

Lone Offender in Lone Star State

The FBI says "lone offenders", who do not belong to any terrorist or criminal group, can still be very dangerous. They say the story of Hosam Smadi shows this.

Smadi was a Jordanian living in the U.S. He was only 19 when he tried to blow up a large building in Dallas, Texas. Smadi has been sent to prison for 24 years.

The FBI first noticed him posting on a radical Islamic site. Many people posted there, saying violence against Americans was good. But Smadi went further. He kept posting that he wanted to do something.

Smadi didn't belong to any terrorist group. He had become an extremist on his own. Online, he was looking for someone to teach him to build bombs.

The FBI could tell this was not an empty threat. It could have had Smadi deported, because his visa had expired. Instead, three FBI agents who spoke Arabic got in touch with him.

They posed as al-Qaeda members. Smadi wanted them to help him make "the next 9/11 attack". He wanted to destroy a tall building and kill thousands of people. Fountain Place, a large office building in Dallas, was chosen.

The agents built a fake bomb for Smadi. As soon as he had put it in the building, they met him -- and arrested him.

The FBI says there could still be many more like him.

Source: <http://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2010/november/terror-plot-foiled/terror-plot-foiled>

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