(U) Feature Story

(U) Sovereign Citizen Sentenced to Death for Murder of Two Law Enforcement Officers

(U) Abbeville, South Carolina—Sovereign citizen Steven Bixby was sentenced to death in February 2007 for the murder of two law enforcement officers in December 2003. Bixby’s parents, Arthur and Rita Bixby, have yet to stand trial for their role in the incident, but an April ruling by the South Carolina State Supreme Court found Rita Bixby ineligible for the death penalty. The officers were killed during a dispute over plans by the state to use a small portion of the Bixby’s property for a highway expansion project. Witnesses reported seeing a “No Government Agents” sign on Bixby’s property prior to the murders, and heard Bixby shout “live free or die” on the day of the incident. The Bixbys moved to the area in the mid-1990s from New Hampshire, where they had been reportedly involved in anti-tax and anti-zoning movements and allegedly had run-ins with a local judge. (TwinCities.com, 21 February 2007; New York Times, 15 February 2007)

(U) Recent Items of Interest

(U) Sovereign Citizens Arrested for Harassing County Officials

(U) Rio, Wisconsin—Sovereign citizens Lester Sundsmo and Lilac Sundsmo were arrested on 14 March 2007 and charged with multiple felony counts of criminal slander of title for filing false liens against individuals and public officials in Columbia County. Many of the false liens targeted county officials and employees of a bank involved in foreclosure proceedings against the Sundsmos’ property for their failure to pay property taxes. Local officials report that although the Sundsmos’ support common-law beliefs, they do not appear to be formally affiliated with any specific sovereign citizen group. (Wisconsin News, 14 March 2007; Twincities.com, 16 March 2007)

(U) I&A Comment: Right-wing extremists often view government officials as the enemy and are particularly hazardous to law enforcement. Bixby’s sentence—and eventual execution—could serve as a potential rallying point for other antigovernment extremists. The issue of eminent domain is a popular point of contention among right-wing extremists.

(U) In This Issue:

(U) Sovereign Citizen Sentenced to Death for Murder of Two Law Enforcement Officers
(U) Sovereign Citizens Arrested for Harassing County Officials
(U) Suspect Arrested in “The Bishop” Pipe Bomb Case
(U) Animal Rights Extremists Target Those Doing Business with Huntingdon Life Sciences
(U) Alleged Earth Liberation Front Claim at Arson
(U) Explosive Device Left at Texas Abortion Clinic
(U) Suspect Arrested in “The Bishop” Pipe Bomb Case

(U) Chicago—Authorities on 25 April 2007 arrested a man they believe to be “The Bishop”—an individual who sent two pipe bombs to financial institutions. John P. Tomkins allegedly sent the pipe bombs hidden in packages to one institution in Chicago and another one in Kansas City, Missouri. The two packages did not detonate, but contained all the components of a workable device, along with letters with phrases such as, “Bang you’re dead” and “Tic-Toc.” The Bishop sent a total of 15 threatening letters to various financial institutions making demands that their stock reach specific prices. (MSNBC, 25 April 2007)

(U/FOUO) I&A Comment: Federal officials believe Tomkins’ motivation was purely financial. Incidents such as this highlight the ability of individuals to use postal and shipping sector systems to target key resource sectors and the potential to cause harm to postal and shipping carriers. Since 2001 the U.S. Postal Inspection Service has investigated more than 2,000 cases of bomb threats and mail containing suspected explosive materials. Mail bombings often are carried out by socially isolated individuals who believe their actions can bring about widespread changes.

(U) Animal Rights Extremists Target Those Doing Business with Huntingdon Life Sciences

(U) Portland, Oregon—The Animal Liberation Front (ALF) claimed credit for vandalizing the home and vehicle of a Wachovia financial advisor in Portland in early March 2007. In an anonymous communiqué, ALF instructed Wachovia to sell its shares in GlaxoSmithKline—a customer of Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS)—or prepare for further harassment of its employees. (The Oregonian, 13 March 2007)

(U) New York—The animal rights extremist groups Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) and Win Animal Rights (WAR) have initiated a campaign against the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) since the December 2006 listing of Life Sciences Research (LSR) on the parent company to HLS—on the NYSE electronic “Arca” exchange. The SHAC and WAR campaigns, titled “Operation Fight Back” and “Operation Helter Skelter,” have included protests at the homes of members of the NYSE board of directors. There has not yet been any violence directed at them. SHAC members have been known to harass, threaten, vandalize property, and engage in other acts of intimidation. (ADL, 7 February 2007)

(U) Inglewood, California—A shipping company that does business with HLS was vandalized on 17 February 2007. Animal rights extremists claimed credit for the attack in which they poured red paint on the carpet and spray-painted slogans on the exterior of the building. (CBS, 21 February 2007)

(U/FOUO) I&A Comment: The number of direct actions attributed to animal rights extremists over the past six months has increased. LSR/HLS is one of the world’s largest research corporations involved in animal testing with facilities in New Jersey and the United Kingdom. SHAC—the company’s primary antagonist—has targeted it on numerous occasions and now has been joined by other animal rights movements.

(U) Alleged Earth Liberation Front Claim at Arson

(U) Denver—Police arrested Grant Barnes for the March 2007 destruction of multiple SUVs using incendiary devices. The letters E-L-F were written in soot near one of the vehicles; however authorities believe this might have been done after the arsonist had left the scene. “ELF” is the moniker for the Earth Liberation Front and investigators cannot confirm that Barnes is affiliated with the group—although SUVs are popular targets for the movement. (Rocky Mountain News, 24 March 2007)

(U/FOUO) I&A Comment: Authorities are still uncertain whether Barnes was motivated by an ecoterrorist ideology. Individuals with no extremist affiliations have been noted using ALF/ELF monikers and slogans to mislead investigators. For example, a serial arsonist in Georgia and a pet store owner in Massachusetts attempted to mislead investigators by using animal rights- and ecoterrorist-related graffiti at the scene. It is likely that criminals will persist in using this tactic to conceal their actions. When investigating suspicious fires that involve a familiar target for ecoterrorists, investigators should consider computer exploitation and remain alert for extremist writings and radical literature associated with animal rights and environmental extremist movements.

(U) Explosive Device Left at Texas Abortion Clinic

(U) Austin, Texas—Authorities on 27 April 2007 arrested Paul R. Evans for allegedly leaving an explosive device in the parking lot of an identified Austin abortion clinic two days earlier. Authorities said the device was configured to cause serious bodily harm or death if it had detonated. (MSNBC, 27 April 2007; ABC News, 27 April 2007; FOX News, 18 April 2007)

(U/FOUO) I&A Comment: Anti-abortion activists committed arson attacks on 12 abortion clinics in Texas from 1984 to 1998—10 attacks remain unsolved. Media attention surrounding the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in April that upheld a previous ban on so-called partial-birth abortions could lead to a resurgence in violence attributed to the anti-abortion movement.

(U) Tracked by: TERR-010000-01-05, TERR-060000-01-05, HSEC-030000-01-05