



THE United States has been narrowly saved from lethal terrorist plots in recent years — or so it has seemed. A would-be suicide bomber was intercepted on his way to the Capitol; a scheme to bomb synagogues and shoot Stinger missiles at military aircraft was developed by men in Newburgh, N.Y.; and a fanciful idea to fly explosive-laden model planes into the Pentagon and the Capitol was hatched in Massachusetts.

But all these dramas were facilitated by the F.B.I., whose undercover agents and informers posed as terrorists offering a dummy missile, fake C-4 explosives, a disarmed suicide vest and rudimentary training. Suspects naïvely played their parts until they were arrested.

Undercover operations, long practiced by the F.B.I., have become a mainstay of counterterrorism, and they have changed in response to the post-9/11 focus on prevention. “Prior to 9/11 it would be very unusual for the F.B.I. to present a crime opportunity that wasn’t in the scope of the activities that a person was already involved in,” said Mike German of the American Civil Liberties Union, a lawyer and former F.B.I. agent who infiltrated white supremacist groups. An alleged drug dealer would be set up to sell drugs to an undercover agent, an arms trafficker to sell weapons. That still happens routinely, but less so in counterterrorism, and for good reason.

**TVNL Comment: The first WTC bombing was such an event. The entire plot was hatched by the FBI. The culprits were recruited and the explosives were supplied by the FBI. Not to mention 9/11...any terrorists, if there were any, were working under our watchful eyes.**

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