities and liabilities whether they hire uniformed security guards from an agency or employ people who live-in and wear civilian clothes. Security employees who live-in have usually trained as in-house security guards. Calling security guards by other names does not reduce exposure to civil and criminal liability because they have identical duties and responsibilities. The only differences between them relate to whether they wear uniforms and who pays them. Mitchell perpetuates the Mullen security farce by falsely claiming that the building has twenty-four hour security:

We do have twenty-four hour security, they do live in the building, they are here. It is your responsibility as a member of this community. If someone follows you in and you don't feel like a confrontation don't confront them we have a video camera that catches them. Go to your apartment and call our security. Simply dial the front desk and automatically ring into their apartment: that's their job. If its three o'clock in the morning they will get out of bed and they will investigate. If you really don't feel safe call 911. Again, we are an independent living community. It is your responsibility, and ours, to insure the safety of this community. We do have twenty-four-hour security but they need to sleep at some point. It's perfectly OK to wake them up if you're concerned. If you notice anything that you're concerned about call them or call the police.⁷

Obviously, video cameras neither catch nor deter extremists. Moreover, the security of the building does not rest with the residents but with the administrator and directors. They evidently have no knowledge or experience in security matters and do not care about them. The number of incidents requiring police investigation has increased drastically during the past twelve months. The number of nonresidents roaming the building at night has increased as have the number of thefts.

The Residents' Association must establish its authority and the residents must speak with one voice through the president of that organization. HUD requires both the directors and the administrator to listen to duly elected resident officers then to meet their own responsibilities instead of using oligarchic control. They must appoint a qualified security expert to refer staff and recommend procedures for an effective security force at Council House. Moreover, the prime consideration should relate to safety not cost. HUD regulations demand a secure environment and do not restrict costs in achieving it.

Those regulations also require the directors to publish a description of the system employed for reporting incidents and resolving resident complaints. That procedure requires the administrator to post complaint procedures and make them readily available at the desk then respond to complaints in writing within an agreed period. However, the directors have neither promulgated procedures nor followed the HUD directive that requires them to report incidents and resident grievances. Instead, the administrator follows the first bureaucratic rule of risk management and conceals the complaint filing procedures and directors' particulars. This allows him to cover up matters that adversely affect residents and places them in danger.

Dead and critically injured people find it difficult to call security or to dial 911. It recently took more than four hours for a resident to find the body and to inform the police about another resident who had met a violent death. The twenty-four-hour security people evidently enjoyed a full night's sleep. The medical examiner did not declare the death as instantaneous. Did this resident die immediately or did she suffer agonizing pain for up to four hours? Could her life have been saved if a security patrol had found her and called for medical help during that time? No one can answer those questions now but should residents ask themselves: do I feel safe with indifferent, negligent people in charge of security?

Absolute answers to any group of situations do not exist. Administrators must address each problem using specific criteria and rational investigation. They must treat each circumstance on its merits and, in particular, must not ignore any issue that affects the safety of residents. At the first sign of danger they have a responsibility to inform the authorities, something that they consistently neglect to do. They remain complacent to avoid reporting problems to HUD as federal law requires them to do. They care more about not having a complaint about them on the HUD record than they do about the safety and comfort of residents. *Nmesis*.

1. Sam Skolnik, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (11 Nov 00).

2. Steven Lee Myers, *The New York Times* (10 Nov 00).

3. 18 U.S.C.A. 2383 and 2384.

4. 4 U.S.C 1 § 7(c)

5. Associated Press and Reuters (22 Dec 99).

6. Kery Murakami, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (31 Dec 99).

7. Stephen Mitchell (00-1108-0930 #307).