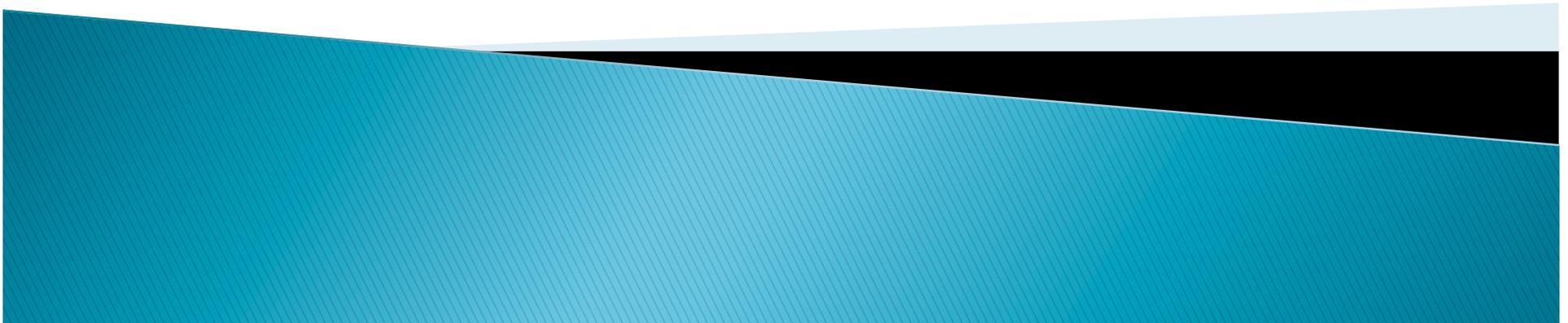
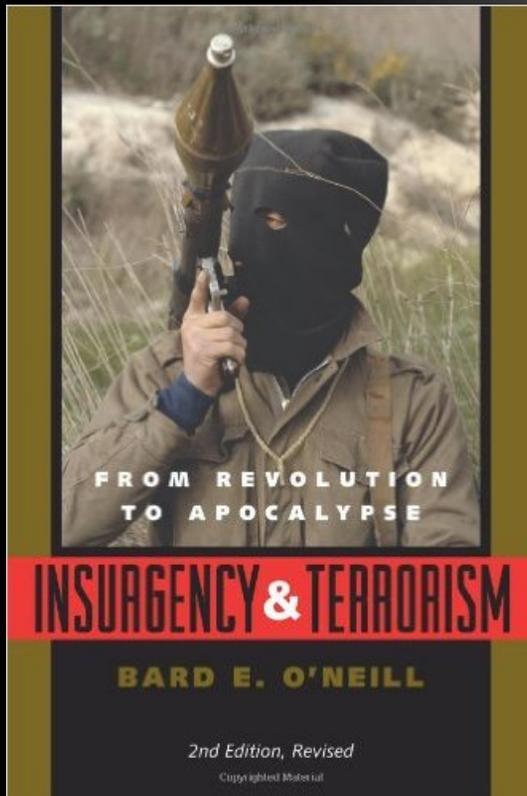


# Teaching Terrorism: Strategy for Engaging Students

James “Buster” Hall, J.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Northeastern State University



# In the beginning...



- ▶ “The task of the analyst...is to identify exactly what is at stake...it is necessary to ascertain the long-term goal of the insurgents and the relationship of that goal to the above described aspects of politics.” (p.19)

In the beginning...

- ▶ “There’s no pictures!”

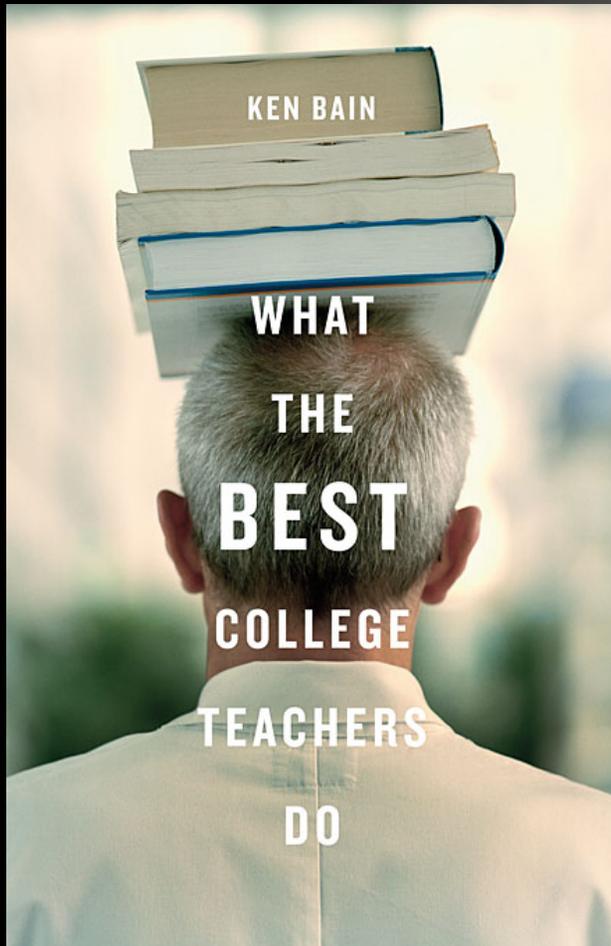


# Back to the drawing board...

- ▶ What do I need to do?
  - I need to rethink my approach
  - What are my strengths as a teacher and what are my weaknesses?
  - Identify my audience
  - What is it I want them to take away from this learning opportunity?



# Back to the drawing board...



- ▶ “The focus remains on helping people learn to reason or create, to use new information, not on the need to tell students everything they must know and understand.”
- ▶ (p. 51)

# Back to the drawing board...

- ▶ My students are interested in getting their degree and finding employment, not as preparation for graduate studies
- ▶ Most are pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice, or are interested in the topic of terrorism
- ▶ Most are non-traditional students, working full-time, and have families



# Thinking like a terrorist...

- ▶ If you want to know how something works, you have to take it apart
- ▶ What is the structure of terrorism?
  - Ideology
  - Organization
  - Funding
  - Planning
- ▶ Terrorists in the classroom



# Thinking like a terrorist...

- ▶ Rules are explained
  - This is a class project, outside of their regular class attendance
  - Students are randomly assigned to a five member cell
  - Operational security is paramount, any breach means zero points, only contact between teacher and cell is through the cell leader
  - There will be NO violence, no operational activities

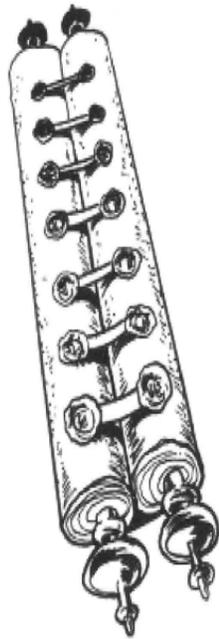


# Thinking like a terrorist...

- ▶ Each cell is required to develop a unifying name, for example Farmers Against Religious Tolerance (FART)
- ▶ To develop an ideology
- ▶ To formulate a funding mechanism
- ▶ To develop an operational plan that furthers their ideology



# The Church of the Seven Seals



**We want to bring about the second coming of Christ through chaos and destruction of all those evil**

- The world is full of sin and must face judgment.
- The Church of the Seven Seals has been chosen by God to help bring an end to the destruction of earth by others.
- If the church can manipulate the Muslim and Jewish community to destroy each other in the final battle, we will help fulfill the prophecy in our Revelation.
- The Church of the Seven Seals will serve as an example to all Christians as the one true path to God.

# Thinking like a terrorist...

- ▶ Department chair and campus dean were notified and briefed about the activity
- ▶ Notified the local newspaper, the Tulsa World, who published an article on the class

The screenshot shows a news article from the Tulsa World. The main headline is "Students turn terrorist for NSU-BA class". Below the headline is a sub-headline: "■ NSU-BA class gets inside look by role-playing". The article is dated Monday, September 20, 2010, 12:00 am, and is written by Jerry Wofford. The article text includes a section titled "WMD: Chemical and Radiological Weapons" with a list of forms of chemical alterations: "Radiological poisoning and 'dirty' radioactive devices" and "Chemicals". The article also mentions a student named James "Buster" Hall who made a proposal to his professor, and a quote from a woman: "She explains in that how we can have access...". To the right of the article is a sidebar with a "Submit Your News!" section and a "Find Crimes In Your Area" section with a "CRIMETRACKER" link. At the top right of the page is a large advertisement for firearms, including "ALL NEW 380 PISTOLS" for "\$30.00" and "9MM AMMO \$9.99/W/CASH \$10.49/W/C".

# Thinking like a terrorist...



- ▶ ASAC Brian Boetig expressed an interest and brought two agents to debrief the cells
- ▶ He was impressed and said half of the cells had viable plans and structure

# Thinking like a terrorist...

## ▶ Tweaks made

- Introduction of a Counterterrorism cell, the Red Cell, whose role is to identify other cells and their plans
- Use of CHDS Dystopia community maps and descriptions, instead of actual locations
- Use of five “canned” ideologies



# Thinking like a terrorist...

## ▶ Lessons learned

- Does not translate well to an online course
- Must be flexible and perceptive to the changing classroom makeup
- Small class size tends to diminish the ability to create effectively
- Keeping the powers that be in the loop



# Questions?

## ▶ References –

- O’Neill, Bard E. (2005) *From Revolution to Apocalypse: Insurgency & Terrorism* Washington DC: Potomac Books
- Bain, Ken (2004) *What the Best College Teachers Do* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Books
- Wofford, Jerry (2010 September 20) Students turn terrorist for NSU–BA class *Tulsa World* retrieved from – [http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/crimewatch/students-turn-terrorist-for-nsu-ba-class/article\\_b43d498e-75e8-5909-9a53-751ccc735ab6.html](http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/crimewatch/students-turn-terrorist-for-nsu-ba-class/article_b43d498e-75e8-5909-9a53-751ccc735ab6.html)

