

The Radicalization Process of Homegrown Terrorists

A Case Study: The Boyd Family in North Carolina

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Chapter 1- Introduction

Daniel Boyd grew up in the United States and played on a state champion high school football team in Northern Virginia. His father was a Marine in the United States Military. He was raised Episcopalian. He fell in love with and married his high school sweetheart. How did Daniel Boyd go from being a typical Episcopalian boy from Virginia to a radical jihadist who became the leader of a group in North Carolina who planned to participate in and aid terrorist activities? Why did his two sons become involved in the plot?

Significance of Homegrown Terrorism

Although homegrown terrorism is very rare, the fear that any individual could potentially be a terrorist makes it a serious threat. It is especially frightening that an individual is able to fit into society while actually holding radical and violent views. Right after Daniel Boyd was arrested, his neighbors and friends first rallied around him, claiming that there had been some kind of mistake and that Boyd was innocent. Moreover, one neighbor claimed that if Boyd was truly guilty of plotting and aiding terrorism, he was the “nicest terrorist” he had ever met.¹

A more recent and successful example of homegrown terrorism, the Boston Marathon bombers, accentuates the threat that homegrown terrorism poses to American society, especially because the brothers were able to blend into American society. Dzhokhar Tsarnaev especially was well liked by many that knew him. Both during and after the massive manhunt that took place in order to capture Dzhokhar, those that knew him spoke out and were shocked that he had been capable of such violence. Even though

¹ M.J. Stephey. “Daniel Boyd: A Homegrown Terrorist?” *Time*. 30 July, 2009. Web Accessed. <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1913602,00.html>

the number of casualties was low in this specific attack, the sheer fact that these two young men were able to pull off an attack on American soil highlights the danger of homegrown terrorism. Therefore, this attack grabbed the American media's attention for weeks following the attack. The seemingly "normalness" of the Boyd family and the Tsarnaev brothers causes one to draw the question of why and how these individuals get to the point where they are willing to plot or commit terrorist acts.

Research Question and Thesis Goal

In this thesis, I hope to answer why and how Daniel Boyd radicalized, as well as his influence on the other seven group members. Moreover, I will explore Daniel's sons, Zak and Dylan, and their pathways to radicalization to determine whether or not they reached the final step of the radicalization process. I will also describe how their father played a key role in each of their processes. I will use radicalization processes already laid out by terrorism experts as well as my own research into the case of Daniel Boyd and the other seven men in the Raleigh Jihadi group to attempt to explain the reasons and the course of action in which the Boyds radicalized. I will connect the literature to the case of Daniel Boyd to argue that even though parts of each theory can be applied to this case study, no one theory correctly describes what happened to this family. Moreover, each theory fails to clearly explain why individuals with similar circumstances to the Boyd family do not radicalize. Therefore, I conclude that the current terrorism research is inadequate and has a long way to go before we can truly understand how and why a seemingly "normal" individual becomes a homegrown terrorist.

Defining Key Terms

“Radicalization” is an important term that I will be using in explaining what happened to Daniel Boyd and potentially to his two sons, Dylan and Zakariya. For the purpose of this thesis, radicalization refers to the process in which at the last step, an individual believes that it is rational to commit a terrorist act and is willing to do so. “Mobilization” refers to the point in which an individual decides to commit a terrorist act. For this thesis, I will use the State Department’s definition of terrorism, which is “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.”² Another word that will often come up throughout the thesis is “jihad,” which in this context refers to “violent jihad.” For the purposes of this thesis, “violent jihad” is defined as the belief that Muslims are obligated to combat those that they believe are enemies to Islam. Moreover, I will be talking about terrorism in general; however, I will be focusing on Muslim homegrown terrorism in the United States. The term “homegrown terrorist” refers to an individual that either is born in the United States or has spent a significant amount of his or her life living in the United States and takes part in terrorist activities, typically against the United States.

Methodology

I will examine the case of the eight men involved in the Raleigh Jihadi Group. I will attempt to explain how and why Daniel Boyd and his sons, Dylan and Zakariya, radicalized to the point that they were plotting terrorist attacks and what steps were taken in each of their radicalization processes. I hope to explain whether Daniel, Dylan, and Zak radicalized separately or whether the group dynamic played a significant role in each

² U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Country Reports on Terrorism, April 30, 2007.

of their processes. Furthermore, I will discuss the impact that the leader of the group, Daniel Boyd, had on the radicalization processes of his two sons. Furthermore, six of the members were between twenty and twenty-four years old, accentuating the idea that the younger men may have looked to Daniel Boyd as a father figure and that his age may have been a determining factor in his ability to lead the group.

In the next chapter, I will describe radicalization pathways already laid out by a number of terrorism experts- both academic and governmental. The third chapter will consist of a narrative of the lives of the Daniel, Dylan, and Zakrayia Boyd, and their involvement in plotting to commit terrorist acts. In the fourth chapter, I hope to use the radicalization processes discussed and analyzed in the second chapter to help determine why, how, and to what extent the Boyd men radicalized. I will specifically focus on the backgrounds of each of the group members as well as attempt to pinpoint the time or times in which they began to move toward a more radical ideology. Furthermore, I hope to analyze why Daniel Boyd went from a seemingly normal high school football player who was raised Episcopalian and the son of a United States Marine, to a radical Jihadist who was willing to commit terrorist acts. Was it a specific moment of his life that moved him toward radicalization or was it many gradual steps over a long period of time? Was it because his Marine father left his family poor and destitute? Was it because his mother remarried a Muslim, or because he was in Pakistan at the end of the Afghanistan-Soviet war? Was it the loss of his son in a car accident in 2007 or was it all of these moments combined? Moreover, I hope to explain why and how Boyd began to recruit other members to his jihadist group, including Dylan and Zak.

In terms of research methodology, I reviewed in detail the case files from the trial, the *United States of America v. Daniel Boyd, Hysen Sherifi, Anes Subasic, Zakariya Boyd, Dylan Boyd, Jude Kenan Mohammad, Mohammad Omar Aly Hassan, and Ziyad Yaghi*. I also read through police files such as search warrants as well as press releases about the plea bargains and sentencing trials of each of the group members. I utilized PACER, an online database consisting of court documents from cases in the United States. Furthermore, I conducted interviews of individuals that knew Daniel, Zakariya, or Dylan on a personal or professional level.

Restrictions

It is important to note that because this case was a terrorism case, access to the court files was limited and I was unable to gain access to certain documents such as the psychological reports of the individuals. Additionally, Anes Subasic's trial is on going; therefore causing many court files related to him to be sealed. Moreover, due to rules set out by the Institutional Review Board, I was unable to interview those individuals involved or their family members.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter, I will first examine the literature that has already been written by experts in terrorism, and then provide a critical review of each of these documents. I will discuss the different approaches to the reasons why some Muslim American citizens radicalize to the point where committing acts of terrorism seems rational. Moreover, I will cover literature from both the academic community as well as from government organizations. Most of these experts agree that only a small percentage of those who radicalize can be considered psychologically impaired or insane. The differing backgrounds of the many individuals discussed by these authors accentuate the idea that there is no set path of radicalization in terms of how and why an individual radicalizes. Furthermore, the many different backgrounds of terrorists emphasize that there is not a specific type of person that will radicalize. Some of these explanations offer multiple reasons why an individual may radicalize and stresses the importance of the group dynamic. Other explanations put the radicalization process into a simple step-by-step process.

Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko

In *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us*, Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko discuss twelve different mechanisms that can cause an individual to radicalize. Specifically, they analyze how some people radicalize individually, while others do so within groups, or with a mass of people. The authors use many different types of examples to highlight these different pathways to radicalization-- from Muslim

terrorists to members of People's Will, a Russian terrorist organization whose goal was to kill the royal family, to radical Americans in the 1970's.³

First, McCauley and Moskalkenko offer six mechanisms that are at work that can cause an individual to radicalize including: a personal grievance, a group grievance, slippery slope, love, risk and status, and unfreezing. A personal grievance refers to an incident in which one or someone in which that person cares about experiences harm.⁴ Similarly, a group grievance occurs when "a group or cause the individual cares about" is threatened or harmed.⁵ The mechanism, the slippery slope, is described as an individual becoming more involved in a cause after first only contributing small involvement.⁶ McCauley and Moskalkenko also argue that love can play a part in one's radicalization by suggesting that "love for someone already radicalized can move an individual toward radicalization."⁷ Risk and status deals with the "attractions of risk-taking and status" while unfreezing refers to "loss of social connection" and its effect on radicalizing an individual.⁸

Moreover, they assert that group radicalization can occur due to group polarization, group competition, and group isolation. Group polarization refers to the idea that "discussion among like-minded individuals tends to move the whole group further in the direction initially favored."⁹ McCauley and Moskalkenko also assert that

³ McCauley and Moskalkenko

⁴ Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalkenko. *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us*. New York City, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2011. Print. P. 13.

⁵ McCauley and Moskalkenko, 21.

⁶ McCauley and Moskalkenko, 35.

⁷ McCauley and Moskalkenko, 49.

⁸ McCauley and Moskalkenko, 59-75.

⁹ McCauley and Moskalkenko, 95.

competition between different groups may also push groups to be more radical.¹⁰ Finally, they discuss the impact of group isolation, suggesting, “the power of group dynamics is multiplied to the extent that group members are cut off from other groups.”¹¹

Mass radicalization may happen to individuals because of jujitsu politics, hatred, or martyrdom. Jujitsu politics refers to the idea that “terrorists often count on government reactions to advance their cause.”¹² For example, al Qaeda utilizes footage of collateral damage caused by the American military as propaganda for recruiting new members. Hatred is described as the idea that terrorists portray their enemy as “less than human” in order to gain support.¹³ Finally, the authors highlight the idea that “a successfully constructed martyr can radicalize sympathizers for the martyr’s cause.”¹⁴

McCauley and Moskalenko immediately suggest that terrorists are not psychopathic and that the goal of their book is to “show how normal people can be moved toward criminal and violent behavior by normal psychology.”¹⁵ McCauley and Moskalenko draw a connection between individuals that radicalize by using a member of Peoples Will as an example of each of the twelve mechanisms. They then use the same process with a modern example consisting of Muslim terrorists. However, they also emphasize that there may be more than one mechanism at work in an individual’s radicalization process. This is best exemplified by Osama bin Laden where Bin Laden had the mechanisms of “group grievance, slippery slope, love, group polarization, group

¹⁰ McCauley and Moskalenko, 109.

¹¹ McCauley and Moskalenko, 130.

¹² McCauley and Moskalenko, 149.

¹³ McCauley and Moskalenko, 161.

¹⁴ McCauley and Moskalenko, 172.

¹⁵ McCauley and Moskalenko, 12.

conflict, and group isolation” at work.¹⁶ Furthermore, the authors point out that there are so many ways that the mechanisms can lead an individual to radicalization. They claim that the number of ways an individual can radicalize is “the number of ways in which [the] twelve mechanisms can combine.”¹⁷

Criticisms of Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalkenko

In the article, “Twelve Mechanisms of Terrorism?” Frederick Frese criticizes *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us*. Frese disagrees with McCauley and Moskalkenko’s early dismissal of psychopathy as the cause of terrorism. At the beginning of the book, the authors compare bin Laden to Ted Kaczynski; however, as Frese points out, “Ted Kaczynski was diagnosed with schizophrenia.”¹⁸ Furthermore, Frese argues that the authors claim that more than one mechanism can be at work during an individual’s radicalization. However, they fail to “clearly discuss how their mechanisms interact” and that “only rarely is one mechanism sufficient for radicalization.”¹⁹ Overall, Frese believes that *Friction* is lacking psychological research that could have made McCauley and Moskalkenko’s work much stronger. However, with the lack of research, “many readers may have reservations about accepting their outright dismissal of psychopathy as a possible factor at play on the part of many terrorists.”²⁰

Mitchel Silber and Arvin Bhatt

In “Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat,” the New York Police Department discusses the process in which western Muslim individuals radicalize. The

¹⁶ McCauley and Moskalkenko, 214.

¹⁷ McCauley and Moskalkenko, 218.

¹⁸ Frederick J. Frese. "Twelve Mechanisms Of Terrorism?." *PsycCRITIQUES* 56.52 (2011): *PsycCRITIQUES*. Web. 14 Apr. 2013.

¹⁹ Frese

²⁰ Frese

authors, Mitchel Silber and Arvin Bhatt, lay out a four-step process that they believe leads Muslim westerners to radicalize. The first step, pre-radicalization, marks the time before the individual adopts more radical and jihadist views. The second step, self-identification, marks the period of time in which the individual begins to explore different ideas, which include radical ideologies. The third step, indoctrination, is the step where the individual adopts the radical ideas, which get stronger and stronger over time. Finally, the last step, jihadization, is the step in which the individual radicalizes so much that they decide that they must participate in violent jihad to show their loyalty to the Muslim faith.²¹

Silber and Bhatt apply their four-step process in explaining five international cases as well as five cases in the United States in the report.²² The authors assert that not every homegrown terrorist follows the process in the same order and that some individuals abandon the process somewhere along the way and do not reach the final step of jihadization. However, “individuals who do pass through this entire process are quite likely to be involved in a terrorist act.”²³ Silber and Bhatt look into the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004, Amsterdam in 2004, London in 2005, Sydney in 2005, and Toronto in 2006 as their international case studies. Within these examples, the terrorists succeeded in pulling off an attack in Madrid, Amsterdam, and London. In Sydney and Toronto, the terrorists were caught before they succeeded in an attack. As evidenced by these case studies, Silber and Bhatt claim that both the environment and the candidates are very important in determining who will become radicalized. They argue that the environment

²¹ Silber and Bhatt, 6-10.

²² Mitchell Silber and Arvin Bhatt. “Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat.” New York City Police Department. 2007.

²³ Silber and Bhatt, 19.

of living in “enclaves of ethnic populations that are largely Muslim often serves as ‘ideological sanctuaries’ for the seeds of radical thought.”²⁴ Furthermore, the “candidates,” or those most susceptible to radical Muslim ideology, tend to live in these communities and tend to be young men from middle class families. However, Silber and Bhatt suggest that not all of those that are radicalized fall into these categories, just a majority of them. They found that from studying these five terrorist plots, the individuals shared many similarities. Some of these similarities included that they were “under the age of 35,” educated, male, “[had] ‘ordinary’ lives and jobs,” and were mostly from “second or third generation of their home country.”²⁵

Silber and Bhatt then turn to five case studies within the United States to suggest that these terrorists too radicalized by this four-step process. They examined the cases of the individuals in Lackawana, New York, Portland, Oregon, Northern Virginia, and two in New York City- the Herald Square Subway plot and the Al Muhajiroun Two. Furthermore, Silber and Bhatt suggest that the United States does not have as many Muslim majority diaspora communities within the country compared to the diaspora communities in Europe. Therefore, they argue that the steps of the radicalization process in the American cases are much less clear than the steps in the international cases.²⁶ None of the terrorists in the American examples were able to carry out their attacks before being caught by law enforcement. Moreover, Silber and Bhatt discuss how the Herald Square Plot has been the only example in New York City since September 11 that homegrown terrorists reached the final step of the radicalization process-jihadization.

²⁴ Silber and Bhatt, 22.

²⁵ Silber and Bhatt, 23.

²⁶ Silber and Bhatt, 56.

Travelling to the Middle East and South Asia and training in camps served as the point in which a number of these individuals reached the last step of the racialization process, in both American and foreign cases.

Criticisms of Mitchel Silber and Arvin Bhatt

The NYPD Report, “Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat,” has received a lot of criticism. The Brennan Center for Justice, a public policy and law institute at New York University Law School, published an article pointing out the shortcomings of the NYPD Report. In the article, “Concerns with the New York Police Department’s Report: ‘Radicalization in the West,’” the Brennan Center suggests that the five cases in the United States that were chosen as examples in the report were “handpicked” and “atypical cases.”²⁷ Furthermore, the Brennan Center suggests that the some of the religious “indicators of radicalization” in the report actually pose no threat to the security of the United States. Rather, these indicators laid out in the report may cause more “racial and religious profiling, which is harmful to both civil liberties and efforts to ensure national security.”²⁸ For example, by calling mosques “incubators,” the report is drawing a negative association between mosques and radical and violent Islam.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) also published an article discrediting the NYPD report. In the article, “Debunked NYPD Radicalization Report Just Won’t Die,” Mike German discusses the issues with American policymakers using the report. German asserts that Silber and Bhatt fail to explain how “‘unremarkable’

²⁷ “Concerns with the New York Police Department’s Report: ‘Radicalization in the West.’” 8 September 2009. Web accessed 13 April 2013.
<http://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/concerns-new-york-police-departments-report-radicalization-west>

²⁸ “Concerns with the New York Police Department’s Report: ‘Radicalization in the West.’”

people... become terrorists.”²⁹ Similar to the Brennan Center’s article, German claims that Silber and Bhatt basically suggest “that all Muslims were potential terrorists that needed to be watched.”³⁰ German also condemns Silber and Bhatt’s idea that diaspora communities serve as “ideological sanctuaries” for Muslims to radicalize because this idea generalizes all Muslims living in diaspora communities. Moreover, some of the “radicalization incubators” such as mosques being seen as dangerous and as a breeding ground for potential terrorists was also heavily criticized as being racist and anti-Muslim. In addition, German suggests that it was because of this report that the NYPD used racial profiling in conducting “mass surveillance of Muslim communities throughout the Northeast.”³¹

John Horgan

In *The Psychology of Terrorism*, John Horgan explores why individuals radicalize, why they remain part of a terrorist organization, and why some individuals stop engaging in terrorism. Horgan explains how psychopathy was associated with terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s; however, there has recently been a shift away from diagnosing terrorists as psychopaths.³² In addition, Horgan emphasizes that the progression to radicalization “is a gradual progression” and that it occurs over a long period of time.³³ Throughout the book, Horgan suggests that there is a solution to terrorism, which is a three-step process. First, one must define the word terrorism, which

²⁹ Mike German. “Debunked NYPD Radicalization Report Just Won’t Die.” ACLU. 11 February 2013. Web Accessed 13 April 2013. <http://www.aclu.org/blog/national-security-religion-belief/debunked-nypd-radicalization-report-just-wont-die>

³⁰ German

³¹ German

³² John Horgan. *The Psychology of Terrorism*. New York City, NY: Routledge, 2005. Print. P. 48.

³³ Horgan, 95.

has no agreed upon definition in the international community. Moreover, one must define the cause of terrorism, and then one must focus on the causes of these terrorist activities and what leads one to join a terrorist organization instead of simply focusing on the consequences that come with terrorism.

In terms of defining why an individual gets involved in terrorism, Horgan utilizes different psychology experiments. In particular, he focuses on experiments that were conducted in Germany in 1981 as well as Russell and Miller's study, which essentially defines the typical profile of a terrorist. In terms of why an individual becomes a terrorist, Horgan presents many possibilities. First, he discusses the "lures" or benefits in which the terrorist organization may offer to its members. These "lures" may lead an individual to want to join a terrorist organization.³⁴ Horgan also offers potential factors that may lead someone to become a terrorist on a more individual level. Specifically, he offers some "predisposing events" that may make it more likely for one to become a terrorist.³⁵ An individual's experience, as well as the "nature and extent of the individual's relevant early experience," are especially important in leading one to become a terrorist."³⁶ He further suggests that the community in which one lives and the "adult socialization" are also important factors in shaping an individual and shaping one's views. A community may encourage or discourage particular ideas, which increases the individual's likelihood to act a certain way.³⁷ Finally, the factors of "a sense of dissatisfaction or disillusionment with the individual's current personal or activity" and "the nature and range of competing alternatives and opportunities" are also important in

³⁴ Horgan, 90-95.

³⁵ Horgan, 102.

³⁶ Horgan, 102.

³⁷ Horgan, 102.

determining if an individual will become a terrorist and remain a part of the terrorist organization.³⁸

Criticisms of John Horgan

Similar to the other authors that I have already discussed, John Horgan fails to clearly explain why some individuals with certain circumstances radicalize while others with the same circumstances do not. He simply discusses the factors that may lead one to become a terrorist and the factors that lead one to remain a part of a terrorist organization. Moreover, in the *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, Nicholas Katers argues that some of the conclusions that Horgan makes from his research “are only generalizations from past terrorist activity.”³⁹

Marc Sageman

In *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*, Marc Sageman lays out a theory in which he believes an individual reaches radicalization. Similar to the NYPD radicalization report, Sageman offers a four-step process which an individual follows and then radicalizes. Sageman claims that there is an event that essentially triggers the first step in this process. He accentuates that this event could be something that the Muslim individual personally experienced or something they see in the news or hear about from someone else. The individual then tries to understand the event, and this can lead to more radical ideology because the individual may feel that this event was an attack against Islam. This triggering event and radical ideology then causes an individual to want to communicate with like-minded individuals and seek to find these

³⁸ Horgan, 102.

³⁹ Nicholas Katers. "The Psychology of Terrorism." *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 1.2 (2007): 149-50. *ProQuest*. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.

individuals.⁴⁰ This connection between these individuals leads to a group dynamic, which in turn can lead to terrorists acts by these groups. Moreover, Sageman emphasizes the threat of the Internet as a catalyst and how it can act as a place where radical individuals can meet and communicate.⁴¹ Finally, Sageman asserts that the impact of an individual that pushes others in a group to become violent and mobilize is very important in the radicalization process. Sageman also dismisses many theories and stereotypes typically associated with terrorism. In particular, he dismisses the idea that an individual is brainwashed into terrorism and that young Muslim men become terrorists because they are sexually frustrated. He claims that an individuals being able to brainwash “vulnerable youths” and lead them to radicalization is indeed a myth.⁴²

In his research, Marc Sageman found that about two-thirds of individuals that join terrorist groups have personal relationships with those in the group or with those that also join the group with the individual.⁴³ In the article, “The Normality of Global Jihadi Terrorism,” Marc Sageman discusses who is likely to join terrorist organizations. In particular, Sageman found from his data that “about seventy percent of the terrorists joined the jihad...in a country where they did not grow up.”⁴⁴ Sageman claims that there are two main groups of potential terrorists, those that are wealthy, educated young men and those that move to Europe or North America for economic purposes. Also, in this article, Sageman also offers his “bunch of guys” theory, in which he emphasizes the

⁴⁰ Marc Sageman. *Leaderless Jihad : Terror Networks in the Twenty-first Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. Print.

⁴¹ Sageman

⁴² Sageman, 50.

⁴³ Sageman, 66.

⁴⁴ Marc Sageman. “The Normality of Global Jihadi Terrorism.” *The Journal of International Security Affairs*. Spring 2005. Web accessed 12 April, 2013.
<http://www.securityaffairs.org/issues/2005/08/sageman.php>

immense importance of the group dynamic. Sageman claims that when like-minded individuals with radical ideology come together, they begin “resenting society at large which excluded them, developing a common religious collective identity, egging each other on into greater extremism.”⁴⁵

Criticisms of Marc Sageman

In a book review of *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*, Dan Cox criticizes Sageman’s work. Sageman actually admits to some of his work’s weaknesses, including the fact that his research only consists of “a limited number of al Qaeda operatives and ‘its findings may not be relevant to other types of terrorism.’”⁴⁶ Moreover, Cox claims that Sageman only focuses on a small number of al Qaeda members, especially since the group consists of thousands of individuals. Cox also argues that Sageman offers solid evidence in the first part of book; however, in the second part of the book, “the statistical analysis is conspicuously absent.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, there is “no appendix or online replication dataset...provided,” leading the reader to wonder how Sageman used data in his research.⁴⁸ In addition, Cox claims that Sageman’s conclusions are “utopian” and somewhat unrealistic as “eliminating historical and current discrimination against Muslims solely in Europe” is not very easily solvable.⁴⁹

Radicalization Dynamics: A Primer

⁴⁵ Sageman, Marc. “The Normality of Global Jihadi Terrorism”

⁴⁶ Dan G. Cox. "Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century." *Parameters* Autumn 2009: 127+. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 01 Apr. 2013.

⁴⁷ Cox

⁴⁸ Cox

⁴⁹ Cox

In 2012, the National Counterterrorism Center in Washington D.C. published “Radicalization Dynamics: A Primer.” The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) offers a process in which Muslim Americans radicalize. The author lays out a separate pathway to mobilization from the pathway to radicalization. The NCTC argues that the factors that determine whether or not an individual radicalizes are different and independent from the factors that determine if an individual mobilizes. First, the NCTC defines radicalization as “the process by which individuals come to believe that their engagement in or facilitation of nonstate violence to achieve social and political change is necessary and justified.”⁵⁰ On the other hand, mobilization refers to the process in which “radicalized individuals take action to prepare for or engage in violence or material support for violence to advance their cause.”⁵¹

The NCTC claims that there are many factors involved in the radicalization of an individual- personal factors, group factors, community factors, sociopolitical factors, and ideological factors. Though these factors can lead to radicalization, the NCTC argues that there are also catalysts and inhibitors that may encourage or discourage radicalization. These catalysts include “social media [and] familial and social networks” while the inhibitors include “law enforcement, community outreach, credible voices [and] family.”⁵² In addition, the NCTC offers catalysts and inhibitors in terms of mobilization. The catalysts include social media and encouragement by family and friends while the inhibitors include credible voices and positive family engagement.

⁵⁰ “Radicalization Dynamics: A Primer,” Washington, D.C.: National Counterterrorism Center (2012), p. 4.

⁵¹ “Radicalization Dynamics,” 4.

⁵² “Radicalization Dynamics,” 17-18.

According to the report, the factors that lead an individual to mobilization include: readiness to act, recognizing targets, opportunity, and capability. For example, many targets in Muslim terrorism include “symbols of Western dominance” and include both military and civilian targets.⁵³ Moreover, “access to training” and access to “resources” provides an individual with the opportunity to mobilize. Finally, having “acquired training” and having relevant “personal experience[s]” may allow an individual to be capable of mobilization.⁵⁴

Criticisms of “Radicalization Dynamics”

The article, “Radicalization Dynamics: a Primer,” describes factors that cause one to radicalize and a separate list of factors that lead one to mobilize. However, the author fails to offer a clear explanation of why some individuals that experience these factors radicalize while others that also experience them do not. Similarly, the NCTC fails to do this with mobilization as well. For example, many individuals experience at least one, if not many of the factors that the author suggests increase the likelihood to push an individual towards radicalization. And not very many of these individuals radicalize or mobilize.

Conclusion

There are many different pathways to radicalization laid out by experts in terrorism studies. Some of these authors, such as Silber and Bhatt and Marc Sageman, lay out a simple step-by-step process in which an individual may radicalize. Others, such as McCauley and Moskalenko, offer a more complex theory in which there can be many mechanisms at work leading an individual to radicalization. Furthermore, some of these

⁵³ “Radicalization Dynamics,” 7.

⁵⁴ “Radicalization Dynamics,” 8.

authors focus on terrorism and political violence in general, while others concentrate solely on Muslim terrorism. The NYPD Report: Radicalization in the West only focuses on Muslim homegrown terrorists in the western world, and the NCTC's report only focuses on Muslims living in the United States. Utilizing these different theories of why an individual might radicalize, I will show that the current literature fails to answer why and how a white, Christian man from Virginia radicalized to the extent that he became the leader of a jihadi group in North Carolina and plotted terrorist activities against Americans abroad. In addition, I hope to explain why and how Daniel Boyd's two sons, Dylan and Zakariya, became involved in the terrorist plot. Although each of these authors offer theories as to why an individual radicalizes, they each fail to successfully explain why other individuals with the same factors at play do not radicalize.

Chapter 3: The Story of the Boyd Family

Introduction

In Chapter 2, I discussed and analyzed the literature where experts have laid out different pathways to radicalization. In this chapter, I will offer the background of the case of Daniel Boyd, as well as the personal stories of Daniel Boyd and of his sons, Dylan and Zakariya. I will also give a brief overview of the case as well as summarize the major court documents, including: the indictment, trial transcripts, and memorandums written on the behalf of the defendants. In the next chapter, I will connect the literature with this case study to explore the group members' different pathways to radicalization.

The Story of the Boyd's

Daniel's Early Life Background

Daniel Boyd was born in 1970 and was one of five sons of a United States Marine. He spent part of his childhood living on the military base at Quantico in Virginia.⁵⁵ However, following the divorce of his parents, Boyd, his brothers, and his mother lived with very little money. His mother claimed in an interview that “she and the children were sometimes reduced to gathering leaves to make into soup in the living room fireplace because the electricity had been shut off.”⁵⁶ Moreover, Boyd's mother became involved with drugs and illicit sexual behavior, exposing Boyd and his brothers to this inappropriate lifestyle at a young age.⁵⁷ His mother eventually re-married to “a Washington lawyer and American Muslim named William Sadler” and settled in

⁵⁵ Interview, Source B.

⁵⁶ The Nicest Terrorist I Ever Met.

⁵⁷ Interview, Source B

Alexandria, Virginia.⁵⁸ Even though Boyd was raised Episcopalian as a child, he along with one of his brothers, converted to Islam because of the influence that Sadler had on their lives. Interestingly, Boyd claims that Sadler held anti-American views and shared these views with the boys.⁵⁹ Boyd's childhood consisted of growing up in the 1970s and 1980s. He played on a state championship football team at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia. However, when Boyd was about fifteen years old, he moved out of the house and began to live in a tent with his future wife, Sabrina. Eventually, Boyd's older brother, Charles, who was also a Muslim, took the two in.⁶⁰ Right after high school, Boyd married Sabrina, who "reportedly decided to convert to Islam just hours before the wedding."⁶¹

Boyd During and After the Soviet-Afghan War

Boyd's Islamic ideology became stronger when, in the 1980's, he moved to Boston, Massachusetts with his wife. Because of the Soviet-Afghan War, many Muslims around the world felt the need to help the mujahedeen against the Soviet Union.⁶² The United States government aided the mujahedeen and a number of American Muslims traveled to Afghanistan to take part in the war. Living in such a large city, Boyd heard many speakers in Boston that lectured about the need to travel to Afghanistan to aid Muslim brothers.⁶³ Boyd moved to Peshawar, Pakistan in 1989 along with his brother Charles, his wife Sabrina, and his two young sons, Dylan and Zak. He claimed that they moved in order to help his fellow Muslim brothers fighting the war in Afghanistan

⁵⁸ The Nicest Terrorist I Ever Met.

⁵⁹ Interview, Source B.

⁶⁰ Interview, Source B

⁶¹ Stephey. "Daniel Boyd: A Homegrown Terrorist?"

⁶² Interview, Source B.

⁶³ Interview, Source B

against the Soviet Union. However, the late 1980's marked the end of the Soviet Afghan war, which resulted in the removal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. It should be noted that there is a disagreement between the defense and prosecution about whether or not Boyd took part in the fighting. The prosecution argued that Boyd did take part in fighting against the Soviet Union; however, his involvement was exaggerated. The defense claims that Boyd arrived in Pakistan after the war had already ended and did not take part in the actual war. Instead, they argue that he wanted to be in the region because of the Soviet defeat. Although Sabrina Boyd shared many of Boyd's radical views, she and the young boys did not take part in any fighting.⁶⁴

The defeat of the powerful Soviet Union led to massive celebrations in the region and radical Islamists became more prevalent. Many jihadists from all over the world came to fight alongside their Muslim brothers against the Soviet Union. According to the indictment, "[Boyd] received military style training in terrorist training camps for the purpose of engaging in violent jihad" following the war.⁶⁵ The exact terrorist group is unknown; however, it is known that it was a Muslim jihadi terrorist organization. Furthermore, Boyd claims to have "met Abdullah Azzam," who was "a mentor of... al-Qaida head Osama bin Laden."⁶⁶ While in the region, Boyd's brother, Charles developed a drug problem.⁶⁷ Following the Soviet Afghan war, the two brothers were actually

⁶⁴ Interview, Source B.

⁶⁵ "Superseding Indictment." *United States of America v. Daniel Patrick Boyd, Hysen Sherifi, Anes Subasic, Zakariya Boyd, Dylan Boyd, Jude Kenan Mohammad, Mohammad Omar Aly Hassan, and Ziyad Yaghi*. September 24, 2009. P. 2.

⁶⁶ "Second Man Pleads Guilty in N.C. Terrorism Case." *Investigative Project on Terrorism*. June 7, 2011. <http://www.investigativeproject.org/2949/second-man-pleads-guilty-in-nc-terrorism-case>.

⁶⁷ Interview, Source B.

arrested and convicted in Pakistan for stealing from a bank in Peshawar in 1991.⁶⁸

However, the United States' State Department intervened and had the two brothers released. Because of this negative experience in Pakistan, Daniel Boyd decided to move his family back to the United States.

The Boyd's Return To the United States

Daniel, Sabrina, and their young sons moved back to the United States in 1991 and they moved around, and at times, they lived out of their car in many different places. However, in 1995, the family settled down in Willow Springs, North Carolina. This small town is located about thirty miles from the state capital, Raleigh. During his first few years back in the United States, Daniel Boyd initially struggled to adjust to American life after living in the excitement of the defeat of the Soviet Union.⁶⁹ However, he eventually began to "Americanize" and Islam was no longer as important to Boyd as it had been in Pakistan and Afghanistan.⁷⁰ In Willow Springs, Daniel and Sabrina now had five children- four sons and a daughter and Daniel began working in the drywall industry and once his sons were old enough to work, they helped their father. Following the American presence in the Muslim-majority countries of Afghanistan and especially Iraq, Islam again became important in Boyd's life. Moreover, Boyd opened up a small store called Blackstone Market in the fall of 2007, which sold food and Muslim materials including books.⁷¹ Boyd had a sign in Blackstone Market that read "We Support Our

⁶⁸ Interview, Source B.

⁶⁹ Interview, Source B.

⁷⁰ Interview, Source B.

⁷¹ Interview, Source A.

Troops,” however, it is important to note that the sign was referring to Muslim troops, not American troops.⁷²

The Boyd children alternated between being home schooled and attending public schools throughout their childhood.⁷³ Before 2005, the Boyd children lived a somewhat normal life. Carol Hewitt, who knew the Boyd’s, wrote that the Boyd children “had always been well dressed in the fashion of their youth.”⁷⁴

Key Years for the Boyd’s

The United States government began its investigation of Daniel Boyd in 2005 when the Muslim community alerted the government of Daniel’s radical views.⁷⁵ 2007 also marked a very important year in the lives of the Boyd’s. Luqman Boyd, the third oldest son, was killed in a fatal car accident as a teenager in April 2007. According to statements made by both Dylan and Zakariya, Daniel Boyd’s beliefs became more and more radical throughout the 2000’s prior to his arrest, mostly during Dylan’s college years, and following the death of Luqman Boyd.⁷⁶ It was also following Luq’s death that Daniel developed his alter ego that he called Saifullah, which means “sword of God.” Daniel claimed that he developed this personality in order to distract himself from the fact that he had lost a son. The Boyd family became much closer following Luq’s death

⁷² Interview, Source A.

⁷³ Dylan’s Sentencing Memorandum, 2.

⁷⁴ Defendant’s Sentencing Memorandum. United States of America v. Zakariya S. Boyd. United States District Court: Eastern District of North Carolina. December 13, 2011, 6.

⁷⁵ Interview, Source B.

⁷⁶ Defendant’s Sentencing Memorandum. United States of America v. Dylan Boyd. United States District Court: Eastern District of North Carolina. December 12, 2011.

and they turned to a stricter form of Islam, in which they prayed together, dressed more conservatively, and spent nearly all of their time together.⁷⁷

Dylan's Life During and After College

After graduating from high school in 2005, Dylan, the oldest son, attended North Carolina State University and began to study health and began to “learn phlebotomy, the study of drawing blood from veins.”⁷⁸ He worked as a phlebotomist while he was attending classes at NC State. As mentioned earlier, Luqman Boyd was killed in April 2007 while Dylan was in school. Later that same year, Daniel Boyd threatened Dylan because he believed Dylan was living too western of a lifestyle (“dating, drinking alcohol, socializing, playing video games”).⁷⁹ Boyd issued an “ultimatum” that “Dylan would either (a) give up his job at WakeMed, his schooling at NCSU, and Western ways and join the family in a strict, extremist Muslim life or (b) Dylan would be ‘excommunicated’ from the family.”⁸⁰ Therefore, Dylan dropped out of school and moved back into the family home in Willow Springs. Dylan never completed his college degree. Furthermore, in 2008, Daniel Boyd arranged a marriage between Dylan and a Muslim woman, both of whom lived with the Boyd’s following their marriage. Dylan was described in his sentencing memorandum and letters written on his behalf as being somewhat rebellious to Daniel Boyd and did not hold as strong of religious views as his father and the other members.⁸¹ Even Daniel Boyd and some of the other group members

⁷⁷ Interview, Source A.

⁷⁸ Dylan’s Sentencing Memorandum, 3.

⁷⁹ Dylan’s Sentencing Memorandum, 4.

⁸⁰ Dylan’s Sentencing Memorandum, 4.

⁸¹ Interview, Source A.

were hesitant to speak about the terrorist plots in front of Dylan. This will be further explored in the next chapter.

Zak's Life Before and During College

Zakariya, known as Zak and the second Boyd son, “accomplished the rank of Eagle Scout” while in high school and was an active member of his boyscout troop, and Daniel was the troop’s scoutmaster in 2008.⁸² Luq’s death also greatly affected Zak, as it did with Dylan. Luq and Zak were closest in age and were therefore “inseparable from an early age until the time of Luq’s death.”⁸³ Two month after the death of Luqman, Daniel Boyd and Zak Boyd travelled to Israel. The motivation for this trip is unknown; however, both men were refused entry to Israel after being held for fifteen hours in Tel Aviv.⁸⁴ Dylan Boyd travelled to Jordan to meet Daniel and Zak for the end of the trip. After high school graduation in 2008, Zak attended the University of North Carolina at Pembroke but only stayed for a year. He began dating a girl named Jordan Hewitt, of whom his father did not approve. Boyd believed that Zak could not live a strict Muslim lifestyle with a girl who was not Muslim. Because Zak’s parents found out about Jordan and his failing grades, Zak was afraid. Carol Hewitt, Jordan’s mother, wrote a letter to the court on behalf of Zak recalling an instance in which Zak ran away from home in 2009. She claimed that he “begged [his friend’s mother] to take him to another state and hide him from his father.”⁸⁵ Statements like these accentuate the power that Daniel Boyd had over the other group members, especially his sons. Unlike Dylan, Zak was described as being very religious and he and his father decided that it would be best for him to

⁸² Zak’s Sentencing Memorandum, 3.

⁸³ Zak’s Sentencing Memorandum, 6.

⁸⁴ Yaghi’s Sentencing Memorandum, 7.

⁸⁵ Zak’s Sentencing Memorandum, 5.

come home from UNC-Pembroke. Because of his involvement in drugs and sexual behavior, Zak believed that the way of life in college contradicted the Muslim faith and he therefore came home so that he could be a better Muslim.⁸⁶

Backgrounds of Those Arrested with The Boyd's

Ziyad Yaghi and Omar Hasan

Besides Daniel, Zakariya, and Dylan Boyd, five other men were included in the indictment. Ziyad Yaghi, who was twenty-one years old at the time of his arrest, lived with his mother in Raleigh and was enrolled in classes at Wake Tech. Yaghi had a criminal record, including a “felonious restraint” and theft charges.⁸⁷ Yaghi met Dylan Boyd in Raleigh through their mutual friend, Mohammad Omar Aly Hasan, another member of the group. Mohammad Omar Aly Hasan, known as Omar, was born in New Jersey but grew up in North Carolina and attended Al-Iman Islamic School, which is part of the Islamic Center of Raleigh, North Carolina. For high school, he attended a public school in Cary where he wrestled and played soccer. After graduating from high school around 2005, Hasan enrolled in classes at North Carolina State University and “majored in sociology and psychology.”⁸⁸ While taking classes, he also had many part time jobs including working at a UPS store, refereeing soccer games, and helping his father with his car business. According to Hasan’s sentencing memorandum, he was an active member of the Islamic Association of Raleigh. While attending North Carolina State

⁸⁶ Interview, Source A.

⁸⁷ “Boyd’s Co-Defendants’ Histories Come to Light,” *News & Observer*, August 5, 2009.

⁸⁸ Defendant Hassan’s Sentencing Memorandum and Request for Downward Departure and Downward Variance. United States of America v. Mohammad Omar Aly Hassan. United States District Court: Eastern District of North Carolina. January 11, 2012. p. 7

University, Hasan met and “religiously married” Sonya Zaghoul. The two did not get legally married; however, because the families would not approve the marriage.⁸⁹

According to Daniel Boyd’s testimony, Boyd and Yaghi met in 2006. Later the same year, Ziyad Yaghi traveled from North Carolina to Israel and stayed in touch with Hasan during this short trip. The exact reason for this trip is unknown. In early 2007, after returning to North Carolina, Yaghi, introduced Hassan to Daniel Boyd. The three had conversations about “contemporary scholars and had discussions about jihad and obligations.”⁹⁰ These conversations occurred both at the Boyd home and in other locations. In 2007, Boyd ordered tickets for Yaghi and Hassan to travel to Israel. However, according to Daniel Boyd’s testimony, Hasan did not keep in touch with Boyd after the summer of 2007 and only saw him on occasion. During the short period of time in which Boyd and Omar stayed in touch, Yaghi and Hassan also “departed Raleigh for Tel Aviv, Israel.”⁹¹ It has also been alleged that the trip was made in order to “attempt to engage in violent jihad.”⁹² However, both Yaghi and Hassan were denied entry into Israel. Moreover, in Daniel Boyd’s testimony, he claimed that “he did not communicate or have any dealings with Yaghi after the summer of 2007 overseas trip.”⁹³

Anes Subasic, Hysen Sherifi, and Jude Kenan Mohammad

Anes Subasic was thirty-three at the time of the arrest and was a naturalized U.S. citizen living in North Carolina. Subasic was from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and

⁸⁹ Hassan’s Sentencing Memorandum, 10.

⁹⁰ Defendant Ziyad Yaghi’s Sentencing Memorandum. United States of America v. Ziyad Yaghi. United States District Court: Eastern District of North Carolina. January 3, 2012, p. 5.

⁹¹ Yaghi’s Sentencing Memorandum, 1.

⁹² Yaghi’s Sentencing Memorandum, 1.

⁹³ Yaghi’s Sentencing Memorandum, 3.

had a criminal record in BiH. He was charged with attempted murder and robbery in BiH and when Bosnian authorities came to arrest him, he had set up a booby trap in his apartment with many explosives.⁹⁴ During the trial, Subasic was also found guilty of lying on his immigration papers. It is unknown exactly when Subasic became involved with the Boyd family; however, meetings between Subasic and Boyd normally took place at Blackstone Market, Daniel Boyd's store in the late 2000s.⁹⁵ There are many recordings in which Daniel Boyd and Subasic discuss jihad, many of which were in code. In particular, they discussed sending Dylan and Zak overseas to take part in violent jihad.⁹⁶ They wanted Dylan and Zak to travel overseas and commit violent acts against Americans and others who they believed were the enemies of Islam.

Hysen Sherifi was the seventh member of the Raleigh Jihadi group and was twenty-four at the time of the arrest. Sherifi was from Kosovo and was not an American citizen. However, he obtained United States legal permanent residence and his family decided to settle down in North Carolina. He graduated from Sanderson High School in 2003 and took courses at Wake Tech.⁹⁷ Sherifi did not meet Daniel Boyd until April 2008, when he met both Daniel and Dylan Boyd. After meeting the Boyds it only took Sherifi four days to accept "jihad as a duty."⁹⁸ Moreover, Daniel Boyd sent emails to Sherifi containing radical literature. Soon after receiving the email and a brief

⁹⁴ Interview, Source B.

⁹⁵ Interview, Source A.

⁹⁶ U.S. v. Boyd (E.D.N.C), No. 5:09-CR-216-1-FL, Superseding Indictment, Filed September 24, 2009, and U.S. v. Boyd (E.D.N.C), No. 5:09-CR-216-1-FL, Government Exhibit 30.

⁹⁷ Rolin Mainduddin. "Triangle Terror Cell (North Carolina): Case Study: Hysen Sherifi." *Department of Political Science North Carolina Central University*. August 8, 2011. P. 1.

⁹⁸ Majinduddin, 1.

correspondence, Sherifi donated hundreds of dollars to Daniel Boyd in support of his cause to commit terrorist acts abroad and his radical ideas.⁹⁹ In addition, Boyd gave Sherifi a book titled *Defense of Muslim Lands* by Abdullah Azzam.¹⁰⁰

Jude Kenan Mohammad was twenty-one at the time of the arrest, but was not arrested because he had already travelled to Pakistan to engage in violent jihad. Mohammad was not an American citizen and moved from Pakistan to North Carolina. In 2007, he met Dylan Boyd and later was introduced to Daniel Boyd.¹⁰¹ Since he was not arrested along with the other group members, very little of his personal information is available. In the summer of 2013, Mohammad was killed by an American drone strike in Pakistan.

The Years Leading Up to the Arrest

The year that Dylan was forced to drop out of college and come home to Willow Springs was the same year as Luqman's death. As mentioned earlier, this year, 2007, marked a drastic change in Daniel Boyd and the Boyd family in general. The family became much closer and turned to Islam following Luq's death. The family began to practice a stricter version of Islam, always eating together, praying throughout the day, reading religious texts, watching religious videos, and dressing more conservatively.¹⁰² Moreover, Daniel began inviting young Muslim men over to their home in order to talk about his achievements and experiences fighting alongside the mujahedeen during the Afghan-Soviet War. The men would camp out and discuss Islam while Daniel would

⁹⁹ NEFA Foundation, "The NC Jihad Cell and the Quantico Marine Base Plot, Daniel Patrick Boyd: Hysen Sherifi."

¹⁰⁰ Mainduddin, 5.

¹⁰¹ Declan Walsh and Daniel Nasaw, "American Jihad or FBI Blunder? The Riddle of the "North Carolina Taliban," *The Guardian*, September 3, 2009.

¹⁰² Interview, Source A.

also teach them survival skills. According to Zak's testimony, the men at the campout "fished, wrestled, ate by the fire," and listened to Daniel speak "about his experiences in Afghanistan."¹⁰³ When federal agents found the computers from the Boyd house, there was also evidence that Daniel and the other individuals watched extremist videos. In particular, they watched beheading videos and listened to speeches from Anwar al-Awlaki, who was infamous for recruiting "Western" individuals to engage in terrorism.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, according to Zak Boyd, Daniel would test the extremeness of the men at the campouts by seeing how far they would go in their radical beliefs.¹⁰⁵

According to Zak Boyd, Daniel Boyd had phases in which he would recruit individuals to join his so-called inner circle. In the first phase, he would get to know the individual and "determine one's extremeness."¹⁰⁶ Then, if they passed on to the next phase, he would invite them over to his home and get to know them better. Finally, they would discuss jihad and "different options for jihad."¹⁰⁷ Daniel Boyd then began to form closer relationships with those that he believed to share his views. These men included not only those indicted members of the Raleigh Jihadi group but also informants who were reporting to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Moreover, those that became involved in the terrorist plot began to meet at the Boyd home as well as at the Blackstone Market, the store that Daniel Boyd owned.¹⁰⁸ During many of these meetings, FBI informants recorded the conversations, which were used as evidence during the trials. In addition to teaching the men survival skills, Daniel Boyd also taught the men how to use

¹⁰³ Yaghi's Sentencing Memorandum, 12.

¹⁰⁴ Interview, Source A.

¹⁰⁵ Interview, Source A.

¹⁰⁶ Yaghi's Sentencing Memorandum, 13.

¹⁰⁷ Yaghi's Sentencing Memorandum, 13.

¹⁰⁸ Interview, Source A.

weapons, in particular, how to use automatic rifles at his home and at different properties. For example, in 2008, Daniel Boyd took Sherifi and Zak to a “private property in Caswell County” in order to practice “military tactics and the use of weapons.”¹⁰⁹ Moreover, since Daniel Boyd had been asked to stop attending the Islamic Center in Raleigh, he began having his own services in which a number of these men attended.¹¹⁰ Additionally, prior to their arrest, the Boyd family began making plans to move to the Middle East. However, Dylan Boyd refused and told his father that he was going to stay in the United States with his wife.¹¹¹

How Were the Men Caught?

From 2006 to 2009, there were many instances and events that would lead the government to figure out that this group of men was dangerous. As mentioned earlier, Boyd, his two sons, and other group members travelled multiple times to Israel and other Middle Eastern countries. Boyd lied to the customs agents and the Federal Bureau of Investigation agents about his reason for travelling to Israel. Furthermore, Boyd had “ideological differences” to the Islamic Center in Raleigh, and individuals at the Islamic Center first alerted the authorities.¹¹² This accentuates the idea that his beliefs were becoming more and more radical. Furthermore, according to many court documents as well as an article in the Raleigh newspaper, *The News and Observer*, there were informants that acted as part of the group that had been reporting to the government about Boyd’s behavior and radical thoughts for years. According to many news sources, as

¹⁰⁹ NEFA Foundation, “The NC Jihad Cell and the Quantico Marine Base Plot, Daniel Patrick Boyd: Training.”

¹¹⁰ Interview, Source B.

¹¹¹ Interview, Source A.

¹¹² Interview, Source B.

well as the website for the Investigative Project, the informants wore a listening device in order to gather evidence for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The recordings, some of which can be found on the Investigative Project's website, consist of instances in which Boyd and the other members are training with weapons or talking in coded messages. It is interesting to note that Daniel Boyd contacted the authorities on his own as well in 2007. However, he only contacted the federal government after he realized that he and his family were being followed by agents.¹¹³

Background of the Case

On July 27, 2009, Daniel Boyd and his two sons were arrested along with four other men. Just days later, they were indicted and the seven men were officially charged with "conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and conspiracy to murder, kidnap, maim, and injure persons in a foreign country."¹¹⁴ Some of the men received additional charges, which I will discuss later in this chapter. The men included in the arrest were Daniel Boyd, Dylan Boyd, Zakariya Boyd, Anes Subasic, Mohammad Omar Aly Hassan, Ziyad Yaghi, Hysen Sherifi, and Jude Kenan Mohammad. It is important to note; however, that Jude Kenan Mohammad was in Pakistan during the arrests and therefore was only included in the warrant. The eight men allegedly practiced with one another in the use of weapons as well as training. Moreover, North Carolina federal agents issued warrants for Daniel Boyd and the other men indicted for conspiring to commit terrorist acts abroad. The police and Federal Bureau of Investigation found multiple weapons and boxes of ammunition in the possession of Daniel Boyd and the

¹¹³ Interview, Source A.

¹¹⁴ "North Carolina Resident Daniel Patrick Boyd Sentenced for Terrorism." 24 August, 2012. Web Accessed. 8 March, 2013.
http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/2042.pdf.

other members of the group. According to Daniel Boyd's indictment, he had "spent the past three years stockpiling weapons."¹¹⁵

The Indictment

In the trial, the eight individuals were indicted for providing material support, which included "currency, training, transportation, and personnel" as well as for "conspiracy to murder, kidnap, maim or injure persons in a foreign country."¹¹⁶ The indictment also lays out five parts in the manner and means section of the indictment, which further explains the "conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists," which was the first count of which the group was charged. The men planned to engage in violent jihad and some defendants were also responsible for radicalizing other defendants and expressing that "jihad was a personal obligation on the part of every good Muslim."¹¹⁷ Moreover, the indictment claims that the defendants conspired to engage in weapons training and provide financial support to fund terrorist activities. Additionally, the defendants conspired to "obtain weapons like the AK-47, to develop familiarity and skills with the weapons of choice used by *mujihadeen* in Afghanistan and elsewhere."¹¹⁸

Counts Two Through Seven

The seven men were also indicted for "knowingly, willfully, and unlawfully [conspiring] with one another...to commit outside the United States an act that would constitute murder, that is, the unlawful killing of human beings with malice aforethought, kidnapping, maiming, and injuring."¹¹⁹ This conspiracy is highlighted by the amount of

¹¹⁵ M.J. Stephey

¹¹⁶ Superseding Indictment, 3-11.

¹¹⁷ Superseding Indictment, 5-6.

¹¹⁸ Superseding Indictment, 5.

¹¹⁹ Superseding Indictment, 10.

travel to and from Israel that the group members performed from 2006 to 2009. Daniel Boyd was indicted with a count of “receiving firearm through interstate commerce” and Boyd, Sherifi, and Zakariya Boyd were charged with “possession of firearm in furtherance of crime of violence.”¹²⁰ Boyd and his son, Dylan, were indicted for the “knowing sale of firearm to convicted felon.”¹²¹ Boyd was also indicted in two counts of “false statements,” both about the reasons Boyd travelled to Israel.¹²²

Counts Eight Through Eleven

Count Eight, Count Nine, and Count Ten all consisted of charges relating to possessing and providing firearms. Count Eleven; however, dealt with Daniel Boyd and Hysen Sherifi’s role in a “conspiracy to kill [a] federal officer or employee.”¹²³ Specifically, the two men plotted to attack the Marine Corps Base at Quantico, Virginia. The Superseding Indictment claims that Boyd “conducted ‘reconnaissance’ at...Quantico.”¹²⁴ Additionally, Boyd acquired a weapon in which according to the recordings or FBI informants, was to be “for the base,” which is how he referred to the plot to attack Quantico.¹²⁵ Moreover, Agent Michael Sutton testified that Boyd made many comments about carrying out jihad. In particular, Sutton testified that Boyd said, “if I don’t leave this country soon, I am going to make jihad right here in America.”¹²⁶

Traveling Abroad and Other Important Events Leading up the Arrests

¹²⁰ Superseding Indictment, 12-13.

¹²¹ Superseding Indictment, 14.

¹²² Superseding Indictment, 14.

¹²³ Superseding Indictment, 18.

¹²⁴ Superseding Indictment, 19.

¹²⁵ Superseding Indictment, 19.

¹²⁶ “Carolina Jihad Suspect Talked of Domestic Attacks.” *The Investigative Project on Terrorism*. August 4, 2009. <http://www.investigativeproject.org/1346/carolina-jihad-suspect-talked-of-domestic-attacks>

The indictment further discusses many instances in which the defendants, mainly Boyd, travelled abroad in order to train or further the plans for terrorist activities. Boyd alone travelled multiple times to Israel in order to train and make contacts abroad. He also bought plane tickets for his two sons, Dylan and Zakariya, to travel to Israel in order to “introduce [them] to individuals who also believed that violent jihad was a personal obligation on the part of every good Muslim.”¹²⁷ Yaghi also travelled to the Middle East allegedly to wage violent jihad.

The indictment also outlines many other events that occurred leading up to the arrests of these individuals. For example, several coded conversations were included in the indictment as well as instances in which Daniel Boyd lied to customs agents and the FBI about his intentions when travelling to Israel. Moreover, another comment worth noting which can be found in the indictment is that, in 2009, Boyd “stopped attending services at the masjids in the Raleigh, North Carolina area due to ideological differences.”¹²⁸ He was allegedly asked to leave by leaders within the mosque because of his outspoken radical views.

Pleading Guilty

At first, the Boyd men did not even want to consider a plea bargain. They wanted to remain strict in their anti-American beliefs and not cooperate with the United States government. However, Daniel started to realize that his sons would spend their lives in prison and he began to take responsibility for his actions as well as for their actions.¹²⁹ Therefore, the three Boyd’s met multiple times before the trial in order for Daniel to

¹²⁷ Superseding Indictment, 5.

¹²⁸ Superseding Indictment, 9.

¹²⁹ Interview, Source A.

convince his sons to take a plea deal. Zak and Dylan had a hard time agreeing to a plea deal because they knew that if they agreed, they would further incriminate their father and did not want to betray him.¹³⁰ After these meetings, Daniel Boyd decided to plead guilty, then Zak, and finally Dylan. Dylan struggled with his decision to plead guilty because he did not believe that he had done anything wrong and had a hard time understanding that it was the conspiracy that he was arrested for, not any action.¹³¹ It is interesting to note that Islam continued to be very important to Zak Boyd, and it was only after much convincing that Zak would agree to shave his beard for his court appearances.¹³²

Daniel Boyd and his two sons, Dylan and Zakariya, all pled guilty to the charge of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists. Daniel Boyd also pled guilty to a second charge of conspiracy to commit murder, maiming and kidnapping overseas. Specifically, Daniel Boyd “admitted his role in a multi-year conspiracy to advance violent jihad by recruiting and helping young men travel overseas to murder, kidnap, maim and injure persons.”¹³³ Daniel agreed to a plea bargain in which his sentence was reduced from a possible life sentence to up to fifteen years in prison.¹³⁴ Within the plea bargain, Boyd was only indicted for conspiring to commit acts abroad and the other eight charges were dismissed, including the conspiracy to attack the Marine Base at

¹³⁰ Interview, Source A.

¹³¹ Interview, Source A.

¹³² Interview, Source A.

¹³³ Robin Zier, “Raleigh Area Man Pleads Guilty to Terrorism Charges.” U.S. Department of Justice. February 9, 2011.

¹³⁴ United States of America v. Daniel Patrick Boyd: Memorandum of Plea Agreement. 9 February, 2011. United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina Western Division. Web Accessed 8 March, 2013.
http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1480.pdf

Quantico.¹³⁵ Boyd was responsible for recruiting his two sons as well as the five other men involved in the terrorist group. Four of the other men, Anes Subasic, Mohammad Omar Aly Hassan, Ziyad Yaghi, and Hysen Sherifi all appeared in trials and were found guilty. Daniel, Dylan, and Zakariya all testified in the trials of the other group members as part of their plea bargains.

Sentencing

Instead of being charged with eleven counts, Daniel Boyd was only charged with two counts. Therefore, he received 180 months on the charge of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and received 216 months on the charge of conspiracy to murder, kidnap, maim, and injure persons in a foreign country. Therefore, he received a sentence of 216 months in prison and he must be supervised for five years after he is released from prison.¹³⁶ Because of their plea deals, both Zak and Dylan received lesser sentences than the fifteen years they would have received. Zak was sentenced to nine years while Dylan was sentenced to eight years.

Conclusion

I have provided the background information of Daniel, Zak, and Dylan Boyd. Furthermore, I discussed the backgrounds of the other Raleigh Jihadi group members and how they came to be involved with Daniel Boyd and the plots to commit terrorist acts. I have also laid out the case of the United States of America v. Daniel Boyd as well as the case of the United States of America v. Daniel Patrick Boyd, Hysen, Sherifi, Anes Subasic, Zakariya Boyd, Dylan Boyd, Jude Kenan Mohammad, Mohammad Omar Aly

¹³⁵ Yaghi's Sentencing Memorandum, 8.

¹³⁶ "North Carolina Resident Daniel Patrick Boyd Sentenced for Terrorism Violations." U.S. Attorney's Office. August 24, 2012.

Hassan, and Ziyad Yaghi. With the information I have provided in this chapter, I hope to track the radicalization processes of Daniel, Dylan, and Zak Boyd, and to find out whether or not their pathways fit into radicalization processes already laid out by terrorism experts, which I discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 4: Connecting the Literature to the Boyd's

Introduction

In this chapter, I will offer possible events and ideas that may have played a role in the radicalization processes of Daniel, Dylan, and Zak Boyd and whether they all reached the last phase of radicalization. As defined in Chapter 1, radicalization refers to the point in the radicalization process in which an individual believes that it is rational to and he or she is willing to commit an act of terrorism. Furthermore, I will use these events and ideas to ascertain whether the literature I discussed in Chapter 2 successfully describes the radicalization processes of Daniel Boyd and his sons.

Connecting the Literature to the Boyd's Radicalization

Daniel Boyd's Childhood

Daniel Boyd's difficult childhood may have contributed to his pathway to radicalization. McCauley and Moskaleiko's mechanism of a personal grievance is clearly evident during Boyd's childhood. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Boyd and his brothers lived with their mother following their parents' divorce. His mother did not have enough money to support her children and they were therefore unable to live a comfortable lifestyle. Moreover, she was involved in the drug and sex scene, exposing Boyd to this lifestyle at a young age. It is also possible that the fact that his father was a U.S. Marine may have been a contributing factor in leading Boyd to negatively view American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. Boyd's father essentially abandoned Boyd, his brothers, and Boyd's mother, leaving them with very little money.

In addition, Boyd's stepfather, William Sadler, had radical Muslim views and strongly disliked America, according to Boyd.¹³⁷ The exposure to these views could have possibly led Boyd to adopt a more radical interpretation of Islam. After converting to Islam, Boyd moved out of his home and lived in a tent with Sabrina during his teenage years. This could be seen as a personal grievance or as a triggering factor because Boyd felt that he could no longer live in his mother's home. Moreover, Daniel and his future wife, Sabrina, lived in a tent until Boyd's brother, Charles, took them in. Charles too was a Muslim and had converted after their mother remarried. Charles offered an atmosphere in which Boyd's Muslim faith could flourish.

Daniel Boyd in Pakistan and Afghanistan

As I mentioned in Chapter 3, Daniel Boyd, along with Sabrina, their two young sons, and his brother, Charles, moved to Pakistan in the late 1980's around the time of the end of the Afghan Soviet War. McCauley and Moskalenko's mechanisms of mass radicalization may have played a key role during this part of Boyd's life. Specifically, the idea of martyrdom led many Muslims around the world to want to protect their Muslim brothers and sisters from the invading force of the Soviet Union. Living in the big city of Boston and being exposed to mujahedeen speakers furthered this idea of martyrdom and led Charles and Daniel to move to Pakistan with his wife and children. In addition, Daniel Boyd allegedly attended mujahedeen training camps near Boston before travelling to fight in the war.¹³⁸ Furthermore, McCauley and Moskalenko's mechanism of group grievance can also be applied here. As defined in Chapter 3, a group grievance refers to a grievance felt by a particular group, even if each individual is not directly

¹³⁷ Interview, Source B.

¹³⁸ Interview, Source B.

affected. Like many other Muslims around the world, Daniel Boyd and his brother travelled to fight alongside their Muslim brothers against the invading force of the Soviet Union. In this particular situation, Muslims are the group and the Soviet Union invading a Muslim majority country is the grievance. Boyd claims to have fought alongside them and was regarded as a Muslim hero to many young Muslims that he mentored in the Raleigh area, including some of those that were members of the Raleigh Jihadi group. Boyd was known among fellow Muslims as having been a mujahedeen who fought against the Soviet Union. It is not surprising, however, that Boyd would have claimed to have fought in the war or exaggerate his role in the war, because Muslims from all over the world came together to fight against the Soviet Union. The excitement following the victory led to an increase in radical views in Afghanistan and among many Muslims in general. Therefore, Boyd was exposed to these radical views in a celebratory way following the victory.

The idea that Daniel Boyd wanted fellow Muslims to believe that he fought in the Afghan-Soviet War alongside other Muslims demonstrates the mechanism of risk and status at work as well. McCauley and Moskalenko claim that “the attractions of risk-taking and status can move individuals... to radical political action.”¹³⁹ Boyd’s charismatic personality and desire to be considered a hero pushed him to enhance his status as a Muslim. Therefore, he told other Muslims, especially young men, that he had fought in the Afghan-Soviet war and exaggerated his experiences. Because of this experience, many of these young men sought guidance from Boyd because they believed he knew what it meant to be a true Muslim.

¹³⁹ McCauley and Moskalenko, 58.

Moreover, Horgan's factor of experience can also be applied here in terms of Daniel Boyd's radicalization process. The fact that Daniel Boyd was able to spend time in a Muslim majority country at the time of the defeat of the Soviet Union gave him the experience of fighting alongside his Muslim brothers. Horgan's idea of community may also be employed here for the same reason. Following the victory in Afghanistan, the level of excitement among Muslims was high and the desire to keep out a foreign force was strong. Although Daniel Boyd and his brother moved to Pakistan with the hopes of fighting alongside their Muslim colleagues against the Soviet Union, they decided to remain there after the war had been won. This sense of community among Muslims, especially those living in the Afghanistan and Pakistan region, led to a great sense of unity among Muslims. Charles became involved in drugs while in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which may have led to a distancing in the relationship between him and Daniel. However, the two were arrested for theft and were sentenced by a Pakistani court. The arrest of Daniel Boyd and his sentencing in Pakistan may have also been a time in his life where his views became more radical. However, the United States government became involved in the arrest of the two brothers and made a deal with the Pakistani courts in order to free them.

Daniel Boyd in the United States

After returning to the United States, the financial situation of the Boyd family could be regarded as a personal grievance, a factor which McCauley and Moskaleiko describe in *Friction*. Daniel Boyd returned to the United States after he had been arrested in Pakistan along with his brother. When Boyd, Sabrina, and their young sons returned to the United States, they were forced to move around and had to live out of their car at

times. For years, Daniel Boyd was unable to provide for his family and had to apply for bankruptcy. When the Boyd family finally settled down in Willow Springs, North Carolina, Daniel Boyd began to “Americanize,” and it was not until after the 2003 invasion of Iraq that Islam once again became a key part of his life.¹⁴⁰ Because Daniel Boyd was willing to fight alongside the Muslims fighting against the Soviets in Afghanistan, it is possible that he again felt the desire to fight alongside the Muslims in Iraq fighting against the United States.

Horgan’s factor of “a sense of dissatisfaction or disillusionment with the individual’s current persona or activity” can be applied to the development of Saifullah.¹⁴¹ When Daniel Boyd began to give more attention to Islam, he began to develop a somewhat alternate personality, which he calls Saifullah. According to neighbors and others that knew him, he would quickly shift his personality depending on who his audience was. For example, his neighbors, who were not Muslims, viewed him as a “normal” man who was looked up to by others living in the neighborhood. On the other hand, when he was around Muslims, especially young Muslim men, his Saifullah alter ego would come out.

The 2003 Invasion of Iraq

The 2003 Invasion of Iraq may have pushed the individuals in the Raleigh Jihadi group towards radicalization. Although the group had not yet formed as early as 2003, it is possible that a number of the group members felt a grievance when the United States invaded a Muslim majority country. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Daniel Boyd did not support the invasion and had a sign in his store, Blackstone Market, saying “support our

¹⁴⁰ Interview, Source C.

¹⁴¹ Horgan, 102.

troops.” However, Daniel Boyd was not referring to the American troops abroad; rather, he was referring to the Muslims fighting against the Americans. McCauley and Moskalenko’s group grievance can also be applied here, similar to the Soviet-Afghan War. They assert that “threat or harm to a group or cause the individual cares about can move the individual to hostility and violence towards perpetrators.”¹⁴² In this case, the individuals may see their Muslim brothers in Iraq being invaded by the United States, who they may view as the perpetrator.

In addition, the National Counterterrorism Center’s pathway to radicalization and mobilization can also be employed here. The invasion of Iraq may have given Daniel Boyd and other members of the Raleigh Jihadi group the “readiness to act” factor that the NCTC argues can lead an individual to mobilization. Additionally, Sageman’s first prong of radicalization, moral outrage, is also relevant to the invasion of Iraq. Sageman asserts that “strong motivational effects of hearing about or watching the suffering of fellow Muslims” can push an individual towards radicalization.¹⁴³ Moreover, two of Sageman’s other prongs of radicalization are also relevant in terms of Muslims being harmed at the hands of the United States. Sageman argues that if one’s moral outrage is intensified by a group of like-minded individuals and that they put this outrage “into a context that affects [the individual] personally,” it will lead “to his personal involvement.”¹⁴⁴ Muslims in general could make up this group because they may see that fellow Muslims are experiencing violence from the United States. Finally, if an individual resonates with a personal experience, one can be led to radicalization.

¹⁴² McCauley and Moskalenko, 21.

¹⁴³ Sageman, 72.

¹⁴⁴ Sageman, 75.

Sageman suggests that discrimination is the best example of this. Though there is no evidence of this, the Boyd's and the other members of the Raleigh Jihadi Group may have felt discriminated living in the United States with the strong presence of anti-Muslim sentiment.

Dylan and Zakariya's Childhood

In the National Counterterrorism Center's article, "Radicalization Dynamics: A Primer," the author suggests that family can act as either a catalyst or an inhibitor. Obviously, Daniel Boyd's radical views acted as a catalyst in terms of the radical acts of Dylan and Zakariya. Moreover, the lack of the presence of other family members may have prevented an extended family member from acting as an inhibitor, or a voice of reason, for Dylan and Zak. The family dynamics of the Boyds did not allow the children to receive guidance from anyone other than Daniel and their mother Sabrina, who also shared radical views. Additionally, Zak Boyd was very interested in religion and researched many different religions. However, when he talked to his father about any religion but Islam, Daniel Boyd shut down the conversation.¹⁴⁵

The Death of Luqman Boyd

Many of the experts that I discussed in Chapter 2 suggest that there is somewhat of a triggering event in an individual's life that may lead them to move to the next step in the radicalization process. Both Horgan's factors of experience and Sageman's theory of a triggering event can be applied to the death of Luqman Boyd. Not only did Luqman Boyd's death greatly affect Daniel Boyd, but it also affected Zakariya and Dylan. Even though Daniel Boyd's radical views became stronger following the American invasion in

¹⁴⁵ Interview, Source A.

Iraq, they intensified following the death of his son, Luq. The Boyd family turned to Islam as a way to try to understand this tragic event. Moreover, the family became closer and spent more time together. Daniel Boyd began to use the Saifullah personality significantly more following Luq's death in order to distract himself from the loss of his son.

The Effect of Daniel Boyd on Zak and Dylan

Daniel Boyd's influence on Dylan and Zakariya can possibly be described by McCauley and Moskalenko's theory of love being at work when once is radicalizing. As the authors write, "love for someone already radicalized can move an individual toward radicalization."¹⁴⁶ This statement emphasizes the idea that someone that one loves, whether it is a family member, friend, or lover, can push one to radicalize. The individual wants to impress the one that he or she loves and wants to get approval. This is very evident in the case of Dylan and Zakariya, because over and over in the letters on behalf of Dylan and Zakariya, this issue comes up. Those that knew the boys argued that they wanted so badly to gain approval from Daniel Boyd that "they did everything they could to please him."¹⁴⁷ The mechanism of love is evident even after they were arrested. Dylan and Zak Boyd did not want to plead guilty because they did not want to get their father into more trouble. Furthermore, McCauley and Moskalenko argue that once an individual joins a radical group, "love for friends and comrades in the group is likely to increase," furthering an individual's desire to impress his or her loved one.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ McCauley and Moskalenko, 49.

¹⁴⁷ Zak Boyd's Sentencing Memorandum, 6.

¹⁴⁸ McCauley and Moskalenko, 54.

The catalysts that are discussed in the National Counterterrorism Center's article can also be applied to Daniel Boyd's influence on Dylan and Zak. According to the NCTC, family can act as either a catalyst or an inhibitor in terms of an individual radicalizing and mobilizing. It is clear that in the case of Dylan and Zak, their immediate family served as a catalyst in encouraging them to radicalize and mobilize. The Boyd family practiced a strict and radical way of Islam and their father encouraged them to participate in travelling overseas and committing violent jihad. Moreover, the NCTC discusses inhibitors as well that may stop an individual from radicalizing and mobilizing. Though family can be a catalyst, it can also be an inhibitor. Because the Boyd family lived so far away from any relatives, Zak and Dylan had no one to turn to for advice except for their parents. Therefore, Zak and Dylan were not exposed to a voice of reason because of the family's isolation in the years leading up to the arrests. Moreover, the relationship between Zak and Dylan and their father exemplifies the "readiness to act" factor that the NCTC suggests can lead to mobilization. The author writes "motivation gained...as a result of established relationships" may lead to this readiness to act, which is accentuated by the controlling relationship between Daniel Boyd and his sons.¹⁴⁹

The Effect of the Group

Group dynamics is especially important in promoting radicalization and affecting the radicalization process. Group polarization, one of McCauley and Moskaleiko's twelve mechanisms, could be at play in the radicalization processes of the Raleigh Jihadi group. According to the authors, "discussion among like-minded individuals tends to

¹⁴⁹ "Radicalization Dynamics," 8.

move the whole group further in the direction initially favored.”¹⁵⁰ Boyd’s influence on the group members, his planned weapons training sessions, and his planned campouts created an atmosphere in which group polarization was able to function. Sageman’s theory of group dynamics can also be applied to the Boyd’s and the Raleigh Jihadi group. Sageman asserts that after a triggering event, an individual will try to find like-minded individuals in order to be around other people that understand them and their views. It is important to note that according to Sageman, one’s triggering event does not have to be an event that he or she experiences. It could also be something that he or she hears about. Therefore, the stories of Daniel Boyd’s experiences fighting alongside his Muslim brothers in Afghanistan may have influenced the radicalization of some of the other group members. Furthermore, following the American invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, Boyd and the other members viewed anti-American propaganda together, which may have also pushed them towards radicalization.

McCauley and Moskalenko’s mechanism of group isolation is also evident in terms of the Raleigh Jihadi group. Specifically, the authors suggest that “the power of group dynamics is multiplied to the extent that group members are cut off from other groups.”¹⁵¹ The campouts and meetings that Daniel Boyd held with the other members of the group isolated them from other groups and differing opinions. As mentioned earlier, Boyd was even asked to stop attending the Islamic Center of Raleigh because of his views. McCauley and Moskalenko suggest that if one is a member of multiple groups, the individual is exposed to “competing values,” however, if one is only exposed to one

¹⁵⁰ McCauley and Moskalenko, 95.

¹⁵¹ McCauley and Moskalenko, 130.

group, the group's "power over individual members is unlimited."¹⁵² The authors assert that the power an isolated group has over an individual is accentuated when the individual is removed from a familiar atmosphere. Even though they did leave the house for school, work, and social activities, the majority of their time was spent in the isolated atmosphere. Not only was the group isolated, but also the power of Daniel Boyd over the other members did not allow them to have differing opinions from his own. Additionally, Sageman's fourth prong of radicalization, mobilized by networks, is especially relevant in terms of Daniel Boyd's leadership of the group. Sageman claims that individuals may radicalize but they need a push to mobilize and act on these beliefs. Therefore, "they need some guidance, someone to take them to the next level of violent radicalization."¹⁵³

In addition, Sageman's "bunch of guys" theory is extremely relevant to the Raleigh Jihadi group. As I said in Chapter 2, when a group of like-minded individuals come together, they start to "[resent] society at large, which excluded them, developing a common religious collective identity, egging each other on into greater extremism."¹⁵⁴ The invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan by American forces, as well as the rise of anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States following September 11, may have caused them to feel "resented" by American society. Sageman found that two-thirds of those that join terrorist groups "were friends with other people who joined together or already have some connection to terrorism."¹⁵⁵ The connection to the group is obvious for Dylan and Zak since their father was the leader of the group. Moreover, in many of the backgrounds of the other group members, some of them became involved with Daniel Boyd through

¹⁵² McCauley and Moskalkenko, 138.

¹⁵³ Sageman, 84.

¹⁵⁴ Sageman, Marc. "The Normality of Global Jihadi Terrorism"

¹⁵⁵ Sageman, 66.

other group members. For example, Ziyad Yaghi introduced Omar Hassan to Daniel Boyd in 2007.

McCauley and Moskalenko's argument of competition within a group can also be applied to these individuals. Daniel Boyd hosted campouts in which he would invite a number of young Muslim men, including many of the individuals of the Raleigh Jihadi group. As mentioned earlier, they would discuss Islam and Daniel Boyd's experience fighting in Afghanistan. Furthermore, Boyd would test the extremeness of the young men at the campouts and promote competition among the young men.¹⁵⁶ This pressure to be seen as the most extreme was probably more prominent for Dylan and Zak Boyd because of their desire to please their father and to make him proud.

Mobilization

Although the men were arrested before they were able to attempt to carry out their terrorist plots, they were planning to commit terrorist acts. Therefore, "Radicalization Dynamics: A Primer" can be applied here in helping to explain the mobilization of the group. While Daniel Boyd was in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the late 1980s and early 1990s, he was able to train in camps, giving him the opportunity to mobilize. Moreover, his "personal experience" of being in Pakistan and Afghanistan at the time of the Soviet defeat may have given him the capability to mobilize. Opportunity and capability can also be applied to the other group members because they were able to gain access to weapons training from Daniel Boyd. Moreover, they were able to purchase weapons and ammunition in order to train. The NYPD Report's last step of radicalization, jihadization, can also be relevant in the case of the men being willing to commit violent

¹⁵⁶ Interview, Source A.

acts. Silber and Bhatt define jihadization as the point in which an individual commits oneself to committing jihad in the name of Islam.

Dylan's Level of Involvement

According to Dylan Boyd's sentencing memorandum, which was written by his defense attorneys to lower his sentence, there is some question about Dylan's level of involvement in the terrorist plots. For example, the Boyd family planned to move to the Middle East; however, Dylan was not going to move with his family. Instead, he planned to stay in America with his wife. In recorded conversations dating from November 2008 to July 2009, Dylan's reluctance to take part in the terrorist plots is accentuated. In a conversation recorded on July 4, 2009, Boyd does not mention the plan to attack Quantico when Dylan is around. Moreover, in a conversation recorded May 12, 2009, Boyd warns the other group members to be cautious about what is said about the plot when Dylan is around and refers to Dylan as "the 'little spy.'"¹⁵⁷ Moreover, Daniel Boyd gave Dylan an ultimatum because Dylan was not living a strict and proper Muslim lifestyle. Islam was not as important to Dylan as it was to many of the other group members, including his brother, Zak.¹⁵⁸ Dylan's somewhat rebellious nature and his reluctance to travel abroad accentuate the idea that he may have not reached the last stage of the radicalization process.

Zak Wanting Out

As mentioned earlier, Zak Boyd was very serious about his Muslim faith. Unlike Dylan, his father did not threaten him in order to make him come home from school. Instead, Zak realized that he was not living a proper Muslim lifestyle due to his exposure

¹⁵⁷ Dylan's Sentencing Memorandum, 14.

¹⁵⁸ Interview, Source A.

to drugs, alcohol, and sex. Therefore, he decided himself to move back home so that he could, in his mind, properly practice Islam. However, similar to Dylan, Zak did not seem as “radical” as his father and some of the other group members.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have picked out key points in the lives of Daniel, Zakaryia, and Dylan Boyd and applied the literature reviewed to each of these moments. It is clear that Daniel Boyd reached the point of radicalization while it is unclear as to whether Zak and Dylan reached the point of radicalization. Many aspects of the Boyd’s lives do fit into the arguments and theories already laid out by terrorism experts. However, these experts, both academic and governmental, fail to fully explain why these factors may have greatly affected the Boyd’s but do not push other individuals to radicalization, and even to mobilization.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Although several aspects of the Boyd's lives are able to fit into a number of the different radicalization processes that I outlined in Chapter 2, no one theory clearly explains all that happened to this family. Daniel Boyd went from being a practicing Christian and a high school football player to the leader of a group in North Carolina that was plotting to commit terrorist acts abroad and against the Marine base at Quantico. There were many events in the lives of these individuals that the literature does suggest as a factor that may have pushed them in the direction of radicalization. However, each of these pathways fails to clearly explain why other individuals that may have the same factors and experiences in their lives do not radicalize. It is clear that each of these individuals fell somewhere along the radicalization scale; however, it seems that Dylan and Zakariya were not as radical as their father, Daniel Boyd.

Daniel Boyd

Through Daniel Boyd's many experiences, it is clear that he had reached the final point of radicalization and possibly mobilization. "Radicalization" as I defined in Chapter 1 refers to the point in the process in which an individual believes that it is rational to and is willing to commit terrorist acts. It is of course difficult to say whether Daniel Boyd would have carried out the planned attacks since the plots were disrupted before he was able to take action. However, there was ample evidence, both from recordings and informants for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, that Daniel Boyd was serious about his terrorist plots. Moreover, he planned to have other members in the group, including his two sons, travel to engage in violent jihad overseas. Additionally, Boyd and some of the other group members possessed a large number of weapons and

ammunition in North Carolina. It is clear that they would not have been able to take these weapons abroad, drawing one to conclude that the men did plan to use them within the United States.

Dylan and Zakariya Boyd

After looking at the different pathways to radicalization and researching the case of the Boyd family, it is possible to conclude that both Dylan and Zakariya were not fully radical. They did fall somewhere on the pathway to radicalization; however, it is clear that their father's influence on them is what most directly led them to become involved in the terrorist plot of conspiring to commit terrorist acts abroad. Though Zak and Dylan may not be considered "radical," it is clear that the personality of their father and the controlling relationship that they shared with him was the strongest factor in pushing these men towards violence and their role in the terrorist plots.

The possibility that Dylan and Zak were not fully radicalized is highlighted by the fact that both men wanted out of the lives that they had been born into. First, Dylan tried to get away from home by enrolling in courses at North Carolina State University. Moreover, while in college, he lived somewhat of a typical American lifestyle until his father threatened him by forcing him to choose between his family and his life at college. When given this ultimatum, Dylan was only about twenty years old and was afraid to lose his family; therefore, he moved back in with his family and once again began to abide by his father's strict rules. The pressure to choose his family over his American lifestyle may have been further enhanced because of the recent loss of his brother, Luq.

Zak too showed signs that he wanted out of the controlling relationship between his father and himself. This is highlighted by the fact that he ran away from home,

begging to be taken away from his family and hidden in another state where his father could not find him.

Conclusion

No one theory of radicalization that I covered in the literature review correctly covers what exactly happened to the Boyd family. When applied to the cases of Daniel, Dylan, and Zakariya Boyd, it is evident that parts of the pathways can be applied to their lives. Even though many phases of their lives fit into some aspects of these pathways, no one pathway is clearly evident in the case of the Boyds. No author, whether academic or governmental, can explain why some individuals with the same circumstances as Daniel, Dylan and Zakariya radicalize, while other individuals do not turn towards radical behavior. Because of this, it is clear that terrorism research still has a long way to go in figuring out why some individuals that are susceptible to radicalization do radicalize while others do not.

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