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**Diffuse Threats:
US Counterterrorism as an Anxious Affective Infrastructure**

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**by
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Dedication

For Lionel "LJ" Palardy

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Abstract

Diffuse Threats: US Counterterrorism as an Anxious Affective Infrastructure

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The infrastructure of US national security has never been more bloated and obfuscatory, US leaders insist that terroristic threats have never been more real and dangerous, and the US War on Terror wages in more nations than ever before. Arguably since the color-coded Homeland Security Advisory System, our post-9/11 terrorism predicament tasks us with modulating our state of alertness to meet the level of mass threat. One of national and local threat rhetoric's most important functions is to manage public anxiety surrounding the potential for rogue citizen and noncitizen terrorists to attack the homeland. This project isolates a new object of homeland security governance revealed by these affective manipulations: the diffusion of terroristic threats. Homeland security rhetoric manipulates public anxiety about threats' capacity to spread. This project thus charts US counterterrorism as an affective infrastructure of anxiety. It defines an affective infrastructure of anxiety as a subterranean network of intermittent interruptions in sense.

Within the past 14 years, a predominant rhetorical maneuver to counter threat diffusion has become intelligence fusion, defined as the conversion of public suspicions

into actionable knowledge through the homeland security institution of the local “fusion center.” Through ethnographic interviews and observations, this project investigates the interoperations of fusion in Texas. The ethnography reveals a host of threat matrixes, pressure points, sore subjects, anguish, failures, stupidities, and surveillance measures that comprise the local and national anxious infrastructure of US counterterrorism. It shows that the rhetorical manipulation of anxiety is an essential component of local and national homeland security strategies.

To attend to anxiety within intelligence fusion, this project develops a method for closely reading affect called “sleuthing.” This method reclaims both suspicion and close reading within the rhetorical tradition for the purpose of describing the extra-linguistic. Making space for affect in rhetorical theory is challenging but essential. Affect tasks us with rethinking fundamental postulations about the coherence of texts, the role of the responsible rhetorician, and the force of persuasion. Most importantly, affect theory can show how homeland security operates through racial phobia. This project represents the first full-length study of race, policing, and surveillance in the context of local intelligence fusion. The project’s goal is to read the far-reaching effects of homeland security’s newest transformations, especially considering recent intensifications in the War on Terror. To do so, one must see homeland security not just as a technical infrastructure but a quivering mass of connected affects.

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Chapter One:
Introduction: Diffuse Threats

“What frightens us today is not contamination per se—which has been viewed as inevitable for some time now—as much as its uncontrolled and unstoppable diffusion throughout all of the productive nerve centers of our lives.”

- Roberto Esposito, *Immunitas: The Protection and Negation of Life*

“Do not ask me who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write.”

- Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*

At the National Fusion Center Association Convention in Alexandria, Virginia, I took an Uber ride with a handful of my research subjects, five male members of a local crime- and terrorism-monitoring intelligence center. We were on our way to an open bar hosted by the conference. After I climbed into the middle row of the sedan, one subject slid in next to me and swung his arm over the back of my seat. It was a tight ride, an uncomfortable position for any researcher who hopes to maintain critical distance from her subjects. The anxiety about whether I was too close would become even more pronounced, as I tried desperately to psychologically and physically distance myself when the subjects began to comment aloud in front of the Uber driver about his name: Mohammad. People began to joke about his terrible driving. Someone commented that he must have been “fresh off the boat.” There was a lot of laughter at this driver’s expense. Mohammad remained silent. He dropped us off, as I, wracked with guilt, tried to thank him and show him some kindness. I wanted to signal, “I’m not with them,” but, in fact, I was. Racial alliances had been drawn, and I dared not defect. At the bar, I braced myself for the inevitability that someone would call Mohammad a terrorist, which happened. But this time, I knew I wanted to respond. I tried to tell the intelligence workers that Mohammad was the most common name worldwide. I wanted them to feel even a modicum of the alienation they might have

generated for Mohammad. They did not know the fact about the name's popularity but mulled it over for a moment.

It is these workers' jobs to find and identify threats to homeland security, field real-time suspicious activity reports from citizens, build detective cases against criminals, and compile data statistics for law enforcement to expedite policing. Was this Uber ride not fundamental to their professional responsibilities? We were at a work conference. Why would Mohammad's presence make them so excitable, as to attack him, back faced to us? Their anxieties coalesced around his name, a name that remains a lightning rod for Orientalist, racist, and xenophobic barbs. One way of tracking Anglo anxieties about the spread of Arabs and Muslims (what Edward W. Said calls "Mohammedism") is to read alarmist news about how the name "Mohammad" is outpacing the popularity of Anglo names in the US and EU.¹ Anxieties over Mohammad, the person in front of us, seemed also to be about him in the driver's seat. The comments reminded me of post-9/11 citizen-anxieties about how New York City cabs might be roving terrorist cells.² Cab anxiety is contorted in its retroactivity: the "enemy" was already here, plotting as white passengers sat there, unaware they were subsidizing terrorism. And now, the enemy was mobile. Like Michael Enright who, inflamed by the Ground Mosque Controversy of 2010, stabbed cab driver Ahmed Sharif numerous times, the workers seemed agitated about losing control, about their inability track of how Mohammads infiltrate "their" spaces.

What we have here is an extension of what the conference was all about: counteracting the diffusion of threat, with "threat" sometimes meaning the endless distributability of Mohammads in white spaces. The interaction is haunted by an intensification in national security rhetoric that makes *threat diffusion an object of*

1 Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (New York: Vintage, 1997), 5.

2 Sarah Sharma, "Taxi Cab Publics and The Production of Brown Space After 9/11," *Cultural Studies* 24, no. 2 (2010): 183-199.

governance. As detailed by the Oxford English Dictionary, diffusion comes from the Latin *diffusio*, meaning the expansion of a substance.³ Its etymological roots evoke the widening of the mind, watering of the eyes, and pouring out of liquids. Diffusion is tied to both accretion and dissemination. Diffusion names both the building up of a substance (like copious amounts of writing) and its displacement, its dispersal across space through transmission. In political science, diffusion also names the process of a state or non-state actor adopting an innovation, such as new war technologies and strategies (i.e. suicide bombing).⁴ The SAGE Handbook of *Terrorism and Communication* names diffusion, which it defines as information transmission, as a central problematic of terrorism. It names eight categories of terrorism diffusion: contagious (terrorism catches on, like a virus across groups), noncontagious (ephemeral collaboration between groups), hierarchical (big terrorist groups teach nascent ones), horizontal (a terrorist group teaches its own members), knowledge (the technical exchange of terroristic knowledge), relocation (the movement of terrorism from one place to another), relational (ideas move between a shared terrorist identity), and non-relational (the imitation of a terrorist group without interaction).⁵ What does it mean that threat-diffusion has become an object of US national security? It means the state becomes preoccupied with accretions and disseminations that hold virtual potential for danger—the emitting of some terroristic-like behavior that could become terrorism. The state targets communication, the presumed medium of information dissemination.

Said writes that “Islamic terrorism” became a master signifier for Western felt-threat in the 1980s and 90s.⁶ Relative to others crimes, terrorism exhibits a violent potential

3 “diffusion, n.” Oxford English Dictionary, accessed June 17, 2018.

4 Michael C. Horowitz, *The Diffusion of Military Power: Causes and Consequences for International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010). See Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovation* (New York: The Free Press, 1983).

5 Jonathan Matusitz, *Terrorism and Communication: A Critical Introduction* (SAGE: 2013).

6 Said, *Covering Islam*.

to spill into nearly every community and activate otherwise “normal” American citizens. Post 9/11 discourse renders the threat of terrorism diffuse: *a threat has already been issued, and its danger lies in its diffusability*. George W. Bush’s National Strategy in September 2002 targeted the “spread” of terrorism, using a quotation from a speech he delivered in 2002 at West Point: “When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology—when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations.”⁷ According to Bush’s threat figuration, not only is the threat of terrorism already real, but it also could touch the US’s borders, fatally. Barack Obama similarly targeted the diffusability of terrorism, moving from a concern with weapons of mass destruction to pernicious ideology. A 2011 National Strategy about how the federal government could empower local partners to prevent the “violent extremism” of al-Qaeda, details, “Radicalization that leads to violent extremism includes the diffusion of ideologies and narratives that feed on grievances, assign blame, and legitimize the use of violence against those deemed responsible.”⁸ Terrorists, in other words, diffuse their beliefs and recruit others to challenge “our American ideals.”⁹ President Donald Trump has escalated anxieties about the spread of terrorism at home, harping that “loser” terrorists—transparently described as foreign and Muslim—plot because they are intimidated by the singular strength and success of the nation. According to Jacques Derrida, post-9/11 efforts to immunize the homeland—the “at-home-ness,” the self-same identity of the US that recognizes itself as a morally virtuous leader of the free world—attempt to suture up “pervertibility,” the virtual potential for threat that “announces itself *even before* organizing itself into terrorism. Implacably.

7 George W. Bush, “US National Security Strategy,” US Department of State, August 2002, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf>.

8 Barack Obama, “Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States,” The White House, August 2011, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/empowering_local_partners.pdf.

9 Obama, “Empowering Local Partners.”

Endlessly.”¹⁰ The alleged diffusability of terroristic behavior is an object of state monitoring.

The very potentiality of threat is rhetorically rendered opaque through a “cryptography of terror,” where only state officials can be fully trusted to know the meaning of the signs.¹¹ This is especially true under the Trump administration, where Trump indicates that he alone possesses the sovereign authority to decide who is and is not welcome within the US (often in opposition to the intelligence community) and that he will keep war strategy secret in order to surprise enemies. All the same, the networked cryptography of terror surrounding suspicious bodies and objects has spread through an explosion of post-9/11 war bureaucracy: “The whole of this sprawling apparatus—close to one million personnel, Yottabytes of server space for storing endless streams of domestic and international ‘intelligence,’ and the paramilitary technologies required to mobilize these elements against those deemed the enemy—falls within the administrative purview of the executive branch of U.S. government.”¹² Though no doubt supercharged by Trump’s racist and xenophobic rhetoric, the model for terror-cryptography was called into being by the Bush administration almost immediately following 9/11.¹³ The model of war melodrama in which citizens participate—a virtuous US nation fighting evil Islamic terror—remains our rhetorical blueprint for what the War on Terror looks and feels like.¹⁴ Homeland security has armed security professionals and citizens with tools to render

10 Jacques Derrida, “Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida,” in *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, ed. Giovanna Borradori (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 109.

11 Barbara Biesecker, “No Time for Mourning: The Rhetorical Production of the Melancholic Citizen-Subject in the War on Terror,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 40, no. 1 (2007), 147–169.

12 William Saas, “Critique of Charismatic Violence,” *symplekē* 20, no. 1-2 (2012): 65-82. Saas indicates that a Yottabyte is septillion (1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000) pages of text. The infrastructure is close to one-million personnel with security-level clearance, including janitors. See Dana Priest and William Arkin, “A Hidden World, Growing Beyond Control,” *Washington Post*, July 19, 2010, <http://projects.washingtonpost.com/top-secret-america/articles/a-hidden-world-growing-beyond-control/>.

13 See Biesecker, “No Time for Mourning.”

14 Elisabeth Anker, *Orgies of Feeling: Melodrama and the Politics of Freedom* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

threats legible in their everyday lives. Making threats legible means counteracting threat diffusion with security fusion: tracking patterns using criminal statistics, finding connections between threats through threat matrixes, and participating in a lateral network of everyday spies to report back to the state.

I explore national security efforts to counteract threat diffusion through the institution created for that sole purpose: the “fusion center,” a post-9/11 domestic intelligence center. Fusion centers engage in a process of “fusing” actionable knowledge from amorphous suspicions.¹⁵ The Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security define fusion as the process of “turning information and intelligence into actionable knowledge.”¹⁶ Fusion has yet to be framed as a *rhetorical* practice. Doing so demonstrates that fusion constitutes a system of significations, speech acts, and extra-linguistic elements that respond to perceived threat diffusion. Fusion brings disparate information about threats together to generate awareness and consciousness in the American public, intelligence analysts, and law enforcement (Figure 1.1). Fusion centers share information about suspicious activity with police departments, Joint Terrorism Task

15 See Torin Monahan and Priscilla M. Regan, “Zones of Opacity: Data Fusion in Post-9/11 Security Organizations,” *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 27, no. 3 (2012): 301-317. They write that fusion centers “may be more problematic because they do not attract attention” (316). Numerous pieces have been published about fusion centers in a push toward transparency. See Hamilton Bean, “Exploring the Relationship between Homeland Security Information Sharing & Local Emergency Preparedness,” *Homeland Security Affairs* 5, no. 5 (2009). <https://www.hsaj.org/articles/104>; Krista Craven, Torin Monahan, and Priscilla Regan, “Compromised Trust: DHS Fusion Centers’ Policing of the Occupy Wall Street Movement,” *Sociological Research Online* 20, no. 3 (2015); Brendan McQuade, “Police and the Post-9/11 Surveillance Surge: ‘Technological Dramas’ in the ‘Bureaucratic Field,’” *Surveillance & Society* 14, no. 1 (2016); Brendan McQuade, “The Puzzle of Intelligence Expertise: Spaces of Intelligence Analysis and the Production of ‘Political’ Knowledge,” *Qualitative Sociology* 39, no. 3 (2016): 247-265; Brendan McQuade, “Surveillance and Policing in Chicago... And Its Discontents,” *American Association of Geographers*, April 5, 2015, <http://news.aag.org/2015/04/surveillance-and-policing-in-chicagoand-its-discontents/>; Torin Monahan, “The Future of Security? Surveillance Operations at Homeland Security Fusion Centers,” *Social Justice* 37, no. 2-3 (2010-2011): 84-98; Torin Monahan, “The Murky World of ‘Fusion Centers,’” *Criminal Justice Matters* 75, no. 1 (2009): 20-21; Torin Monahan and Jill A. Fisher, “Strategies for Obtaining Access to Secretive or Guarded Organizations,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 44, no. 6: 709-736; Anthony B. Newkirk, “The Rise of the Fusion-Intelligence Complex: A Critique of Political Surveillance after 9/11,” *Surveillance & Society* 8, no. 1 (2010): 43-60; Priscilla M. Regan, Torin Monahan, and Krista Craven, “Constructing the Suspicious: Data Production, Circulation, and Interpretation by DHS Fusion Centers,” *Administration & Society* 47, no. 6 (2015): 740-762.

16 “Fusion Center Guidelines: Developing and Sharing Information and Intelligence in a New Era,” The Bureau of Justice Assistance, August 2008, http://it.ojp.gov/documents/d/fusion_center_guidelines.pdf. Chemically, “fusion” refers to the combination of two or more nuclei into one atom i.e. the “fusion bomb”). Both definitions of “fusion” can be found in: Margaret R. O’Leary, *Dictionary of Homeland Security and Defense* (New York: iUniverse, 2006), 200.

Forces (JTTFs), public safety officials, military partners, private sector businesses, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Manager of the Information Sharing Environment (ISE), and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). Criminal justice scholar Jerry Ratcliffe and crime analyst Kyle Walden argue that fusion centers are now “the *lynchpin* of criminal intelligence and information sharing coordination between federal agencies and officers at local levels of American policing.”¹⁷

The first state-level fusion center, the Los Angeles County Terrorism Early Warning Center (LACTEW), was established in 1996, and there are now 79 such centers nationwide (Figure 1.2).¹⁸ The Information Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 mandated that states establish fusion center offices within existing intelligence centers and public safety departments. The Department of Homeland Security estimates that it has spent somewhere between \$289 million to \$1.4 billion of public funds on fusion centers.¹⁹ Various fusion offices at the national level (like the Director of Central Intelligence’s National Counterterrorist Center) were created in the 1980s and 90s to integrate intelligence from the CIA, FBI, and counter-terrorism units. Local, regional, and tribal fusion centers collect information about potential threats, find patterns in the information that indicate threats, and disseminate the nature of the threats to forces that can track and capture them in smaller geographic areas. Fusion centers engage in what National Security

17 Jerry H. Ratcliffe and Kyle Walden, “State Police and the Intelligence Center: A Study of Intelligence Flow to and from the Street,” *International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts* 19, no. 1 (2010): 1. My emphasis.

18 Monahan and Palmer, “The Emerging Politics of DHS Fusion Centers,” 618. An image of 78 fusion centers (not inclusive of the newest center) is available here: “2014-2017 National Strategy for the National Network of Fusion Centers,” National Fusion Center Association, July 2014, <https://nfcausa.org/html/National%20Strategy%20for%20the%20National%20Network%20of%20Fusion%20Centers.pdf>.

19 For more information on the funds allocation and discrepancy, see “Investigative Report Criticizes Counterterrorism Reporting, Waste at State & Local Intelligence Fusion Centers,” U. S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, October 3, 2012, <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/subcommittees/investigations/media/investigative-report-criticizes-counterterrorism-reporting-waste-at-state-and-local-intelligence-fusion-centers>.

Agency intelligence analyst David T. Moore calls “sensemaking,” coming to a holistic situational awareness about problems that have no end or source like terrorism.²⁰

I approach fusion as a national project that is irreducible to the institutions of statewide and local fusion centers, because fusion centers teach partners how to engage in fusion as an intelligence practice. If fusion is a rhetorical practice, it is helpful to generalize it. If we consider fusion’s broader definitions, we can see that intelligence fusion is the performance of five overall rhetorical movements: connecting the dots; plugging in to information and affective infrastructures; making one cohesive entity by blending disparate elements; coming to consciousness, new knowledge, or the senses; and arming a circuit with a safety device in case it overheats. Centers recruit civilians to act as intelligence-fusing liaisons and perform these rhetorical movements. Fusion is about finding connections to terrorism and crime that exist but that are yet to be discovered.

Fusion centers’ most important role is providing an avenue to process anxious citizen-to-citizen spying. To ignore anxiety, then, is to ignore the primary function of fusion. Fusion counteracts and produces public anxiety about terrorism by promising to locate the source of US’s powerlessness against it. “Data” that slips through the cracks—that is too diffuse to capture and even yet call “data,” like the potential for imperceptible terrorism traces—concerns fusion centers the most. Lauren Berlant has called the War on Terror the “first war on emotion.”²¹ Thus, contemporary national security’s “*primary effect*” is “to manage both experts and the national community at the level of affect and emotion.”²² One crucial function of fusion’s rhetorical movements is to render actions from

20 David T. Moore, *Sensemaking: A Structure for an Intelligence Revolution*, second edition (Washington, DC: NI Press, 2012), 18–20. Some field work within fusion centers suggests that fusion centers are ineffectual at counteracting terrorist threats. Brendan McQuade, “Securing the Homeland?: Inside the World of Intelligence Fusion,” (dissertation, State University of New York at Binghamton, 2015); Ratcliffe and Walden, “State Police and the Intelligence Center,” 1–19.

21 Lauren Berlant, “The Epistemology of State Emotion,” in *Dissent in Dangerous Times*, ed. Austin Sarat (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 46–78.

22 Joseph Masco, *The Theater of Operations: National Security Affect from the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 30. My emphasis.

what Brian Massumi calls “affective facts,” or verifiably correct bodily intensities that precede full-fledged cognition, such as a citizen-subject’s inkling that something is off.²³ The fusion workers’ responses within the Uber story recounted above operate on the level of the workers’ immediate bodily discomfort and flashes of paranoia.

I propose that one dominant purpose of fusion centers nationwide is to disseminate anxiety about threats to a level ever-micro-perceptual: the local territory, the (non)citizen’s social media post, the analysts’ guts. Diffusion names a general condition of rhetoric itself: rhetoric’s openness to *distributability*. Rhetorical criticism’s objects are diffuse, spreadable in new iterations. Fusion converts the fact of distributability into a nationwide phobia within public intelligence. Fusion therefore comes to operate as an anxious affective infrastructure, defined as an embedded network of anxieties. The conversion of diffusion into a phobic object nationwide deserves further inquiry, because it signals a new arrangement of anxiety in national security. In the spirit of engaging in a rigorous rhetorical inquiry into fusion and US counterterrorism anxiety, this dissertation asks:

- To what extent is fusion (a collecting gesture) dependent on diffusion (a dispersive gesture)?
- How does anxiety about threat diffusion become attached to certain phobic bodies and objects through the rhetoric of fusion?
- And if anxiety re-fuses/de-fuses relations and attachments without granting immediate knowledge of these changes, how might rhetorical critics attend to anxiety’s wild scramblings?

23 Brian Massumi, *Ontopower: War, Powers, and the State of Perception* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

DATA AND METHOD

By looking to specific surveillance measures in Texas, I expand on Brendan McQuade's finding from his study of New York and New Jersey fusion centers: "[s]ophisticated surveillance methods are grounded in and differentially distributed across the varied institutional cultures and social spaces that define 'the state.'"²⁴ Texas is relevant not just because it is a border state and a hotbed of racialized strategies for implementing national security. Texas is uniquely positioned to direct counterterrorism efforts. Texas Representative Michael McCaul, Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, wrote a new national counter-terrorism strategy, which calls upon fusion centers to develop real-time information sharing so no "data-point [is] lost in the noise" and confidential tip lines so that members of the public can report "terrorist radicalization in their communities."²⁵ Fusion in Texas deserves further inquiry. Two full-length dissertation studies exist about the North Central Texas Fusion Center in McKinney, Texas, a center that put out a memo about creeping sharia law.²⁶ One study is by former director of the North Central Texas Fusion Center and the other is by a doctoral student studying database integration.²⁷ An inquiry into Texas fusion from critical/cultural, rhetorical, and ethnographic perspectives is overdue, because these perspectives can tell us about how fusion alters national security's capacity to control populations. The goal of any inquiry into fusion that hopes to be specific is to get on ground within the centers and read how power, affect, and language interrelate.

24 McQuade, "Police and the Post-9/11 Surveillance Surge," 2.

25 Michael McCaul, "A National Strategy to Win the War Against Islamic Terror," *Homeland Security Committee*, September 20, 2016, <https://homeland.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/A-National-Strategy-to-Win-the-War.pdf>, 9, 13.

26 See Forrest Wilder, "Dr. Bob's Terror Shop," *The Texas Observer*, April 3, 2009, <https://www.texasobserver.org/3003-dr-bobs-terror-shop/>.

27 Tyler Lawrence Evenson, "The Texas Law Enforcement Resource Center: An Exploratory Study of Fusion Center Databases," (dissertation, The University of Texas at Arlington, 2011); Kelley Edmonds Stone, "Creating an Information Sharing and Analysis Center: A Case Study of the North Central Texas Fusion Center," (dissertation, The University of Texas at Dallas, 2014).

There are seven fusion centers in Texas in the following locations: Austin (two centers, one local and one statewide), Dallas, El Paso, Houston, McKinney, and San Antonio (Figure 1.3).²⁸ In 2005, then-governor Rick Perry called for the creation of Texas fusion centers through a five-year Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan. Since then, Perry has issued the Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 and Governor Greg Abbott has released the Strategic Plan for 2015-2020.²⁹ In May 2018, Abbott called for the creation of more fusion centers that monitor social media related to school shootings.³⁰ The 2005 Strategic Plan recognized the 2003 Texas Security Alert and Analysis Center (TSAAC) as an official fusion center and renamed it as the Texas Fusion Center (TxFC). It has been renamed the Texas Joint Crime Information Center (JCIC) since 2014.³¹ Perry's Strategic Plans for 2005-2010 and 2010-2015 outline the same international and domestic threats of terrorism. International threats include "violent Islamic extremist" groups like al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, and Hamas. Abbott added ISIS to the list of international terrorist groups.³² For Perry, domestic threats include "left-wing" groups (Animal Liberation Front, Earth Liberation Front, Stop Huntington Animal Cruelty), "right-wing" groups (Skinheads and the modern Klu Klux Klan), and "lone wolf" attackers (like "an individual who sympathizes with the Palestinian cause").³³ Perry singles out Mexican gangs and "illegal aliens" from Mexico as

28 "Fusion Center Locations and Contact Information," Department of Homeland Security, accessed June 18, 2018, <https://www.dhs.gov/fusion-center-locations-and-contact-information>.

29 Greg Abbott, "Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan, 2015-2020," *Governor's Office, State of Texas*, September 30, 2015, https://www.dps.texas.gov/director_staff/txHomelandSecStratPlan2015-2020.pdf; Rick Perry, "Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan, 2005-2010," *Governor's Office, State of Texas*, November 1, 2005, accessed June 2018, <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/18209744/texas-homeland-security-strategic-plan-2005-2010-office-of-the->; Rick Perry, "Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan, 2010-2015," *Governor's Office, State of Texas*, 2010, <http://drought.unl.edu/archive/plans/Other/State/TexasHomelandSecurity.pdf>; "Self-Evaluation Report," *Texas Department of Public Safety*, September 29, 2017, <https://www.sunset.texas.gov/public/uploads/files/reports/Department%20of%20Public%20Safety%20Self-Evaluation%20Report.pdf>.

30 "Governor Abbott Unveils Plan to Address School Safety in Texas," *Governor's Office, State of Texas*, May 30, 2018, <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-unveils-plan-to-address-school-safety-in-texas>.

31 "State Unveils New Homeland Security Plan," *Texas Government Insider*, November 4, 2005, <https://www.spartnerships.com/newsletter/tgi%2011-4-05/tgi.html>.

32 Abbott, "Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan, 2015-2020," 21.

33 Perry, "Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan, 2010-2015," 21-22

populations of concern, and Abbott names gangs and Mexican cartels as predominant criminal enterprises that could fund terrorism.³⁴ Abbott does not name white nationalist groups as domestic threats. Because centers were carved out of existing public safety spaces and adapted to local and regional needs, each Texas center has its own physical arrangement. Most feature desktops aligned in front of large screens that play the news, ticker real-time police alerts, and provide live video feed around the city (See, for instance, Figures 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, and 1.7).³⁵ Along with fusion centers, Perry's office established the Texas Data Exchange (TDEx), the state's most exhaustive database about Texas residents, hosted out of state by a private company in Louisville, Kentucky.³⁶ This exchange, the purview of the Governor's Office, has thousands of users, including the original Texas Fusion Center.³⁷

Access to centers is challenging, and there are invaluable lessons from this study's persistent efforts to acquire access. Throughout the course of this study, I gained favor with three centers, each of which at one point verbally indicated I could undertake research in the center. All seven centers in Texas considered allowing me to engage in observations and interviews, as I doggedly pursued entry. Finally, one center decided to sign the paperwork to allow me to engage in field work. To do so, I had to submit information for a criminal background check. I also elected to make my social media private, so that the

34 Abbott, "Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan, 2015-2020"; Perry, "Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan, 2010-2015," 28.

35 The images can be viewed online. Austin Regional Intelligence Center: Nadia Galindo, "Austin's Intelligence Center Looking to Add More Agencies to Regionalize Law Enforcement," *CBS Austin*, June 15, 2016, <https://cbsaustin.com/news/local/austins-intelligence-center-looking-to-add-more-agencies-to-regionalize-law-enforcement>. Dallas: Brian Heaton, "Fusion Centers: Have They Found Their Sweet Spot?" *Government Technology Magazine*, October 23, 2014, <http://www.govtech.com/security/Fusion-Centers-Have-They-Found-Their-Sweet-Spot.html>. North Texas Fusion Center, McKinney: Wilder, "Dr. Bob's Terror Shop." Southwest Regional Fusion Center, San Antonio: "SA's Ultimate Crime Trackers: Inside the Fusion Center," *News 4 San Antonio*, February 25, 2014, <https://news4sanantonio.com/news/san-antonios-voice/sas-ultimate-crime-trackers---inside-the-fusion-center>.

36 Jake Bernstein, "The Governor's Database," *The Texas Observer*, April 20, 2007, <https://www.texasobserver.org/2472-the-governors-database-texas-is-amassing-an-unprecedented-amount-of-information-on-its-citizens/>.

37 There are many pitfalls to this arrangement. See Bernstein, "The Governor's Database." Texas is responsible for the most data in the National Data Exchange (N-Dex), according to the Department of Public Safety Crime Records Newsletter. "Changes and Accomplishments: The Texas Data Exchange (TDEx)," *Crime Records Service Newsletter* 21, no. 4 (2016), https://www.dps.texas.gov/administration/crime_records/crNewsletters/2016/crNews4thQtr16.pdf.

center directors would not make assumptions of my political leanings. Considering how painstaking access to security-level clearance institutions is, the findings from deep engagement with one center are worthwhile.³⁸ Put plainly, there is simply so much more to learn. In order to protect the privacy of my research subjects and remove reticence to speak with me openly, my work keeps secret the identity of the Texas city in which the center operates. As I discuss in further detail in Chapter Four, access has everything to do with positionality, especially the extent to which a research subject can signal that she is non-threatening.

I engaged in 120 hours of field observations and conducted 14 interviews over the course of 10 months (June 2017 to March 2018) in one local fusion center in a moderately-sized city in Texas. The notes and interviews about the one center total 416 pages of double-spaced, typed text. I recorded thirteen interviews and transcribed one interview by hand. The interviews averaged one hour in length, and I used four interview guides that were provided to interviewees ahead of the interview.³⁹ I interviewed one director, one high-level staff member with director-like responsibilities, one supervisor of a watch center, two data analysts (one specializing in social media and the other specializing in Suspicious Activity Report processing), one project manager, one event surveillance

38 Most dissertation research published on fusion centers through fieldwork do not provide a critical lens of power but rather explore fusion organization. See Jeremy Gibson Carter, "Policing innovation: Exploring the Adoption of Intelligence-led Policing," (dissertation, Michigan State University, 2011); Andrew Francis Coffey, "Measuring Effectiveness in the Domestic Intelligence Community: Taking a Configurational Approach to Explain Organizational Outcomes in the National Network of Fusion Centers," (dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2015); Roy Evans, "Policy Implementation in Homeland Security: Implementing Open Source Intelligence Policies within State Run Fusion Centers," (dissertation, Walden University, 2013); Nicolas Klem, "Elements Impacting the Integration of the National Network of Fusion Centers with the U.S. National Security Strategy," (dissertation, Walden University, 2017); Kirk Knight, "Exploring the Tampa Fusion Center: Interagency collaboration for Homeland Security," (dissertation, Northcentral University, 2009); Carla Lewandowski, "Information Sharing using a State Fusion Center: A Case Study of the New Jersey Regional Operations Intelligence Center," (dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2012); Selby Marks, "An Analysis of Fusion Center Collaboration in a Network Environment," (dissertation, University of Nevada, Reno, 2014); Kelley Edmonds Stone, "Creating an Information Sharing and Analysis Center: A Case Study of the North Central Texas Fusion Center," (dissertation, The University of Texas at Dallas, 2014.) For notable exceptions see McQuade, "Securing the Homeland?" and Mary Stalcup, "Connecting the Dots: Intelligence and Law Enforcement since 9/11," (dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2009).

39 See "Appendix: IRB Materials."

coordinator, three police officers, one FBI liaison, one military liaison, and two detectives. These are common positions in local fusion centers in Texas. Most of the research subjects interviewed were in their 40s, though a handful of subjects were between 25 and 35. I interviewed two women and twelve men. The center's staff at the time was mostly male and white, and this reflected in my sample.⁴⁰ Out of the 14 interviewees, two interviewees were black, four were Hispanic, and one was Asian-American. The remaining seven were white.

In order to see the extent to which practices of this center were reflected nationally, I conducted an additional 30 hours of observations during a three-day National Fusion Association Convention in Alexandria, Virginia from November 7-9, 2017. The notes from that total 30 pages of double-spaced, typed text. During the conference, I had the chance to speak to a number of Texas fusion center personnel and see presentations by Texas fusion employees, including by the director of the Suspicious Activity Reporting program for the state. The conference is a key access point for research of opaque state practices, because it was there that fusion workers were much more willing to speak to me openly. There are a few reasons for this openness: They assumed I was part of the fusion community if I was at the conference; their inhibitions were lowered by the conference's open bar; and the setting allows them to share knowledge about what they do and why it matters. The conference included keynote presentations by Chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security Michael McCaul, the Deputy Assistant Director of the FBI Jennifer Boone, Director of the National Counterterrorism Center Lieutenant General Michael Nagata, and Attorney General Jeff Sessions. Their presence shows the extent to which fusion is an inimical part of national security strategy.

⁴⁰ Because of the small sample size, I do not often name the race of the person quoted within the chapters, in order to protect their identity.

In order to show the extent to which fusion is a new affective-intelligence-practice, this dissertation first zooms in on the Texas fusion center in the first two analysis chapters, zooms out to how fusion links up with other surveillance systems (acoustic and informant-based) within the state in the next two chapters, and zooms furthest out to an array of related national security discourses and the role of the so-called “intelligent” rhetor-analyst in the final chapter.

Because my focus is on the interplay of affect and power in the context of fusion and my field work required emotional performances to preserve access, my method is unconventional. I develop a method of close reading and fieldwork I call *sleuthing*, a stance of performative dogged curiosity that snoops through texts and spaces to find traces of affect. Chapter Two outlines the method and proposes four new principles of reading that reconfigure close textual rhetorical criticism: 1. No-thing is fully present to itself or to a reader, who is herself produced by the reading; 2. Close reading is not confined to observation of oratory; 3. Close reading’s task is not just constative but performative; and 4. Close reading is not a mere human activity. Sleuthing’s most productive, performative function is how it can unpack the central affective assumptions that undergird security systems: racialized discourses of threat, suspiciousness of tips, and truths produced by risk analysis. The tone of the method, while dogged, aims toward humility over the messiness created by opening up closed cases and spaces. Most importantly, rather than deny that affect can be read, sleuthing attempts to notice the *specificity of anxiety*: how it moves, or becomes rhetorically enfolded into infrastructures, differently than other affects.

ANXIETY'S OBJECT

In a climate of risk and threat, anxiety seems to be everywhere, including in nearly every account of a post-9/11 world. In most works on national security, the background condition for the entire national security enterprise is anxiety.⁴¹ Patricia Clough and Craig Willse describe a present filled “with fear, speculation, and anxiety.”⁴² Masco mentions that the US security apparatus amplifies “public anxiety” and relies on an “affective atmosphere of anxiety.”⁴³ Brian Ott, Hamilton Bean, and Kellie Marin argue that affective atmospheres of “both anxiety and fear” commission bodies for national security projects.⁴⁴ Stephen Graham writes that national security relies on “the production of permanent anxiety around everyday urban spaces, systems and events that previously tended to be banalized, taken for granted, or largely ignored in US urban everyday life.”⁴⁵ In these formulations, anxiety is a normalized background condition of everyday life, an atmosphere that envelops everything and even causes itself (anxiety creates more anxiety). If anxiety is endemic to the US War on Terror, what kind of anxiety are we talking about? What is its object, meaning what causes it and what does it refer to? How can we account for anxiety's normalization?

41 Renata Salecl's *On Anxiety* and Slavoj Žižek's *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!* preserve the character of anxiety as an encounter with the unsymbolizable order of experience—an encounter that this dissertation argues carries over into national security domestic policing. Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!* (New York: Wooster Press, 2011); Renata Salecl, *On Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Some works that discuss anxiety and the war on terror: Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014); Bethany Albertson and Shana Kushner Gadarian, *Anxious Politics: Democratic Citizenship in a Threatening World* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); Kumarini Silva, *Brown Threats: Identification in the Security State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2016). Volumes devoted to national security affect overwhelmingly focus on fear and terror, however. See: Masco, *The Theater of Operations*; Brian Massumi, *Politics of Everyday Fear* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Massumi, *Ontopower*; Annamarie Oliverio, *The State of Terror* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998); W. J. T. Mitchell, *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to the Present* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Julian Reid, *The Biopolitics of the War on Terror: Life Struggles, Liberal Modernity, and the Defence of Logistical Societies* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2006).

42 Patricia Ticineto Clough, and Craig Willse “Beyond Biopolitics: The Governance of Life and Death” in *Beyond Biopolitics: Essays on the Governance of Life and Death*, ed. Patricia Ticineto Clough and Craig Willse 1-18 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 2.

43 Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 1, 18.

44 Brian L. Ott, Hamilton Bean, and Kellie Marin, “On the Aesthetic Production of Atmospheres: The Rhetorical Workings of Biopower at The CELL,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 13, no. 4 (2016): 351.

45 Stephen Graham, “Cities and the ‘War on Terror,’” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30, no. 2 (2006): 261.

If the primary effect of national security is managing the nation at the level of affect, we should further consider how the affect most closely associated with diffusion (anxiety) functions within US counterterrorism and national security. Anxiety is an affect, a bodily intensity that operates prior to and alongside representation, understanding, and signification, that indexes an intermittent retreat of symbolic reality, the given signs and meanings that lend coherence to a world.⁴⁶ As an affect, anxiety is a primordial response to a subject's unbearable openness to a non-programmatic future, a future that cannot be predicted or preempted. Anxiety is a result of the failure of an individual, institution, or nation's programs and procedures, as is often the case in national security efforts to win the War on Terror's numerous fronts, including the homeland. This dissertation explores how the "affective infrastructure of national security," as it is manifested in counterterrorism rhetoric, operates to both trigger and respond to anxiety.⁴⁷ One mechanism for this process is bureaucracy, which spreads responsibility for managing anxiety over several institutions and educates sectors of the American public on how to feel and respond to anxiety.

Theorists of affect have tended to blur the terminology of affects, feelings, and emotions together—sometimes through deliberate imprecision.⁴⁸ Like Rei Terada, I "try to steer a middle course between imposing a single vocabulary on all discussions of texts and giving up on terminological distinctions altogether."⁴⁹ Affects are inchoate intensities registered on a body *prior to* representation, understanding, and signification.⁵⁰ Emotion,

46 Jacques Lacan, *Anxiety: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. A. R. Price (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2014). Bruce Fink argues in his translation of Colette Soler's *Lacanian Affects* that *angoisse* is better translated as "anguish" or "angst." See Colette Soler, *Lacanian Affects: The Function of Affect in Lacan's Work*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015).

47 Masco, *The Theater of Operations*.

48 See Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*; Ann Cvetkovich, *Depression: A Public Feeling* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012): 4-5; Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

49 Rei Terada, *Feeling in Theory: Emotion After the "Death of the Subject"* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 4.

50 Massumi has since argued that instead of existing prior, affects "infra-condition" representation, understanding, and signification. The *infra-* gives a better sense of how signification and affect co-mingle, but I think it is important to consider affect's not-quite-

Terada explains, “encompasses affect, passion, and pathos.”⁵¹ Emotion is the enfolding of affect, passion, and pathos in a subjective experience, which is an effect of rhetoric. I follow Terada in believing that emotions, like affects, *remain non-subjective* despite being made to seem like inner qualities, meaning emotions are not the property of a subject or expressions of an inner state.⁵² The reading of emotion as non-subjective echoes rhetorical scholars who state that only when affects become domesticated do they become legible as personal states of feeling.⁵³ Emotions may feel like the expression of an inner self that finds an outlet, but, Davis writes, “my most profound inner experience will turn out always already to be a relation with inassimilable exteriority.”⁵⁴ The presumption of auto-affection, feeling *my* emotions, requires an address, a gesture from outside the self, toward the self.

The dominant entry into the concept of affect in rhetorical studies is through Baruch Spinoza’s (and later, Deleuze’s) delineation between *affectus* (affect) and *affectio* (affection).⁵⁵ *Affectus* is a “prepersonal” *potential* or *transition*, the *passage* from one state to another.⁵⁶ *Affectio* is an affection that describes the encounters between two bodies where a body leaves a trace on another body. For Deleuze, changes in affect modulate a being’s capacity to act, or its power to endeavor “to persevere in its being” (what he calls *conatus*).⁵⁷ An awkwardness about the room can be described both in terms of *affectus* and

qualified existence that is one jolt ahead of signifier qualification (like Lacan does in *Seminar X*). Brian Massumi, *Politics of Affect* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2015), 212.

51 Terada, *Feeling in Theory*, 5.

52 Terada, *Feeling in Theory*, 7.

53 See Erin Rand, “Gay Pride and its Queer Discontents: ACT UP and the Political Deployment of Affect,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 98, no. 1 (2012). Christian Lundberg, “Enjoying God’s Death: The Passion of the Christ and the Practices of an Evangelical Public,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95, no. 4 (2009): 390.

54 Diane Davis, *Inessential Solidarity: Rhetoric and Foreigner Relations* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 108.

55 On affect’s travel to rhetoric, see Jenny Edbauer Rice, “The New ‘New’: Making a Case for Critical Affect Studies,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94, no. 2 (2008): 200-212.

56 Gilles Deleuze, “Spinoza,” *Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze*, January 1, 1978, <http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=14%20&groupe=Spinoza&langue=2>.

57 Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. W. H. White (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 2001), 105.

affectio. The feeling is a virtual potential, or a nervous buzz that could go an innumerable number of places, including dissipate. The affect also may be an actualization, a concrete manifestation of a state of awkwardness between two bodies. Neither *affectus* nor *affectio* for Deleuze and Félix Guattari denotes a personal sentiment, or an emotion.⁵⁸ Deleuze is interested in the Spinozan distinction to maintain the status of *affectus* as a “non-representational mode of thought.”⁵⁹ As an example, Deleuze writes that love represents nothing in and of itself; we may have an *idea* of love (what it consists of, looks like, etc.) and impressions/affections left by experiences of love, but love is a state of potential that does not *represent* an object.⁶⁰ A Deleuzian notion of affect as non-representational finds echoes in Jacques Lacan’s account of anxiety. The problematic of anxiety and representation concerns the *object* of anxiety.

This dissertation asserts that anxiety’s object is not an object, in the traditional sense, or a thing that one can hold. Instead, anxiety’s object is openness itself, the *too-much* quality of an unpredictable future. The anxiety that concerns this dissertation is the primordial anxiety of an unbearable exposure to a non-programmatic future, a future that cannot be controlled and predicted. Anxiety’s “object” is an un-dodgeable excess that announces a *predicament* of openness. Scholarship that asks, “What is anxiety?” often starts with a disjunctive move that separates anxiety from fear, following the claim that fear has a discrete, identifiable object, while anxiety does not. This dissertation follows a similar path toward theorizing anxiety, though it pays special attention to how anxiety scrambles object-relations and language. A study of anxiety requires care when dealing with how anxiety is translated differently across fields. The affective response to

58 Brian Massumi, “Notes on the Translation and Acknowledgments,” in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, trans. Brian Massumi (New York: Continuum, 2004), xvii.

59 Deleuze, “Spinoza.”

60 Deleuze, “Spinoza.”

unbearable openness is sometimes translated as *angst*, dread, and anguish, yet these affects have specific connotations. Anxiety is the more general term for these kinds of intensifications of experience.

The anxiety that concerns us is, then, may not exactly be the disclosive anxiety to which a being can easily *gather* itself, as articulated by Martin Heidegger. The idea that anxiety refers to “nothing” can be traced to passages in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. Heidegger writes that Dasein is a “being-there” whose being derives from being-in-the-world, being-*with* (Mitsein) others. Any singularity can only exist because of this prior sociality, a dependence on a *shared* world. As Diane Davis explains, Heidegger extrapolates two modes of being-with-others in the world: authentic and inauthentic.⁶¹ An authentic mode positions Dasein to live life while facing death, whereas an inauthentic mode subsumes Dasein in the “they,” a comforting public that makes Dasein feel at home in the world. Avital Ronell describes the inauthentic Dasein as a sort of being on the run, pushed by an inertia that leaves it no time to consider other “real possibilities for itself.”⁶² The thing that is able to shake Dasein from its inauthentic mode of relating in the world is anxiety, what Heidegger calls a “mood” or state of mind. Heidegger writes in *Being and Time* that anxiety (*angst*) is different from fear because anxiety does not indicate a knowable object as its cause. Whatever initiates anxiety “is so close that it is oppressive and stifles one’s breath.”⁶³ Whereas fear is fear *about* something, a threat that initiates anxiety goes without recognition; it is located “nowhere.” Anxiety leaves “Dasein to face its being *as such*, the sheer fact *that it is* and that, for it, ‘to be’ at all is to be outside itself, *in-the-world*: ekstatic.”⁶⁴ Anxiety leads Dasein to discover its “thrownness” in the world,

61 Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 91.

62 Avital Ronell, *Crack Wars: Literature Addiction Mania* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 41.

63 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper-Collins, 1962), 186.

64 Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 93.

the condition on which one is thrown, helpless and powerless, into a “there.” Such a confrontation is with nothingness, a nullity, or impotence, when world withdraws. Confronting death *as a possibility*, though, means that Dasein can resolutely face death, choosing to live according to possibilities that Dasein previously could not identify. Anxiety becomes a sort of opening through which Dasein can make a resolute choice.

At issue is whether anxiety’s “object” is “nothingness,” and whether a being can respond to anxiety with such a powerful “gathering” move (opening to the possibility of understanding). Part of the issue with anxiety, shown by Sigmund Freud’s speculations, is that it is impossible to nail down; it is not clear why anxiety arises, how it moves, where it goes, or what separates it from other affects. Freud, like Heidegger (though in vastly different realms), positioned anxiety as an ego’s response to an unknown threat, but for Freud, anxiety is not affect to which an ego can always respond with a strong gathering maneuver. Freud could never quite settle on an account of anxiety in *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*. He states that anxiety has a relationship with mourning and pain, since anxiety arises when an ego *loses* an object of desire in castration or separation. Freud *suggests*, though, that anxiety may have an object: “Anxiety has an unmistakable relation to *expectation*: it is anxiety *about* something.”⁶⁵ Probably the most pressing question for theorists interested in anxiety, then, is: What can we say anxiety is *about*?

Lacan proposes in *Seminar X* (1962-1963) that the *objet a* is the object of anxiety, meaning anxiety *refers to* the *objet a*. The *objet a* is an *unbearable* object (a “non-specular” object) that one can never behold, the *something extra* beyond a person, a body, or an object (a little missing piece) that mobilizes desire.⁶⁶ As Frances L. Restuccia puts it, the “object”

65 Sigmund Freud, “Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety,” in *On Freud’s “Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*, ed. Samuel Arbisser and Jorge Schneider (London: Karnac Books, 2013), 89.

66 Joshua Gunn, “For the Love of Rhetoric, with Continual Reference to Kenny and Dolly,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94, no. 2 (2008): 139.

of anxiety “turns out to be an ‘object’ without a name, *an overwhelming excess*.”⁶⁷ Lacan reiterates that the *objet a* is not in “my” possession: “The *a* is called *a* in our discourse not merely for the algebraic function of the letter that we were promoting the other day, but, if I may say so, light-heartedly, because it’s what *on n’a plus*, what we *ain’t* got no more.”⁶⁸ Lacan assumes that anxiety does not lie about its function. Anxiety *indexes*, or points to, the *objet a*, the “something more” beyond discrete objects.⁶⁹ His *Seminar X* returns to the litotes, “Anxiety is not without an object.” Calum Matheson uses Lacanian interpretation of anxiety to position it as an “*inherently* rhetorical phenomenon arising from networks of affective investment, mediated by symbols.”⁷⁰ Anxiety can inspire *feelings* of anxiety (mistrust, confusion, disorientation, uncertainty) but it is not reducible to the feeling. Matheson situates anxiety in a network of signification, because anxiety’s placement in a network “allows critics to place anxious subjects in a larger social and political context.”⁷¹ Only reading anxiety within this network allows us to read the social life of anxiety, particularly the moments in which public discourse is in crisis.

Following Lacan, then, it is helpful to consider that anxiety arises when a network of signification *fails*, so while anxiety might be positioned *within* a network of signification, it is a *gap* in this order: “*a failure* of the symbolic reality wherein all alienable objects, objects that can be given or taken away, lost and refound, are constituted and circulate.”⁷² Joan Copjec defines anxiety as “an affect aroused in reaction to an existence,

67 Frances L. Restuccia, “The Virtue of Blushing: Assimilating Anxiety into Shame in Haneke’s *Caché*,” *symploke* 18, no. 1 (2010): 156. My emphasis.

68 Lacan, *Anxiety*, 117.

69 Soler, *Lacanian Affects*, 20.

70 Calum Matheson, “‘What Does Obama Want of Me?’ Anxiety and Jade Helm 15,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 102, no. 2 (2016): 135. My emphasis.

71 Matheson, “‘What Does Obama Want of Me?’” 145.

72 Joan Copjec, *Read My Desire: Lacan Against the Historicists* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 119. My emphasis. For Lacan, there are three orders of experience: the Symbolic, the realm of signification and language; the Imaginary, the realm of images, illusions, and fantasy; and the Real, “an undifferentiated and unsymbolizable realm of being.” Gunn, “For the Love of Rhetoric,” 144. Anxiety “refers, not to the signifier that leads us astray owing to its substitutions, but to its effect of subtracting something from the real.” Soler, *Lacanian Affects*, 5. My emphasis.

to pure existence, without sense.”⁷³ Lacan reiterates, “anxiety isn’t the signal of a lack, but of something that has to be conceived of at a duplicated level, as *the failing of the support that lack provides*.”⁷⁴ Anxiety refers to this retreat from the signifier, the precise moment “at which the signifier throws in the towel.”⁷⁵ According to Lacan, anxiety can be “moored” by signifiers, but signification follows after an interruption that, Copjec puts it, has no “objectivity” (it “cannot be communicated or exchanged”).⁷⁶

It is of further help to consider that, for Lacan, anxiety arises in the moment of an *unexpected occupant*, an ungraspable guest (*hôte*), whose knocking is an interruption, a “sudden appearance” in a frame: “The phenomenon of anxiety is the sudden appearance of the *Heimliche* within the frame, and this is why it’s wrong to say that anxiety is without object.”⁷⁷ So while Freud articulates anxiety with expectation, Lacan writes that anxiety *interrupts* frames of expectation, preparation, warning, and anticipation. One can prepare for the future, make all sorts of plans to pre-empt the potential sources of anxiety, but anxiety arises the sudden presence of “something which is already there much closer to home.”⁷⁸ There is “no image or idea” of this “ungraspable” entrance.⁷⁹ Anxiety indexes the intermittent interruption (in other words, a *repetitive interruption*) of a programmed future, one that is expected, prepared, and anticipated. Anxiety’s interruptive quality is why, Lacan states, anxiety hangs between embarrassment and dismay.⁸⁰ The sudden arrival of a guest who cannot be known threatens to expose all anticipatory plans as fraudulent;

73 Joan Copjec, *Read My Desire*, 135.

74 Lacan, *Anxiety*, 53. My emphasis.

75 Soler, *Lacanian Affects*, 5.

76 Copjec, *Read My Desire*, 135.

77 Lacan, *Anxiety*, 76.

78 Lacan, *Anxiety*, 6.

79 Soler, *Lacanian Affects*, 24.

80 His lectures in 1962 and 1963 about anxiety chart (a literal visualization of anxiety in a chart) anxiety’s position on axes of “difficulty” and “movement.” Lacan, *Anxiety*. Also see Eugenie Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 201-208.

ridicule, as Ronell puts it, can stalk “like a ghost.”⁸¹ We can consider how US counterterrorism as an enterprise involves considerable *angst* that terrorists could be left to plot unchecked, all while leaving traces of their criminality that retroactively testify to the incompetence of US intelligence forces.

Positioning anxiety as an affect produced in confrontation to an unbearable openness, we can therefore begin to read anxiety’s dissemination and containment, or its various diffusions and fusions, within national security infrastructures. In the next section, I propose two concepts to get at the aesthetic specificities of anxiety and its effects in national security intelligence: anxious affective infrastructures and racializing surveillance.

POWER, SURVEILLANCE, AND RACE

Dominant modes of power change over time. These shifts are not historical progressions, according to Michel Foucault, but new deployments that attempt to make power operate more efficiently. In his formulation of biopower, power exercised at the level of *bios* or life, Foucault diagnoses a disciplinary form of power operating in 18th and 19th century Europe that seeks to control the actions of individuals enclosed in institutions.⁸² Taking Bentham’s Panopticon prison as exemplar, Foucault draws out how disciplinary power extracts utility from bodies by rendering them docile.⁸³ Foucault’s *Society* seminars mark a shift toward biopolitics as the dominant mode of power. Biopolitics is a “very specific, albeit complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its

81 Avital Ronell, *Stupidity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 291.

82 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

83 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 26.

essential technical instrument.”⁸⁴ In contradistinction to sovereign spectacles of torture or disciplinary control of practices, biopolitics inaugurates a new sovereign right to “‘make’ live and ‘let’ die” by operationalizing population racism, which Foucault (inadequately, I will show) defines as the biological caesura of healthy and unhealthy species.⁸⁵ Biopolitics monitors the capacities of populations in order to foster life and minimize risk. Biopolitics cultivates a “security society.” Security becomes the *technical instrument* that both polices (administers safety) and crafts policy (administers welfare).⁸⁶ Biopolitics is tied up in the political philosophy of liberalism, in which populations actively “participate in their own governance” by organizing around the correct arrangements of society.⁸⁷

Numerous surveillance scholars argue that the diagram of power resembles the structure of “control societies,” articulated by Gilles Deleuze, wherein power is adaptive, mobile, and lateral. David Lyon, for instance, argues that surveillance operates less as panoptic oversight; instead, surveillance systems “grow like weeds.”⁸⁸ Surveillance, Lyon explains, has its roots in the French verb *surveiller* (to “watch over”).⁸⁹ Feminist surveillance scholars Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoshana Amielle Magnet define surveillance generally as “a systematic and focused manner of observing.”⁹⁰ Systemic observation need not be visual. Andrejevic argues surveillance is endemic to all

84 Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–78*, ed. Francois Ewald and Alessandro Fontane, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 108.

85 Michel Foucault, “*Society Must Be Defended*”: *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–76*, ed. Mauro Bertani, Alessandro Fontana, and François Ewald, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 241. Foucault says, “That is the first function of racism: to fragment, to create caesuras within the biological continuum addressed by biopower.” Foucault, “*Society Must Be Defended*”, 255.

86 James Hay and Mark Andrejevic, “Introduction: Toward an Analytic of Governmental Experiments in These Times: Homeland Security as the New Social Security,” *Cultural Studies* 20, no. 4-5 (2006): 334.

87 Hay and Andrejevic, “Introduction,” 334.

88 David Lyon, *Surveillance Studies: An Overview* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2007), 95.

89 Lyon, *Surveillance Studies*, 13.

90 Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoshana Amielle Magnet, “Introduction: Feminist Surveillance Studies: Critical Interventions,” in *Feminist Surveillance Studies*, ed. Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoshana Amielle Magnet (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 2.

information collection.⁹¹ Surveillance society's shift from discipline to control is not just a matter of a change in power's target from discrete bodies to populations. What changes is the *intensification* of power, meaning its multiplication and extension in realms of application. By making the delinquent species at issue rather than a criminal act, security and surveillance systems can "multipl[y] the concepts and practices of potential guilt."⁹² National security's preoccupation with whole areas of infrastructure, big data and risk assessment, and biometrics evince the intensification of power.⁹³

The contemporary security state's infrastructure should be contextualized as an extension of the US's imperialist wars in the Middle East and Northern Africa, born from historical discourses that position these regions as hostile to Western capitalism.⁹⁴ The War on Terror is a product of imperialistic Western fantasies of conquering the Middle East and North Africa through nation-building. Nation-building is the logical consequence of capitalist desires to establish democracy in purportedly "barbaric" parts of the globe,⁹⁵ where enterprise in keeping with US interests can thrive. The rhetoric of homeland security asks Americans to partake in the cleansing of the body politic as a way of supporting fantasies of spreading democratic-capitalism. The Department of Defense uses data fusion to compile threats within each country implicated in the War on Terror. Such data fusion puts greater pressure on terrorists through high-tempo raids and drone strikes (get the information, act on it immediately). US ground forces and aerial weapons in part derive

91 Marc Andrejevic, Foreword to *Feminist Surveillance Studies*, ed. Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoshana Amielle Magnet (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), x.

92 This is not to say that a criminal "act" is a unicity. Jacques Derrida asks whether differential logic is the operating principle of power (whether dissension is a "prerequisite methodological or philosophical consideration[s]"), the very means by which we can isolate changing operational principles. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 38.

93 Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 30.

94 See Dana Cloud, "'To Veil the Threat of Terror': Afghan Women and The <Clash of Civilizations> in the Imagery of the U.S. War on Terrorism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 3 (2004): 285-306; Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

95 George W. Bush has called Iraq and Afghanistan "barbaric regimes." Obama has echoed this language with regard to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

their shock value from the efficiency of intelligence gathering. Local data fusion provides a similar function: it allows law enforcement to round out profiles and track terrorism more quickly. Neighbors and businesses spying laterally—spying on a community in which they are a part—viscerally and locally extends the global war.

My project elaborates that social control works through the orchestrations and interventions of affect. In other words, I argue that affect should be a key concept for rhetorical theorists concerned with power and authority. The changing dynamics of biopower mean that studies of US national security and surveillance have foregone the exclusive focus on ocular control. As one of its defining features, biopolitics, or the power to make live, operates at level of affect, defined as inchoate bodily intensities that affect and are affected prior to their conscious apprehension.⁹⁶ Notably, Puar argues, “the ocular, affective, and informational are not separate power grids or spheres of control; rather, they work in concert—not synthetically, but as interfacing matrices.”⁹⁷ The combination of police, security, military, and intelligence power in bureaucratic national security centers invites new arrangements between affective and informational control.⁹⁸ The goal of security procedures, especially intelligence practices, is to increase the security apparatus’s “knowledge-power,” to make information “pointy” so it can be a weapon of war, through the management of affect.⁹⁹ The fantasy of self-synchronized affective conversion (anxiety

96 Ben Anderson, “Affect and Biopower: Towards a Politics of Life,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37, no. 1 (2012): 28–43; Ben Anderson, “Morale and the Affective Geographies of the ‘War on Terror,’” *Cultural Geographies* 17, no. 2 (2010): 219–236; Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); Patricia Ticineto Clough, and Craig Willse, *Beyond Biopolitics: Essays on the Governance of Life and Death* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Ott, Bean, and Marin, “On the Aesthetic Production of Atmospheres”; Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*; Kyla Schuller, *The Biopolitics of Feeling: Race, Sex, and Science in the Nineteenth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018); Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

97 Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 197.

98 Fusion center staff varies by locale, but the staff is an amalgam of local and national analysts, watch center respondents, military officers, FBI analysts, and police officers.

99 Massumi, *Ontopower*, 99.

into information into actionable knowledge) inaugurates a new kind of rhetorical process in intelligence communities and national security.

Studying the specific and complex rhetorical operations of anxiety as it operates through “fusion” encourages rhetorical studies to craft “a politics attentive to the affectivities of war and security.”¹⁰⁰ By figuring national security as an anxious affective infrastructure of racializing surveillance, rhetorical critics can explore how anxiety becomes a resource for surveillance, security, and war technologies, and an unavoidable confrontation with these technologies’ limitations.

Anxious Affective Infrastructures

I use “affective infrastructure” to describe the distribution, institutionalization, and normalization of affect as a national security arrangement. Masco argues, “National security affect has... become a new kind of infrastructure.”¹⁰¹ An infrastructure is a substructure, a structure that exists “below,” “beneath,” and “alongside” other establishments as material support.¹⁰² “Infrastructure” is thus a kindred concept with affect. An affective infrastructure is a substrate of organized affects. An infrastructure is a subordinate part of a system that undergirds the entire apparatus. Affective infrastructures describe subterranean circuits, without which there would be no symbolic, imaginative infrastructures. An affective infrastructure can orchestrate behavior and action before and

100 Anderson, “Morale and the Affective Geographies of the ‘War on Terror,’” 231.

101 Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 18. Masco uses “affective infrastructures” and “structures of feeling” from Raymond Williams interchangeably. “Structures of feeling” refers to a shared affective state that is under the surface, that does not manifest clearly or coherently but operates more as an historical residue. While infrastructures and structures of feeling might be similarly non-conscious, affective infrastructures of national security may be more explicitly organized. See Lauren Berlant, “Structures of Unfeeling: Mysterious Skin,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 28, no. 3 (2015): 191-213; Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 128–135.

102 “Infrastructure,” Oxford English Dictionary, accessed December 15, 2016.

beneath the reaches of rational, conscious faculties, making it difficult to counter-act its effects.

Infrastructure's *embedded* quality is key. Infrastructure's prefix *infra-* also means in Latin *within*. Brian Massumi elaborates the *infra-* quality of affect; it operates *alongside* and *within* symbolic language: "Affect is the *infra-conditioning* of every determinate activity, including that of language."¹⁰³ Though it conditions language, it "lies below a certain threshold of appearance."¹⁰⁴ One might say it operates diacritically; it is an arrangement of accents below and alongside signifiers that enables meanings, actions, and practices.

An affective infrastructure is "the *enabling* architecture of a system."¹⁰⁵ Affective infrastructures fortify and secure arrangements and attachments. Affective infrastructures provide justification for practices. Anker describes this enabling quality as "felt justification," the immediate feeling that something is justified and so needs no other reason for its perpetuation.¹⁰⁶ Deborah Gould argues that affect provides felt justification for ideologies, social structures, hierarchies, and norms: "affective states generate attachments to leaders, to reigning ideologies, to existing social structures and hierarchies, and to normative ways of being."¹⁰⁷ Affective infrastructures undergird felt justification. For instance, the sense that a neighbor is suspicious is retroactively justified by the suspicion ("better safe than sorry"). Security institutions and homeland security campaigns encourage American citizens embed themselves within this affective infrastructure.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Massumi, *Politics of Affect*, 212.

¹⁰⁴ Massumi, *Politics of Affect*, 212.

¹⁰⁵ Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 33. My emphasis.

¹⁰⁶ Anker, *Orgies of Feeling*.

¹⁰⁷ Deborah B. Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 26.

¹⁰⁸ See Robert Bach and David Kaufman. "A Social Infrastructure for Hometown Security: Advancing the Homeland Security Paradigm." *Homeland Security Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2009).

It is not just that national security *relies* on affective infrastructures; Masco argues that national security *is* an affective infrastructure. Though affective infrastructures seem to be a lower security priority than other kinds of infrastructures (technological, technical, tourism-related, critical), national security is an elaborate system of regulated affects. Threat matrixes, risk assessment mappings, and the sensitivity of security operations are based on the organization, installation, and normalization of anxiety. National security is perpetually predicting the likelihood and intensity of future threats. According to Masco, national security's affective infrastructure extends circuits of agitation and excitability. Counterterrorist discourse "asks experts and citizens alike to remain *perpetually agitated* and tuned toward an announced spectrum of potential violence."¹⁰⁹ Massumi describes the Bush administration's color alert system as an attempt to convert the US population into "a networked jumpiness, a distributed neuronal network registering en mass quantum shifts in the nation's global state of discomfiture."¹¹⁰ National security makes an alert affecting one area of the US felt throughout the entire country; a threat in one regional location calls into question the threat environment of the entire nation. Affective infrastructures speak to "the ability to be coordinated as subjects through felt intensities rather than reason at a mass level."¹¹¹ Affective infrastructure captures the sense in which national security *coordinates* affective responses.

A critic might take issue with how the term "affective infrastructure" overestimates the extent to which affect is organized; affect is, after all, fleeting. How can a critic be sure that affect is installed or localized certain ways? Numerous affect theorists have shown that affect is arranged, in economies, ecologies, atmospheres, and/or structures, without

¹⁰⁹ Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 33. My emphasis.

¹¹⁰ Massumi, *Ontopower*, 172.

¹¹¹ Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 20.

becoming *in sum* stuck as an interior emotional state.¹¹² The concept of an “infrastructure” underscores that affect is not a free-floating, transcendental signified that operates before all influence or control. National security’s mechanisms of control mean that “affect is less the site of bodily discombobulation and creative resistance, than it is a resource available for surveillance and modulation.”¹¹³ Considering that affect is an object “for forms of power,”¹¹⁴ scholars should find ways to describe how affect becomes arranged in infrastructures that enable oppression and disenfranchisement.¹¹⁵ Those marginalized within infrastructures are dispossessed of inclusion in certain public affectivities and even become barriers to their expression.

For more precise language on how affective infrastructures police and profile difference, I turn to the concept “racializing surveillance.”

Racializing Surveillance

Black feminist scholars argue that scholarship concerning power must reckon with power’s imbrication in specific racial formations. Otherwise, Simone Browne argues, scholars risk contributing to the *un*-visibility of black life and death.¹¹⁶ Population control perpetuates racism, defined as “the political exploitation and (re)production of race,” as part of its core functionality.¹¹⁷ Racialized intelligence gathering technologies are embedded within and emboldened by affective infrastructures. Racializing surveillance is

112 See Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*; Berlant, “Structures of Unfeeling”; Catherine Chaput, “Rhetorical Circulation in Late Capitalism: Neoliberalism and the Overdetermination of Affective Energy,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 43, no. 1 (2010): 1-25; Ott, Bean, and Marin, “On the Aesthetic Production of Atmospheres”; Jenny Rice, *Distant Publics: Development Rhetoric and the Subject of Crisis* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

113 Jasbir Puar, “Prognosis Time: Towards a Geopolitics of Affect, Debility and Capacity,” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 19, no. 2 (2009): 162.

114 Anderson, “Morale and the Affective Geographies of the ‘War on Terror,’” 220.

115 Deborah B. Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP’s Fight Against AIDS* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 26.

116 Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 68.

117 Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 55.

“a technology of social control where surveillance practices, policies, and performances concern the production of norms pertaining to race and exercise a ‘power to define what is in or out of place.’”¹¹⁸ The term “racializing surveillance” “signals those moments when enactments of surveillance reify boundaries, borders, and bodies along racial lines, and where the outcome is often discriminatory treatment of those who are negatively racialized by such surveillance.”¹¹⁹ Racializing surveillance reifies race, the sociopolitical and material processes that “discipline humanity into full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans.”¹²⁰ Contemporary surveillance relies on the categorization of racial identities, making the technologies simply more efficient forms of racial profiling. The confinements of anxiety can produce, to borrow a phrase from Browne, “crushing asphyxia” for those implicated.¹²¹

Conceiving US national security intelligence as an affective infrastructure highlights how both blackness and “brown threats” mobilize its operations.¹²² While post-9/11 rhetoric makes the brown body into “the bearer of risk,”¹²³ this body’s abjection “comes out of a much deeper institution of racism in the United States that is rooted in the history of slavery, immigration, and economic disparities that produce a form of collective social anxiety...”¹²⁴ The notion of “brown threats” illustrates the threat identifications that cut across nationalities and ethnicities in post-9/11 policing, catching numerous disparate bodies in militarized security networks.

This project theorizes racial anxiety using numerous theorists. Frantz Fanon’s notion of racial phobogenics, the marking of a body as an object of racial anxiety, and Sara

118 Browne, *Dark Matters*, 16.

119 Browne, *Dark Matters*, 16.

120 Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 12, 4.

121 Browne, *Dark Matters*, 48.

122 See Silva, *Brown Threat*.

123 Yasmin, *Feminist Surveillance Studies*, 84

124 Silva, *Brown Threat*, 6.

Ahmed's documentation of racial anxiety qua object-alienation prove to be the most useful theoretical lenses.¹²⁵ They provide language for how anxiety creates racial capture. I articulate their conceptual apparatuses in the context of fusion, surveillance, and national security, showing how anxiety creates specific racializing effects within these practices.

The bureaucratic state—often a primary object of surveillance studies—is an *effect* of the forceful colonization of native and Indigenous peoples.¹²⁶ Surveillance bureaucracies are products of settler colonialism organized around the disappearance of troubling racialized bodies and control over space.¹²⁷ This is clear in how intelligence centers, like the Austin Joint Crime Information Center and El Paso Intelligence Center, have helped law enforcement and border patrol reify the US-Mexico border since 1974.¹²⁸ Karma Chávez argues the militarization of the border from the Reagan administration onward should catalyze a critical shift in security studies.¹²⁹ It is key, she argues, to document the ways security and surveillance are entwined with militarization, the adding-of-force to military power. “Security” can carry connotations of softer power, which Chavez points out, “disguises its material impact.”¹³⁰ The creation of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Citizen and Immigration Services in 2002 couch the terms of border control in securitizing the homeland, and fusion contributes to militarization.

Since its emergence in the 1980s, the concept of “Islamic terrorist” has allowed the US to depoliticize and vilify a global Islamic identity (i.e. the Islamic Brotherhood), an

125 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1986); Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.

126 See Smith, “Not-Seeing.”

127 See Smith, “Not-Seeing.”

128 See Damien Van Puyvelde, “Fusing Drug Enforcement: A Study of the El Paso Intelligence Center,” *Intelligence and National Security* 31, no. 6 (2016): 888-902. This center coordinates with the fusion center, the El Paso Multi-Agency Tactical Response Information eXchange (MATRIX).

129 Karma R. Chávez, “Border Interventions: The Need to Shift from a Rhetoric of Security to a Rhetoric of Militarization,” in *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*, ed. D. Robert DeChaine, 48-64 (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012).

130 Chávez, “Border Interventions,” 49.

identity category which responds to colonial histories.¹³¹ US intelligence practices replicate circuits of Islamophobia (fear of Muslim figures, suspicion of radicalization, etc.) and Islamophilia (love for the moderate Muslim who cooperates with police, hyper-sexualization of presumed Muslim terrorists, etc.).¹³² These circuits are entwined in a history of black Muslim suppression in the US. Islamophobia is expressed in US surveillance of African and black migrants and Americans.¹³³ Racializing surveillance captures the extent to which these bodies are, from the beginning of the concept of America (and even before that), monitored for being out of place. As this project shows, post-9/11 fusion is an historical regression to and expression of racializing surveillance.

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In Chapter Two “Close Reading, Again,” I first outline the unique method of this study, *sleuthing as close reading*. Each of the subsequent chapters attempts a close reading of anxiety, particularly racial anxiety, in the affective infrastructure of US intelligence. I split this project into two overall sections: “Closer” and “Further.”

Within “Closer,” the first two analysis chapters zoom into the Texas fusion center. Chapter Three “Fusing Race: The Phobogenics of Racializing Surveillance” provides a framework to read how fusion controls race and renders profiling continuous. Chapter Four “‘Bureau of Hurt Feelings’: The Anguished Affective Labor of Local Fusion Intelligence”

131 See Arun Kundnani, *The Muslims are Coming! Islamophobia, Extremism, and the Domestic War on Terror* (New York: Verso, 2015).

132 See Moustafa Bayoumi, *This Muslim American Life: Dispatches from the War on Terror* (New York: New York University Press, 2015); Gargi Bhattacharyya, *Dangerous Brown Men: Exploiting Sex, Violence and Feminism in the War on Terror* (New York: Zed Books, 2008); Louis A. Cainkar, *Homeland Insecurity: The Arab American and Muslim American Experience after 9/11* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2011); Sherene Razack, *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Life and Politics* (University of Toronto Press, 2008); Silva, *Brown Threat*.

133 Matt Appuzzo and Adam Goldman, “The NYPD’s Division of Un-American Activities,” *New York Magazine*, August 25, 2013, <http://nymag.com/news/features/nypd-demographics-unit-2013-9/index3.html>.

reads the self-victimization labor of fusion workers in the context of gender. The section provides important frameworks for assessing how intelligence work is affective in nature.

The “Further” section zooms out to examples of racializing surveillance, as racializing surveillance links up with fusion centers statewide: acoustic surveillance in San Antonio and informant surveillance in Houston. Fusion centers in Texas provided intelligence support for these cases. Chapter Five “Anxious Ears: ShotSpotter and Sensorial Preemption in San Antonio” reads how gunfire detection software in San Antonio makes black and brown residents disproportionately audible to police. Chapter Six “Black Muslim Suggestibility: The Case of Barry Walter Bujol, Jr.” reads a case of entrapment in Houston in which a black Muslim man was made suggestible by a surveillant infrastructure. This section discerns how fusion streamlines an infrastructure of law enforcement and security policing.

The final chapter, Chapter Seven “Security Stupidity,” zooms out even further to a meta-level of the role of any supposed “intelligent analyst.” It argues that the labor of any intelligence enterprise, but especially US security intelligence and academic intelligence, are humbled by stupidity, the limitedness of existence. If stupidity is an immanent part of intelligence, the War on Terror’s war on stupidity can be read as a violent projection against the US’s own limitations. My hope is that we will begin to realize how stupidity humbles the War on Terror and rhetorical scholarship’s reproductions of limited Western perspectives.

I end by confronting three confusions generated by the study. These con-fusions include: the non-rational intelligence of police intelligence, the movements of anxiety, and rhetorical methodologies that read affect and embrace the limitations of such readings.

Figure 1.1. An “Information Flow Diagram” for Fusion Centers. “Information Sharing Environment-Suspicious Activity Report, aka ISE-SAR, Functional Standard v. 1.5.5,” *Office of the Director of National Intelligence*, February 23, 2015, <https://www.dni.gov/>.

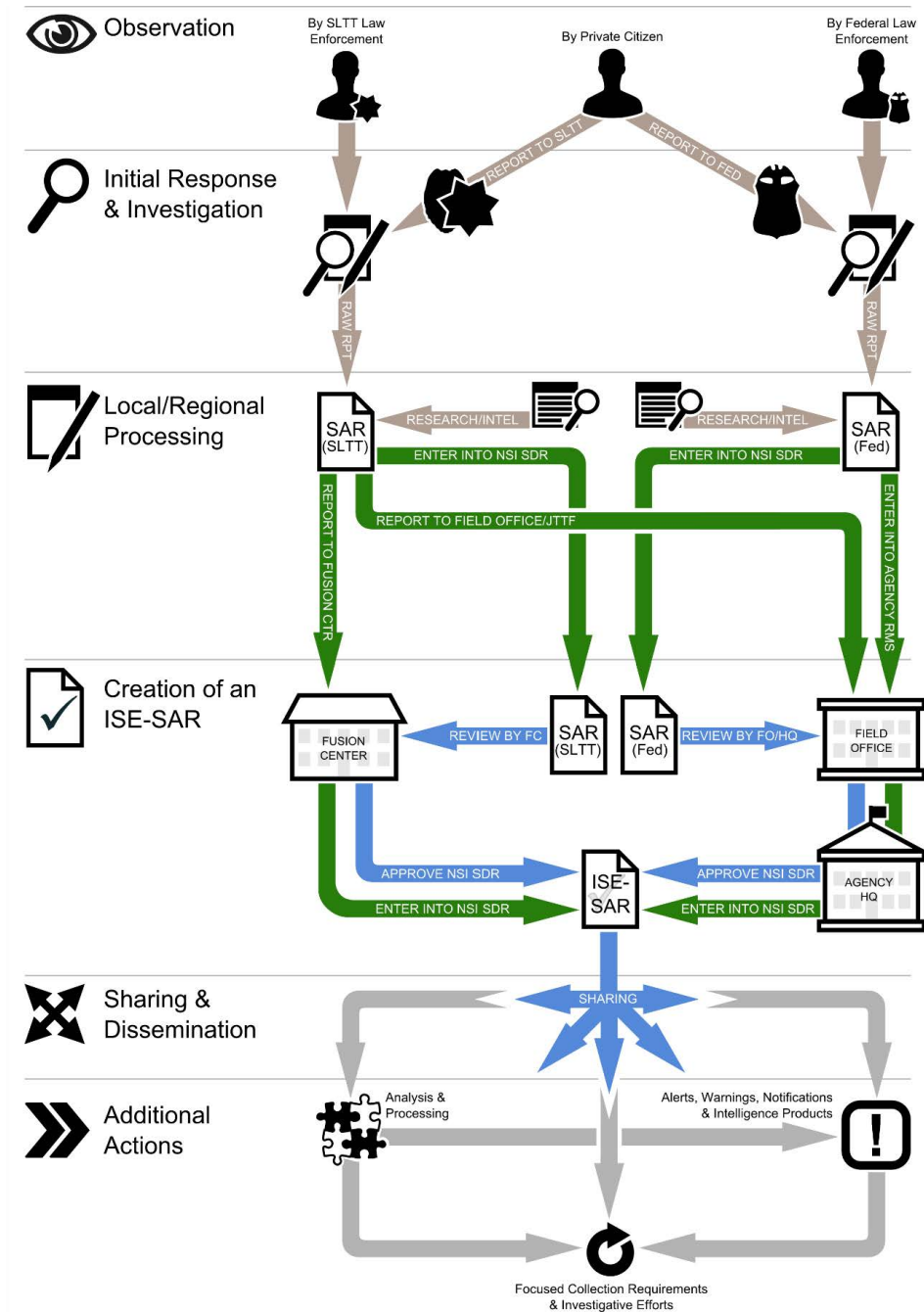


Figure 1.2. Nationwide Fusion Network. “2014-2017 National Strategy for the National Network of Fusion Centers,” *National Fusion Center Association*, July 2014, <https://nfcausa.org>.

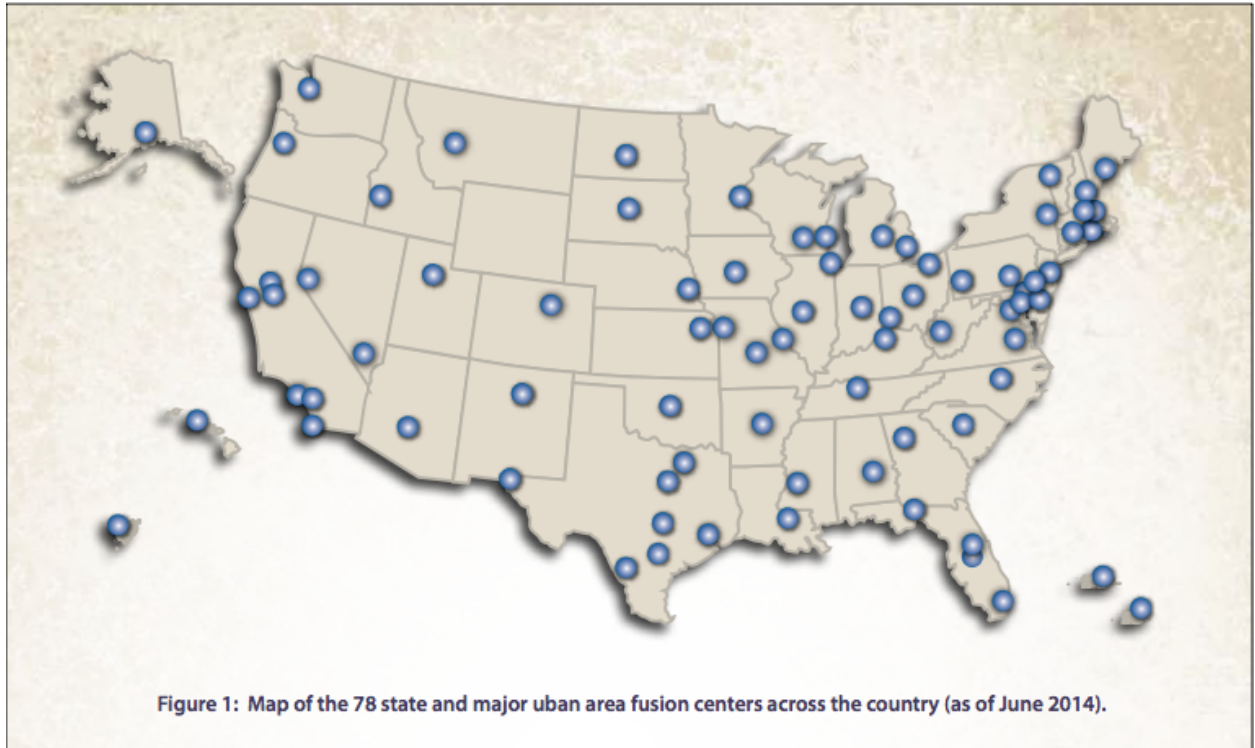


Figure 1.3. Texas Fusion Center Locations. “Fusion Center Locations and Contact Information,” *Department of Homeland Security*, accessed June 18, 2018, <https://www.dhs.gov/fusion-center-locations-and-contact-information>.

Texas

- [Texas Joint Crime Information Center](#) (Primary) – 512-424-7981 / 866-786-5972
- [Austin Regional Intelligence Center; Austin, TX](#) (Recognized) – 512-974-2742
- [Dallas Fusion Center; Dallas, TX](#) (Recognized) – 214-671-3482
- El Paso Multi-Agency Tactical Response Information eXchange (MATRIX); El Paso, TX (Recognized) – 915-680-6500
- Houston Regional Intelligence Service Center; Houston, TX (Recognized) – 713-884-4710
- [North Texas Fusion Center; McKinney, TX](#) (Recognized) – 972-548-5537
- [Southwest Texas Fusion Center](#); San Antonio, TX (Recognized) – 210-207-7680

Figure 1.4. Inside the Austin Regional Intelligence Center. Nadia Galindo, “Austin’s Intelligence Center Looking to Add More Agencies to Regionalize Law Enforcement,” *CBS Austin*, June 15, 2016, <https://cbsaustin.com/news/local/austins-intelligence-center-looking-to-add-more-agencies-to-regionalize-law-enforcement>.

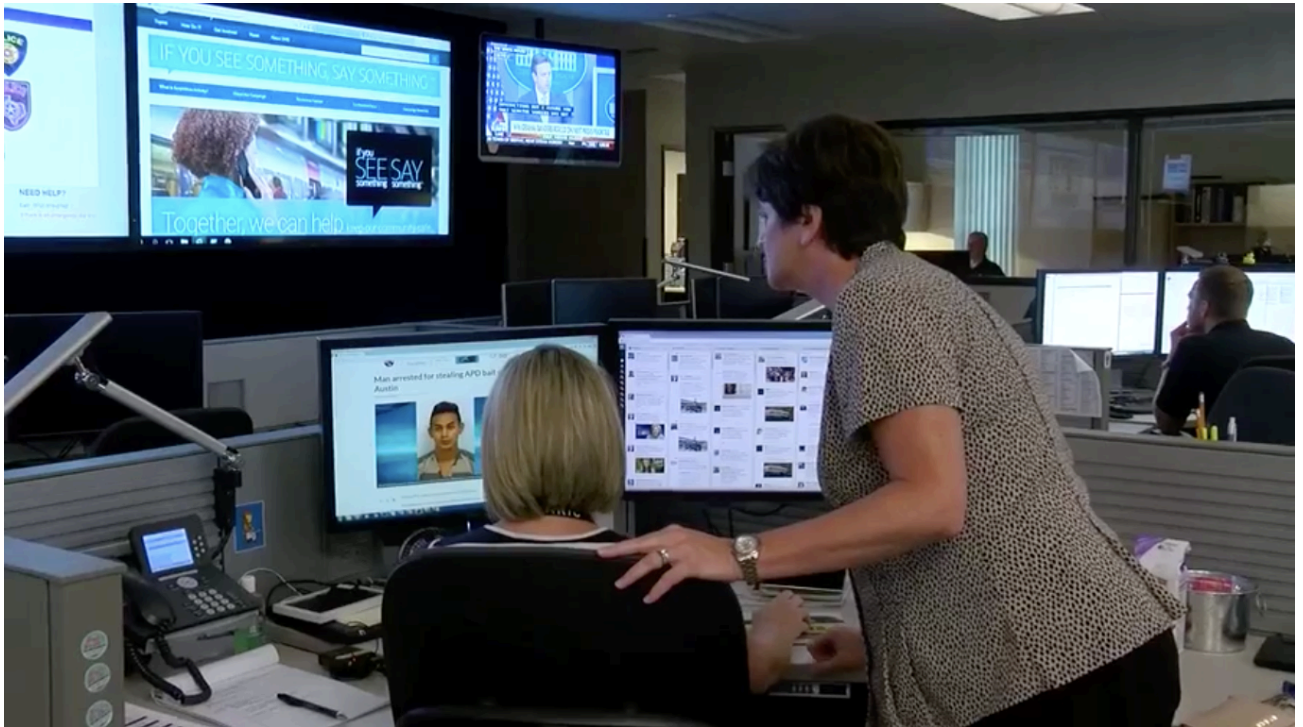


Figure 1.5. Inside the Dallas Police Fusion Center. Brian Heaton, “Fusion Centers: Have They Found Their Sweet Spot?” *Government Technology Magazine*, October 23, 2014, <http://www.govtech.com/security/Fusion-Centers-Have-They-Found-Their-Sweet-Spot.html>.



Figure 1.6. Inside the North Texas Fusion Center, McKinney. Forrest Wilder, “Dr. Bob’s Terror Shop,” *The Texas Observer*, April 3, 2009, <https://www.texasobserver.org/3003-dr-bobs-terror-shop/>.



Figure 1.7. Inside the Southwest Regional Fusion Center, San Antonio. “SA’s Ultimate Crime Trackers: Inside the Fusion Center.” *News 4 San Antonio*, February 25, 2014, <https://news4sanantonio.com/news/san-antonios-voice/sas-ultimate-crime-trackers---inside-the-fusion-center>.



Chapter Two:
Close Reading, Again

“Those who boast so mightily of the scientificity of their metaphysics should receive no answer; it is enough to pluck at the bundle which, with a certain degree of embarrassment, they keep concealed behind their back.”

- Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human*

INTRODUCTION

In this section, I re-position close reading as a vital rhetorical method, if we take “method” in its broadest form as a way of doing something (here, that something is rhetorical criticism).¹³⁴ It might seem strange to argue that affect invites rhetorical critics to return to practices of close reading, since close reading emerged from rhetorical and literary traditions that disavow reading’s contingency, what Barbara Biesecker describes as regard for a “text’s own provisionality.”¹³⁵ But that is what I set out to prove: the investigation of affect calls for close reading. A look at top communication journals suggests that “close reading” is still popular (it is mentioned in abstracts, especially),¹³⁶ even if criticized since the late 1980s and early 1990s.¹³⁷ If close reading is something that critics still do, what are they doing? What value might close reading have for rhetorical criticism (if that is what “we” do), especially for affective subject matters?

134 “Method, n.” Oxford English Dictionary, accessed November 4, 2016. Method, definition 2: “More generally: a way of doing anything, esp. according to a defined and regular plan; a mode of procedure in any activity, business, etc.” Method connotes a procedure, a declaration of what will happen in advance of its happening. A prospectus might make these promises, but the temporality of the promise is such that it has to be broken and/or forgotten for it to be enacted. All the same, declaring a method assures readers that the dissertation will proceed a certain way, even if that way is yet to happen.

135 Barbara Biesecker, “Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation from Within the Thematic of ‘Différance,’” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 22, no. 2 (1989): 120.

136 See Stephen Browne, “‘Sacred Fire of Liberty’: The Constitutional Origins of Washington’s First Inaugural Address,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 19 no. 3 (2016): 397-425; Kundai Chirindo, “A (Hetero)Topology of Rhetoric and Obama’s African Dreams,” *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 19, no. 1 (2016), 50-70; David Zarefsky, “Lincoln and the House Divided: Launching a National Political Career,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 13, no. 3 (2010): 421-453;

137 See Celeste Condit, “Rhetorical Criticism and Audiences: The Extremes of McGee and Leff,” *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54 (1990): 330-345; Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, “Object and Method in Rhetorical Criticism: From Wichelns to Leff and McGee,” *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 51 (1990): 290-316; Raymie McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis,” *Communication Monographs* 56 (1989): 91-111; Stephen A. Tyler, *The Unspeakable: Discourse, Dialogue, and Rhetoric in the Postmodern World* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987); Barbara Warnick, “Leff in Context: What is the Critic’s Role?” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78, no. 2 (1992): 232-237.

Re-reading Michael Leff's textual criticism, which he likened to close reading, through Biesecker's rethinking of text/context through *différance* and contemporary affect theories, I offer another practice of close reading that reads affects' movements as they register as intervals, or breaks in signification. Acknowledgment of contingency is not all close reading can do; close reading can open up meanings that are taken for granted, or, as Avital Ronell puts it, "open cold cases."¹³⁸ Close reading with an eye to deconstruction and affect starts with different presuppositions than its "textual criticism" predecessor (which were discernible in textual criticism, if denied): 1. No-thing is fully present to itself or to a reader, who is herself produced by the reading; 2. Close reading is not confined to observation of oratory; 3. Close reading's task is not just constative but performative; and 4. Close reading is not a mere human activity. My hope is that what follows will not read as an effort to make deconstruction a method. This section thinks through how the suppositions of deconstruction-influenced rhetorical theory might change the practice of close reading.

My method is to closely read affects' detours between and through language toward unpacking the racial and metaphysical baggage of fusion center rhetoric. Plucking at the bundles on fusion centers' backs, the form of close reading this dissertation assumes is sleuthing, which Ronell describes as a performative stance of dogged curiosity that follows after traces.¹³⁹ This close reading does not disavow suspicion of a racialized state apparatus—suspicion creates an appetite to further read based on hints and suggestions—though anxiety might prove to be the more important affect (the anxieties of assuming close proximity to evidence, not "getting it," staying on the trail of evidence, and/or responding to opaque rhetoric). Close reading's object is not a text as it has been traditionally defined

¹³⁸ Quoted in Astra Taylor, *Examined Life: Excursions with Contemporary Thinkers* (New York: The New Press, 2009), 37.

¹³⁹ Diane Davis, "Breaking Down 'Man': A Conversation with Avital Ronell," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 47, no. 4 (2014): 370. See D. Diane Davis, "Confessions of an Anacoluthon: Avital Ronell on Writing, Technology, Pedagogy, Politics," *JAC* 20, no 2. (2000): 253.

in rhetoric's textual criticism (a masterpiece, a speech, a field of symbolic action). Close reading takes "affect" as its object, and close reading insists on getting close to what can only register as an interval. I read anxiety as an extra-symbolic rhetorical element, in all potential degrees of intensity—a snag, a disruption, an upheaval—to which signification responds.

First, I read through close reading in rhetorical studies as manifested in textual criticism. I then outline four different presuppositions of close reading in the rhetorical tradition from deconstructive and affective works. Finally, I elaborate how close reading can sleuth, a useful performative task for engaging opaque institutions.

CLOSE READING IN THE RHETORICAL TRADITION

In his *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* eulogy to Michael Leff, Martin Medhurst points us to a variety of works on close reading. At the end of a footnote, he writes, "The granddaddy of all close reading is, of course, Hermann G. Stelzner 'War Message' December 8, 1941: An Approach to Language. *Speech Monographs* 33 (1966): 419-37."¹⁴⁰ What did Stelzner do that would birth generations of close readers to come? He inaugurated "microcosmic" reading during a period of speech communication's "enlargement" beyond studying a speech's impact on an immediate audience.¹⁴¹ Stelzner maintains that the interplay of the microcosmic and macrocosmic "may yield insights," yet "the posture of this study is microcosmic."¹⁴² A microcosmic disposition or stance concerns only a small

140 Martin J. Medhurst, "Mike Leff, the Devil, and Me: Remembering a Friend and Scholar," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 13, no. 4 (2010): 668.

141 He believes Marie Hochmuth Nichol's 1963 *Rhetoric and Criticism* and Edwin Black's 1965 *Rhetorical Criticism* are macroscopic. Hermann G. Stelzner, "'War Message' December 8, 1941: An Approach to Language," *Speech Monographs* 33 (1966): 419. Michael Leff and Andrew Sachs name movements, genres, and ideologies as part of this turn to "complex intertextual phenomenon" and discourse formations (255). Michael Leff and Andrew Sachs, "Words the Most Like Things: Iconicity and the Rhetorical Text," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54, no. 3 (1990): 252-273.

142 Stelzner, "'War Message' December 8, 1941," 437, 419.

universe, a constellation of rhetoric that derives its meaning from how it relates to itself. Stelzer calls for making one discrete text the topographical place to delimit a critic's reading:

The present approach to Franklin D. Roosevelt's 'War Message' is 'topographical.' The speech is the 'particular place' and, to assess the configurations of its language, its 'roads,' 'rivers,' 'cities,' 'lakes,' and 'relief' are examined. To shift the figure, fragments of language are not selected from the speech and regarded as dominant lights, independent and autonomous. The concern is with the constellation, not the major stars alone. Interest centers on the order, movement, meanings, and interrelations of the language; the object is to discover not only what goes on, but how it goes on. The aim is full disclosure.¹⁴³

Close reading looks at the interwoven, inter-related movements of a speech's linguistic elements. Along similar lines, Barry Brummett suggests that rhetorical texts exist on a continuum between "discrete" and "diffuse." *Discrete texts* are a collection of signs held together in time and space through relative stability, and *diffuse texts* are complex and layered experiences where multiple meanings take place at conterminously.¹⁴⁴ For instance, he indicates that "hip-hop" is a diffuse text that includes gestures, music, clothing, etc., yet one hip-hop song may be one discrete, textual element.¹⁴⁵ Numerous questions have since come to the fore in rhetorical theory about the text as discrete object: Are texts as self-evidently interrelated as they seem? Who decides what the topographical place of a text begins and ends, and what is inside it? How should a critic read the text, if the critic comes to the text with her own assumptions?

In the history of speech criticism, Michael Leff attempted to address the above questions by systematizing textual criticism. Though his contemporaries were doing close reading,¹⁴⁶ Medhurst notes that Leff extrapolated what close reading involved. Close

143 Stelzer, "'War Message' December 8, 1941," 420.

144 Barry Brummett, *Rhetoric in Popular Culture*, fourth edition (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2014), 93-95.

145 Brummett, *Rhetoric in Popular Culture*, 94.

146 See Amy Slagell, "Anatomy of a Masterpiece: A Close Textual Analysis of Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address," *Communication Studies* 42 (1991): 155-171. Slagell was influenced by Stephen E. Lucas and Stanley Fish.

reading, Leff writes, is not a method so much as a perspective,¹⁴⁷ which leads us to an obvious question: Whose perspective? For Leff, a critic assumes the perspective of the text, which he defines as a “field of action.” A field of action has “integrity,” a structure and internal coherence—what he also called an “artistic unity”—that lends it a distinct identity.¹⁴⁸ Leff and Andrew Sachs called the textual identity a “textual context,” the context *within the text*: “an unfolding sequence of arguments, ideas, images, and figures which interact through the text and gradually build a structure of meaning.”¹⁴⁹ Close reading is said to lend substance to observations, because a critic’s claims arise from an immersion in the text’s internal context. Responding to criticism, Leff doubles down on the idea that the text “itself defines the horizon of critical attention.”¹⁵⁰ Kirt Wilson, in his tribute to Leff, states that Leff wanted to “engage the text on its own terms.”¹⁵¹ Close reading involved *oratory* as an object of study rather than other forms of “verbal arts,” because oratory is “a genre of discourse that effaces its own constructions.”¹⁵² The text of oratory issues its *own* speech, yet it is a *veiled* speech that conceals its own production and arrangement. Leff focused his rhetorical criticisms on so-called “masterpieces,” or, as Barbara Warnick phrases it, “model texts.” These texts, for Leff, were “models of rhetorical excellence” whose impact lasted beyond their first utterance.¹⁵³

Despite its adherence to the text, textual criticism necessarily involves the perspective of the critic: “The act of interpretation mediates between the experience of the critic and the forms of experience expressed in the text. To perform this act successfully, critics must vibrate what they see in the text against their own expectations and

147 Quoted in Kirk H. Wilson, “Decorum and the Legacy of Michael Leff,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 13, no. 4 (2010): 701.

148 Michael Leff, “Textual Criticism: The Legacy of G. P. Mohrmann,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72, no. 4 (1986): 383.

149 Leff and Sachs, “Words the Most Like Things,” 256.

150 Michael Leff, “Things Made by Words: Reflections on Textual Criticism,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78, no. 2 (1992): 228.

151 Wilson, “Decorum and the Legacy of Michael Leff,” 700.

152 Leff, “Textual Criticism,” 378.

153 Leff, “Textual Criticism,” 383.

predilections.”¹⁵⁴ Interpretation is vibrational, according to Leff. For Leff, the rules and systems that a critic brings to a text (a “dumb science,” he says) crumble; the text contradicts these rules with its own insights. Interpreters filter the text’s experiences through themselves, and they then make observations of the text rub up against their own prejudices. For Leff, the rules and systems exist in the critic (though Leff and Sachs would later clarify that political ideologies evolve *within* a text’s meaning).¹⁵⁵ The mediation by a critic, so Leff says, is meant to stop the critic from violently assimilating the text, yet ideally the critic should “*merge* his or her consciousness into the text as he or she understands it.”¹⁵⁶

Textual criticism throughout the rhetorical tradition, from Stelzner to Leff, advances the following assumptions: the text is a place, unity, or field with structural integrity where the context is inherent in the text; the text is oratory, or verbal speech; textual criticism’s work is constative, to describe what *is* within the text; and the human critic is the mediator between the text and what is outside the text. In the next section, I outline different presuppositions of close reading based on Biesecker’s deconstruction of text/context and the influence of affect theory in rhetorical studies.

CLOSE READING, AGAIN

I outline four suppositions: 1. No-thing is fully present to itself or to a reader, who is herself produced by the reading; 2. Close reading is not confined to observation of oratory; 3. Close reading’s task is not just constative but performative; and 4. Close reading is not a mere human activity. The suppositions below may not amount to a program for

154 Michael C. Leff, “Interpretation and the Art of the Rhetorical Critic,” *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 44, no. 4 (1980): 345.

155 Leff and Sachs, “Words the Most Like Things,” 269.

156 Leff, “Interpretation and the Art of the Rhetorical Critic,” 344.

reading, but they challenge the bundled assumptions of traditional textual criticism in rhetorical criticism, which continues to haunt the practice of close reading. Each presupposition issues a “no” that invites an affirmation of another kind of reading practice.

First, no-thing is fully present to itself or to a reader, an “I” who is produced by the reading.¹⁵⁷ Textual criticism collapses a speech’s context to the internal dynamics of a text. In other words, Leff writes as if there is no outside to the text’s essential unity. Biesecker’s introduction of deconstruction to rhetorical studies delimits rhetoric as both tropological figures (the unification of differences, like Stelzner’s topographical place and Leff’s discrete field of action) *and* the internal division of each sign that renders all meaning only from a play of differences.¹⁵⁸ Derrida describes this internal division as the trace. The trace is a *non-present remainder* (*restance*, or resistance) that divides any mark, any unit of communication, *within itself*.¹⁵⁹ The trace prevents a mark from becoming *identical to itself* in an iteration. Any form of communication, any instantiation of identity can become re-appropriated in other contexts only because of this internal division. Any appropriation is already exposed to its own an *openness* to iterability. In other words, the trace makes it impossible for a rhetorical element to refer only *to itself*. Derrida writes that the trace intervenes in all situations, whether one is sending oneself a shopping list or winking at someone.¹⁶⁰ The trace is an internal division that makes it impossible for one to be the precisely same person writing the shopping list as the person receiving it (one revisits the shopping list later and might not even recognize things on it). The trace is the internal division that makes it possible for re-marking, re-turning. A text’s “diffusion” would then

157 Dilip P. Gaonkar’s “close reading of the third kind” (CRTK) emphasizes the translucence of the text. He claims a text is a refractory surface, which constantly deflects a reader’s consumptions and gets that reader caught up in mud. Dilip P. Gaonkar, “Close Readings of the Third Kind: Reply to my Critics,” in *Rhetorical Hermeneutics: Invention and Interpretation in the Age of Science*, ed. William M. Keith and Alan G. Gross, 330-356 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997).

158 Biesecker, “Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation.”

159 Jacques Derrida, “Limited Inc. a b c...,” trans. Samuel Weber, in *Limited Inc.* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 50, 71.

160 Derrida, “Limited Inc. a b c...,” 50.

not be the opposite end of a continuum with “discreteness,” but a constitutive part of any unit of communication.

Biesecker’s reading of Derrida points us to the operations of the non-present remainder, a “semantic void,” a “differencing zone.” Biesecker claims that the space between the “(in)dependent texts” in *Glas* “deliberately and unavoidably stages the incision, the cut, the introduction of a differencing zone, a structure of *difference* that in being divided makes meaning possible.”¹⁶¹ Rhetoric as tropological unification is made possible by this structure of difference that slices any unit of communication within itself. Biesecker claims a text is not “an object that mediates between subjects (speaker and audience).” A text is a weaving-together of an infinitely divisible number of contexts. A text is more precisely figured as a *textile*:

Whether in the order of spoken or written discourse, no element can function as a sign without referring to another element which itself is not simply present. This interweaving results in each “element”—phoneme or grapheme—being constituted on the basis of the trace within it of the other elements of the chain or system. This interweaving, this textile, is the *text* produced only in the transformation of another text. Nothing, neither among the elements nor within the system, is anywhere ever simply present or absent. There are only, everywhere, differences and traces of traces.¹⁶²

An element within a system is never “simply present or absent.” No-thing can have meaning with referring to another trace that is “not simply present.” Derrida writes in *Dissemination* that to read means to enter “the game,” to get a few fingers caught in a reading rather than look at the threads from afar, surveying them.¹⁶³ The *touch*, the laying a hand, and the risk of being-touched in reading would mean that all reading is *close*

161 Biesecker, “Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation,” 118-119.

162 Derrida, quoted in Biesecker, “Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation,” 116. Original emphasis.

163 Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (New York: Continuum, 2004), 69.

reading.¹⁶⁴ Derrida writes that reading involves the addition of “some new thread,” giving *to read*.¹⁶⁵ Derrida figures reading as a process of embroidering, which involves weaving through phantom threads that enable the embroidering.¹⁶⁶ If reading involves the *addition* of some new threads, then reading *inscribes*, or makes marks. Derrida says, then, that one must “in a single gesture, but doubled, read and write.”¹⁶⁷ Reading as a weaving of traces would mean both that the “text” in question is not self-evidently unified and that the “I” reading is not simply given at the scene of reading. Biesecker’s introduction of deconstruction into rhetorical theory implicates the “who” of reading. “Who underlines?” is a retroactive question.

Second, close reading is not confined to observation of graphemes or verbal speech. Close reading commissions all the senses for its scrutiny.¹⁶⁸ Some affect theorists propose moving to sensory methodologies other than reading, because reading carries the boasts of *logos*.¹⁶⁹ However, other affect theorists have articulated an array of novel reading methods—influenced by literary studies, ethology, kinesics, ethnomethodology, and microsociology—that trace the emergence of affect, like surface reading and minor reading.¹⁷⁰ Even in a colloquial sense, one can “read a room”: get a sense of the mood, take stock of what’s happening. To emphasize the polysemy of reading does not mean that reading is a better method than other forms of sensing. It is to say that reading can follow after affect. Eve Sedgwick surmises that close reading has been regarded as a “weak

164 Joshua Gunn describes textual criticism’s close reading as a critic’s “romancing” of the text, a textual erotics. Joshua Gunn, *Modern Occult Rhetoric: Mass Media and the Drama of Secrecy in the Twentieth Century* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2005), 83.

165 Derrida, *Dissemination*, 69.

166 Derrida, *Dissemination*, 69.

167 Derrida, *Dissemination*, 69.

168 See Greg Goodale, *Sonic Persuasion: Reading Sound in the Recorded Age* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 2011).

169 See Brian L. Ott and Diane Marie Keeling, “Cinema and Choric Connection: Lost in Translation as Sensual Experience,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 4 (2011): 363–386.

170 See Heather Love, “Close but Not Deep: Literary Ethics and the Descriptive Turn,” *New Literary History* 41, no. 2 (2010): 371–391; Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*.

theory” because it documents and describes what “is.”¹⁷¹ Eugenie Brinkema argues that detailed description *is* close reading’s most enticing quality. For Brinkema, close reading calls on “the wild and many fecundities of *specificity*: difference, change, the particular, the contingent (*and*) the essential, the definite, the distinct, all dense details, and—again, to return to the spirit of Deleuze—the minor, inconsequential, secret, atomic.”¹⁷² Brinkema claims that when works articulate affect only as a vague sensation or intensity, “one can only speak of its most abstract agitations instead of any particular textual workings.”¹⁷³ Readers should attempt to notice the *particular* instantiations of affect, i.e. how anxiety becomes activated or moves differently than disgust, pressures certain bodies more than others, or spreads across a room. Contrary, to the predominant understanding that affect cannot be apprehended, Guattari writes that affect is “perfectly apprehensible to the extent that it is characterized by the existence of threshold effects and reversals in polarity.”¹⁷⁴ If nothing else, “[a]ffect is not where reading is no longer needed,” meaning affect’s diffusion does not abdicate the careful work of discerning its fluctuations.¹⁷⁵

Third, close reading is constative and performative. Diane Davis explains that there is no way to sidestep the work of exegesis, the “constative work of describing and explicating.”¹⁷⁶ Exegesis has important functions. It gives readers something to latch onto; it traces important genealogies; it provides context for a thought; it describes what is happening. But close reading is also performative, meaning it *acts*. Brinkema claims that what close reading *does* is track down detours: the alternative routes that affect takes. For Brinkema, reading follows unpredictable paths: “Tarrying with a text’s specificities is, in

171 Eve Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 145.

172 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, xv. My emphasis.

173 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, xiii.

174 Félix Guattari, “Ritornellos and Existential Affects,” trans. Juliana Schiesari and George Van Den Abbeele, *Discourse 12*, no. 2 (1990): 67.

175 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, xiv. Original emphasis.

176 Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 15.

a manner, nothing but restless detours, strange delays, awkward encounters, and endless alternative routes—a constant possible going otherwise that traces the unpredictable path of what is unexpected.”¹⁷⁷ Close reading of affect concerns the unpredictable paths of “passionate structures.”¹⁷⁸ If a method is “a vehicle use[d] to get around a text,” “a way to travel,” as Brummett surmises, then close reading as a method might be a faulty car that gets excited by off-ramps (i.e. the circuits of affective infrastructures).¹⁷⁹ Reading entertains detours and segues. The kind of car envisioned here zips in a constant possible going otherwise.

Fourth, close reading is not a mere human activity. Another way of putting this is to say: one never reads alone. Reading carries an *automatic* quality (like scanning that takes stock of something), because it is not entirely intentional.¹⁸⁰ As Forbes Morlock puts it, reading “has always, *initially*, happened.”¹⁸¹ Leff replicates the devouring-reading he wants to dodge by designating the critic as the locus of interpretation, the measure of all things. Leff advances a “rhetorical humanism.” As he acknowledges that his perspective begins “to come undone,” i.e. it cannot “close itself into a system rotten with perfection,” he writes that openness to the mutability of a text can happen by “pay[ing] heed to the human voice that resonates in all rhetorical activity.”¹⁸² All rhetorical activity, he presumes, unfolds in a human drama that is subject to constant change and fallible judgment (the “human condition”). The issue here is that Leff reduces extra-human elements of reading (limitations, iterability, change) to the “human voice.” Affect is a collective intensity that is irreducible to mere human expression. Reducing affect to human experience means

177 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 30

178 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 37, 46.

179 Barry Brummett, *Techniques of Close Reading* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2010), 29.

180 On reading rhetoric with many voices, see Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

181 Forbes Morlock, “The Subject of Reading,” in *Reading Derrida’s Of Grammatology*, ed. Sean Gaston and Ian Maclachlan (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 176.

182 Leff, “Textual Criticism,” 388.

ignoring that anxiety arises with an encounter with something that scrambles human object-subject relations. One never reads alone (hence, anxiety).

CLOSE READING AS SLEUTHING

Close reading in this project tries to assume the form of *sleuthing*, which Avital Ronell describes as a performative stance of dogged curiosity that involves snooping through texts to find traces or clues that have been left behind.¹⁸³ Sleuthing is a necessarily delayed process; it follows after events have taken place and re-traces its own steps. Sleuthing, of course, sounds like a ridiculous method for a rhetorical criticism; it might conjure images of a researcher crouched in bushes, trying to eavesdrop on a conversation. But its over-the-top serious non-seriousness is why the method may work. Sleuthing performs a Nancy Drew-esque naiveté and persistence that can be both flattering and annoying for the powers that be—typically men on the job who engage in what one intelligence handbook calls “pissing contest[s].”¹⁸⁴ Torin Monahan and Jill A. Fisher suggest that feigned naiveté can be an important negotiation within ethnographic research in opaque institutions, like security facilities, while recognizing the difficulty of prescribing this strategy for any female researcher, especially those whose sleuthing may compromise their safety.¹⁸⁵ For instance, one option by rhetoricians would likely invite serious harm on South Asian, Muslim, and black researchers in our contemporary moment: “a critic working in airports can refuse to comply with routine security procedures to explore the

183 Davis, “Breaking Down ‘Man.’” See D. Diane Davis, “Confessions of an Anacoluthon,” 253.

184 John Buckley, *Managing Intelligence: A Guide for Law Enforcement Professionals* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2014), 466. In interviews with male security professionals and their lawyers, I felt a tendency to “play dumb” so that they were not threatened. In one interview in another piece, an interviewee was shocked I “did my homework” when I asked him about SARs. See Marnie Ritchie, “Feeling for the State: Affective Labor and Anti-Terrorism Training in US Hotels,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 12, no. 2 (2015): 179–197.

185 Monahan Fisher, “Strategies for Obtaining Access to Secretive or Guarded Organizations.”

affective boundaries of the extended state security apparatus and in doing so can multiply the locations where rhetorical criticism can occur.”¹⁸⁶ Refusals to comply from particular bodies in airports—deliberate or not—are criminalized by swift, traumatic police actions. This is not to say that South Asian, Muslim, and black researchers do not play, pass, or sleuth within these institutions. It is to say that researchers prescribing that play in affective fieldwork can invite trouble for others. “Exploring” the affective boundaries of the extended state security apparatus would at best challenge the differential riskiness of research.

Sleuthing has a serious academic drive that is difficult to control. Its steadfast pursuit means putting all the resources of one’s academic labor “on it.” Ronell describes the summons, the constant impulse to re-think:

[T]hese things are inexhaustible. They call us, they summon us, and they force us to pay attention. If something had a meaning that could be tagged and decided on once and for all, we wouldn’t be called ethically to over it again and again and to review things, to question them, to open cold cases and rethink our common certitudes. All of this requires intellectual labor, the boost of our ethical, first-responder kind of instincts. All of this requires us to be on it and all over it—without, however, presuming that we have been able to master something.¹⁸⁷

Close reading—the return to “it,” a nagging question, feeling, or idea, over and over again—can open cold cases, happenings that are said to be over and done with, solved. Research can go back to these cases with a feverish desire to rethink their bundled assumptions. This requires intellectual labor to “be on it and all over it.” A researcher is, as Diane Davis puts it, “an agent on assignment,” *assigned* over and over again to a task that pursues her.¹⁸⁸ Close reading’s performative power is how it can unpack the central

186 George F. McHendry, Michael K. Middleton, Danielle Endres, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Megan O’Byrne, “Rhetorical Critic(ism)’s Body: Affect and Fieldwork on a Plane of Immanence,” *Southern Communication Journal* 79, no. 4 (2014): 298.

187 Quoted in Taylor, *Examined Life*, 37.

188 Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 113.

assumptions that hold together a bundle (and that are already fraying), i.e. a racialized discourse of felt-threat, a suspicious affective product, the truths produced by risk analysis.

The language of sleuthing might invite speculation that this dissertation will reify the “hermeneutics of suspicion” that rhetorical theory has, with considerable difficulty, tried to circumvent. Sedgwick argues that to invoke Paul Ricoeur’s “hermeneutics of suspicion” (in which he lumps Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud) has become something of an imperative: “avoid it!”¹⁸⁹ Considering the possibility that Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud grant something other than projects devoted to a “hermeneutics of recovery of meaning,” as Ricoeur claims, a few questions open up: Is reading a hermeneutics? Who or what is suspicious in this practice? What comes along with “suspicion” that we might want to—well, be suspicious of? Ronald Walter Greene is perhaps the most vocal critic of a “hermeneutics of suspicion” in rhetorical studies. He argues that a hermeneutics of suspicion turns scholars into moralizing competitors, seeking rote programs to unearth hidden meanings and presumed truths.¹⁹⁰

Greene’s criticism echoes Sedgwick, who challenges “paranoid reading” that seeks to unearth what is concealed underneath false rhetoric. For Sedgwick, a hypervigilant, self-congratulatory reading sends all ambiguity and surprise packing, or registers them only as non-sense. Sedgwick gives the example of feminist thinkers who approach psychoanalytic theory with the presumption that “a certain, stylized violence of sexual difference must always be *presumed* or *self-assumed*—even, where necessarily, imposed—simply on the ground that it can never be finally *ruled out*.”¹⁹¹ Sedgwick argues that one not need be paranoid to know, nor to make that knowledge relevant to combatting oppression. Paranoia, she says, is one form of knowing.

189 Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 124-125.

190 Ronald Walter Greene, “Another Materialist Rhetoric,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 15, no. 1 (1998): 21-40.

191 Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 133.

As Heather Love, Tavia Nyong'o, and Sedgwick note, though, if reading is not merely a "program" one can follow, it would avow its own negativity—its paranoia, aggressivity, frustration, and suspicion. Arguments against suspicion often set the affect up as a straw-person. Matthew Bost and Greene take issue with "cultivating suspicion as a political disposition," because capitalists and conservatives use the same disposition for their ends.¹⁹² Yet, suspicion has aesthetic specificity. Suspicion recoils from an abject object, which can be a number of things marked before a reader knows it, i.e. a racialized practice, an upsetting phrase, a cultural assumption that does not sit well, a person who has been politically iffy in the past. Suspicion sets evaluation going full-steam, sometimes without asking questions, and it can inspire a voracious appetite to track something down. Suspicion can also aid in survival, like suspicion of the police, which casts doubt on the extent to which police are helpful (it is not as if the police have a secret that suspicion uncovers; it is no secret how violent they are). Suspicion is also fundamental to the pursuit of political "truths," because suspicion insists on digging deeper, through more layers—if the truths claimed by suspicion are contingent and provisional, even if the digging only uncovers more, perhaps even better dirt rather than some foundational bedrock. Additionally, Nyong'o points out how critical and queer projects cannot help but adopt some of a "paranoid schizoid" sociality—to marshal around the feeling "my ears are burning."¹⁹³ Because suspicion "cannot guarantee its purpose" (what can?) is no reason to write the affect off the political terrain.¹⁹⁴ Suspicion can be an important hesitation.

Sleuthing follows after and attunes itself to affect without trying to uncover it as an immutable, constant substance. In the place of a heroic euphoria of "correct interpretation,"

192 Matthew Bost and Ronald Walter Greene, "Affirming Rhetorical Materialism: Enfolding the Virtual and the Actual," *Western Journal of Communication* 75, no. 4 (2011): 441.

193 Tavia Nyong'o, "Trapped in the Closet with Eve," *Criticism* 52, no. 2 (2010): 246.

194 Bost and Greene, "Affirming Rhetorical Materialism," 441.

anxiety can precipitate a productive “structural stuckness that does not know what to do with itself to *be enough*.”¹⁹⁵ Anxiety, linked with the narrowing of corridors and passageways, makes readers feel the unavoidable squeeze of thinking and interpreting—especially of confronting “what is not in the order of signification.”¹⁹⁶ Lacan describes how thinking about anxiety involves working *without a net*, a network of signifiers that will perfectly capture anxiety’s movements.¹⁹⁷ Lacan tells his students that he will assume the position of a tightrope walker, proceeding slowly, delicately, aware that he can fall off track easily. A tightrope walker follows after threads with care.¹⁹⁸ Lacan insists digressions may be inevitable when studying anxiety, because anxiety has only ever been approached obliquely; Freud never settled on an account of anxiety, making anxiety a moving target in psychoanalytic thought. Close reading as sleuthing involves confronting the “claustrophobic, tight gap[s]” where thinking can feel like circling back, tightrope walking, running in place, or treading water.¹⁹⁹

This “working without a net” business can propel the work of questioning common certitudes. Ronell indicates that the plot of detective fiction often includes the detective reaching a moment where she must “turn in the badge,” renouncing that she has pure authority on the messiness of a particular case, which I will attempt in the final chapter of the dissertation.²⁰⁰ Sleuthing does not belie a superior intellect that can unveil truths or outsmart others. If close readers are “meaning detectives” who “notice meanings that others might not,” as Brummett suggests, their authority to render meanings is continually humbled by anxiety, their badges thrown on the desk in frustration. A sleuth cannot resolve

195 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 238.

196 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 208.

197 Lacan, *Anxiety*, 9.

198 Ahmed writes that carefulness can ironically lead to the event it is trying to guard against, because extreme care can make a body clumsier. Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 81.

199 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 208; Copjec, *Read My Desire*, 131; Lacan, *Anxiety*, 9.

200 Quoted in Davis, “Confessions of an Anacoluthon,” 253.

the impasses of a particular case, nor can they shelve the case, be done with it. Sleuthing imports all the anxieties that come with rendering conclusions from hints, traces, and suggestions. The messiness of a case will continue to haunt.

A legitimate concern of the dissertation method is how to counteract fusion centers' "zones of opacity," what Monahan and Regan describe as protected spaces that institute asymmetrical visibilities, uneven arrangements of who/what can look and be looked at. These arrangements warrant suspicion, a critical hesitation. Opacity is a rhetorical effect and act; it institutes a dynamic of (un)apprehendibility. Opacity provides narrow freedom to access space, information, and resources. Monahan and Regan prove that fusion centers are not responsive-to others, meaning they do not have to answer calls to justify their practices. Some of fusion centers' operations will be beyond the reach of a researcher, beyond Nietzsche's poking stick. National security meets its own non-responsivity with a drive to make *others* responsive to its policies, actions, and affective regimes. National institutions of surveillance demand full transparency of people, spaces, and practices—like Lantern Laws that mandated slaves carry lit candles after dark or X-ray machines that flag trans*, disabled, and black passengers at airports. National security, however, is at times also dully transparent. Over 850,000 people have US national security clearances; the operations of homeland security are available to many, even if these workers are not informed of the outcome of their work.²⁰¹ National security's distribution of opacity and transparency can be met by tactics that frustrate its arrangements, i.e. slaves who blew the Lantern Law-mandated candles out and whistleblowers who broadened access to surveillance intel to critical media outlets.

Another concern is how to keep tabs on a seemingly omnipotent, all-pervasive surveillance system. Ronell describes: "the police, haunting everything, are everywhere,

²⁰¹ Priest and Arkin, "A Hidden World, Growing Beyond Control."

even where they are not; their mode of being present does not coincide with presence, which is why the pernicious effects of increased surveillance need to be studied beyond any simplistic notions of a subject's 'being present at the scene'”²⁰² Browne elaborates “dark sousveillance” as a range of tactics to counteract surveillance’s all-encompassing control. Slave and abolitionist practices of dark sousveillance “appropriated, co-opted, repurposed, and challenged” how surveillance systems operated “in order to facilitate survival and escape.”²⁰³ Dark sousveillance “charts possibilities and coordinates modes of responding to, challenging, and confronting a surveillance that was almost all-encompassing.”²⁰⁴ Its charting of potential responses operates “undersight” from normalized institutional visibility.²⁰⁵

Sleuthing involves a kind of fieldwork that sniffs the ground, where the sniffing is an *attentiveness* to power dynamics. In this form, close reading follows closely with institutional ethnography, which Kevin Walby and Seantal Anaïs suggest can track the flow of information in surveillance institutions.²⁰⁶ Of course, security and police forces have their own forms of sleuthing. Police bloodhounds (one can think of McGruff the Crime Dog) are enormous creatures who are trained to sleuth and retrieve prey that would otherwise be inaccessible to human hunters. Bloodhounds tracked down and subdued Native Americans, slaves, and Civil Rights protesters. Sniffing down a trace is a marking

202 Avital Ronell, *Finitude's Score: Essays for the End of the Millennium* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), xi.

203 Browne, *Dark Matters*, 21.

204 Browne, *Dark Matters*, 21. Counter-surveillance measures against fusion centers include “Operation Defuse” (a libertarian effort to expose fusion centers in response to Virginia fusion center spying on right-wing activists), the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and regional audits like StopLAPD Spying. Texans for Accountable Government (TAG) have also protested fusion centers in Texas: “Texans for Accountable Government,” *Tag Texas*, accessed July 8, 2018, <http://www.tagtexas.org/>. For more on various measures against fusion centers, see: Nadia Kayyali, “Fusion Centers: The 78 Local Intelligence Hubs Spying On Us All,” *Gizmodo*, April 8, 2014, <https://gizmodo.com/fusion-centers-the-78-local-intelligence-hubs-spying-o-1560675084>.

205 Browne, *Dark Matters*, 21.

206 Kevin Walby and Seantal Anaïs, “Research Methods, Institutional Ethnography, and Feminist Surveillance Studies,” in *Feminist Surveillance Studies*, ed. Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoana Amielle Magnet (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 216. They believe interviews can follow along “active texts” that get transferred from department to department, through surveillance processes (217). Interviews are a point of access for snooping. I take issue with Walby and Anaïs’ disciplinary anxieties about “surveillance studies” needing empirical, qualitative research in order to be taken seriously or separate from security and intelligence studies.

of territory; it marks something or someone as conquerable and apprehensible. The trick is how to sniff the ground, how to follow threads as a tactic of dark sousveillance.

Close reading's performative power can open up the assumptions on which racializing surveillance institutions rely: unpacking metaphysical baggage. Reading in the service of dark sousveillance can operate a few ways. First, it can mean retrieving the traces (documents, hearsay, observation) which show how surveillance systems work. Publishing these operations may provide material to mobilize counter-maneuvers from those who are subject to racializing surveillance. Second, it can mean being all over the racializing suppositions and affective dispositions that have been met with little resistance, ready to register and challenge them. Third, it can mean being intrusively curious in spaces that do not welcome critical attention in order to jolt an opaque institution's comfort with its own inaccessibility. These actions alone may not guarantee escape from forms of control, but they might allow for more breathing space under a surveillance regime. Finally, reading as sleuthing amasses traces for future struggles and meddlers. Close reading re-visits the cold cases of surveillance: its affective facts, predictive truths, and programs of packaging suspicious products.

SLEUTHING IN ANXIOUS AFFECTIVE INFRASTRUCTURES

Sleuthing, close reading through the motivational suspicions and anxieties of dogged curiosity, recognizes that all texts are diffuse. Close reading that *attends* to diffusion is challenging, but the four principles above can guide the reading practice. Close reading within this project produces a number of figures of the sleuth-critic, calls for close attention to affect's specificity, unpacks racialized bundles of feeling and thought, and affirms the non-human intensities and forces that accompany reading. Again,

psychoanalytic accounts of anxiety have assumed many forms that welcome (or, at the very least, cannot avoid) anxiety's non-linear progress: circling back, tightrope walking, running in place, or treading water.²⁰⁷

What is a rhetorical sleuth to do in anxious affective infrastructures? How is a sleuth embedded within them and apart from them? How might a sleuth's personal anxieties, produced throughout the research process, reflect public anxieties? The following two sections of rhetorical analysis perform this embeddedness. The two sections follow anxiety by stepping closer and further to fusion centers proper.

In the first section called "Closer," I closely read observations and interviews from ethnography within one Texas fusion center. The section inspires two provocations. First, ethnographic sleuthing makes the positionality of the sleuth unavoidable; a sleuth's tactics of maneuvering and responding in the moment are fundamental elements of the findings. Second, the section fills in an image of what control over populations looks and feels like in a guarded state security institution. Rather than speak of fusion centers in abstractions, the section challenges specific surveillance and security practices.

Zooming out from the centers proper, in the second section called "Further," I closely read surveillance systems in Texas that link up with fusion: acoustic and informant-based. The section explores fusion as a wider practice than analysis done within the 79 centers proper. The section demonstrates two overall takeaways. First, the section shows that fusion provides analytic support for myriad intelligence systems and police technologies. These partnerships constitute interlocking layers of surveillance. If US intelligence is now a "fusion-intelligence matrix,"²⁰⁸ fusion as an anxious infrastructure runs below and alongside technical, critical surveillance infrastructures, both contemporary

207 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 208; Copjec, *Read My Desire*, 131; Lacan, *Anxiety*, 9.

208 Newkirk, "The Rise of the Fusion-Intelligence Complex."

and historical, in US cities. Second, the section questions how power operates through *indirect* persuasion. Rhetorical analysis should therefore approach persuasion as something that happens despite ourselves. Motivated by safety and comfort—anxious attachments to love-objects—US (non)citizens can be manipulated at their most vulnerable.

In both sections, we see how anxiety, intelligence, and racializing surveillance interrelate. In the final chapter I try to get “above” the project to consider it self-referentially, on a “meta” level. The section analyzes “intelligent analysis” in both the US intelligence community and critical/cultural and rhetorical scholarship. The issues that concern this chapter are ulterior; they implicate what “we” do as scholars concerned about appearing intelligent through our work.

I conclude by confronting some confusions brought about by closely re-reading the project’s analyses related to intelligence, anxiety, and rhetorical methods. I have declared my intentions to bring you, the reader, closer and further. The distance a reader experiences herein is subjective; there will be times a reader will feel too close or too far, subterranean or out in space. Perhaps by pulling you closer to the world of fusion centers, you will feel repelled by its practices, or by taking you meta, you will feel closer to the practice of rhetorical criticism. In each case, anxieties over proximity take form *through reading*.

CLOSER

Chapter Three:
Fusing Race: The Phobogenics of Racializing Surveillance

INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets up a framework to assess how fusion centers' purported passive institutional operations comprise an infrastructure of anxiety-based racialization. Such a framework would detail that racism, the rendering of raced bodies as out of place, is an immanent part of the melding of police, military, and national security intelligence. Toward cultivating a horizontal consciousness of information that augments war operations and domestic policing, fusion centers combine older technologies like on-the-ground human intelligence collection and Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) paper forms with newer technologies like online watch centers, spatial mapping technology, data-mining algorithms, and information networks. The Department of Justice re-conceptualized national security post-9/11 to better integrate law enforcement with homeland security and facilitate partnership between military and nonmilitary intelligence. The Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative (NSI) is a direct result of this push. Surveillance scholars have pointed out how fusion centers, the intelligence centers that process SAR's, disproportionately target racial minorities for surveillance,²⁰⁹ but it has yet to be theorized *why the fusion center's data aggregation is racializing itself*. How do we best account for racializing surveillance *as* data aggregation, so as to properly understand what fusion centers are up to? This chapter offers one answer: the information network surveillance of "suspicious" objects or subjects is built on the ground of racial anxiety.

The wager of this chapter is that Frantz Fanon's insights about "racial phobogenics" can be useful for scholarship at the intersection of race, data, security, policing, affect, and biopolitics, especially considering Fanon's own surveillance by the FBI.²¹⁰ Phobogenics is

209 Craven, Monahan, and Regan, "Compromised Trust"; McQuade, "Surveillance and Policing in Chicago"; Newkirk, "The Rise of the Fusion-Intelligence Complex"; Joshua Reeves, *Citizen Spies: The Long Rise of America's Surveillance Society* (New York: New York University Press: 2017), 155-159.

210 See Browne, *Dark Matters*, 1-30.

the rhetorical process of making a raced body into an object of anxiety such that the body becomes *fixed*, meaning paralyzed from agentive movements—a phenomenon Fanon links with “lapsing into non-being.”²¹¹ While Fanon seems to alternate between fear and anxiety as “aversive sensations,”²¹² he defines phobogenics as the reduction of a raced body to an object of *anxiety*.²¹³ In other words, a raced body is an unsettler of objects. The body becomes a moving target, a target because it can move. This body is accused of upending the capacity of those integrated into whiteness to feel settled in time and space. *Black Skin, White Masks* implicates Fanon’s French Caribbean identity and the positionality of black men, yet his discussion of racial phobogenics has wider applicability. According to Sylvia Wynter, Fanon’s works explore “what it is *like to be*, human.”²¹⁴ The experiencing of what it is like to be human or dip below that threshold is unavoidably rhetorical, meaning an effect of how discourses create and manipulate subjectivities and affects. Fusion rhetoric codifies racial phobogenics by mutating the “*rhetoricity* of our human identity” and housing these phobogenic relations in institutional infrastructures.²¹⁵

To read the extent to which fusion aggregates data by means of phobogenics, I closely read 120 hours of field observations and 14 interviews conducted over the course of 10 months (June 2017 to March 2018) in one fusion center in a moderately-sized US city in Texas.²¹⁶ The fusion center is a local center, including detectives, a crime monitoring team of police officers and military liaisons, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) liaisons, gang units, civilian data analysts, and a

211 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 34.

212 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 34.

213 Sylvia Wynter, “Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, Identity, the Puzzle of Conscious Experience, and What it is Like to Be ‘Black,’” in *National Identities and Sociopolitical Changes in Latin America*, ed. Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan and Antonio Gómez-Moriana, 30-66 (New York: Routledge, 2001), 52. On affect and posthumanism in Wynter, see Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, “Animal: New Directions in the Theorization of Race and Posthumanism,” *Feminist Studies* 39, no. 3 (2013): 669-685.

214 Wynter, “Towards the Sociogenic Principle,” 31.

215 Wynter, “Towards the Sociogenic Principle,” 60.

216 I recorded thirteen interviews and transcribed one interview by hand. The notes and interviews total 416 pages of double-spaced, typed text.

director. In order to see the extent to which practices of this center were reflected nationally, I conducted an additional 30 hours of observations during a three-day National Fusion Association Convention from November 7-9, 2017 in Alexandria, Virginia.²¹⁷ While this data set is admittedly limited to one center—and each center is different—it provides a telling snapshot into an oft-hidden analytic process. Most importantly, the findings herein—and their verification across fusion sites nationally—call into question the *modus operandi* of fusion: an affective infrastructure of transversal hypersensitivity to suspicious objects and bodies.

One critical task of a project concerned with the racial phobogenics of data policing is to question the essentializing creation of *data skins*, or digital epidermises. Simone Browne, building from Fanon, defines “digital epidermalization” as the imposition of race that converts a raced body into data.²¹⁸ Digital epidermalization is one means of enacting “racializing surveillance,” which Browne defines as the monitoring of racialized bodies that renders them out of place.²¹⁹ The consequence of digital epidermalization is that an “embodied subjectivity is dissected and reduced to a constructed ‘skin,’ or a synthetic, hollow shell, that is overwritten by the nefarious taxonomies undergirding white supremacy.”²²⁰ Taxonomies are bureaucratic systems of classification. They convert racist behaviors into the procedural work of data analysis and, in so doing, abrogate fusion’s responsibility for reproduction of racial difference. As Pauline Wakeham writes, these “chromatics of skin” within taxonomies are not just visual but *corporeal*, that is, “semiotic, somatic, and affective” within systems of biopower, or the control over life at the level of

217 The notes total 30 pages of double-spaced, typed text.

218 Browne, *Dark Matters*, 109. In other words, race is not constructed through data but as the aggregation of data itself. See Arun Saldanha, “Skin, Affect, Aggregation: Guattarian Variations on Fanon,” *Environment and Planning* 42 (2010): 2410-2427.

219 Browne, *Dark Matters*, 8.

220 Pauline Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs: Reconstructing Aboriginality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 22.

population.²²¹ Digital epidermalization and racial phobogenics go hand-in-hand, because the aggregation of anxiety *on* suspicious bodies further vacates those bodies of their embodiment.

This chapter argues that “situational awareness” is a contemporary method by which fusion taxonomizes race. “Situational awareness” taxonomies are affective, meaning they are redundant aggregations of anxiety surrounding phobic objects that become procedural replications, or built into the interoperations of intelligence work. According to high-level staff at the fusion center in question, situational awareness is a trained ability to know “what’s off,” respond to the suspicious happening, and share relevant information with third parties. “Situational awareness” is a pedagogy of abnormal behavior. On-the-ground field work can provide an image of *the biopolitics of fusing race*, meaning a system of intelligence about a suspicious species that installs racial phobogenics. Fusing race means coming to bodily awareness. This bodily awareness, while made to seem like cognitive intelligence, are *affective facts* that are more difficult to override with objections and training. I outline how the biopolitics of fusing race has three features: an affective prelogic of phobogenics; continuous, trained installation of the prelogic; and regulation over the dosage of public anxiety. This study raises the question: Can the lateral surveillance of suspiciousness under the aegis of “situational awareness” ever become decoupled from racialization?

To answer, I first outline how biopolitics and phobogenics relate. The theorization of these concepts together, first, provides a theoretical tool to read racial dynamics in security studies, and second, helps analyze how biopolitical exercises of power operate through affect, especially within settings overdetermined to be read as exercises of pure reason, like intelligence work. I then outline the affective taxonomies of “situational

²²¹ Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs*, 23.

awareness” within fusion: what is out of place and what is inflammatory. These taxonomies illuminate the biopolitics of fusing race, with its three predominant features, that cuts across fusion discourse nationwide. I end by considering the extent to which “situational awareness” can become uncoupled from its contemporary governance-structure.

BIOPOLITICS AND PHOBOGENICS

In much scholarship in the vein of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, theories of biopolitics are “taken up without its explicit grounding in racism,” according to Arun Saldanha.²²² In recent years, the models for biopolitics have been rethought along the lines of racial difference, or how “racial difference *in itself*... persists as a biocultural, biopolitical force amid other forces.”²²³ In addition to Arun Saldanha, Simone Browne, Mel Y. Chen, Jasbir Puar, Kyla Schuller, and Alexander Weheliye theorize biopolitics and race, which means making departures from how Foucault and Deleuze articulate discipline, biopower, and control.²²⁴ For Foucault, biopolitics is a mode of power that departed from and integrated disciplinary power, in at least three respects: rather than confine individuals in prison structures, biopolitics proliferates detainment-effects throughout the entire social field; rather than target individuals, biopolitics’ object is the “species body,” the population; and rather than confine an individual to one set identity, biopolitics engages in continual assessment and change in who subjects could become (Deleuze’s “dividuals” of “control societies”).²²⁵ Rather than rely on the exemplar of the Panopticon to articulate

222 Arun Saldanha, “Introduction: Bastard and Mixed-Blood are the True Names of Race,” in *Deleuze and Race*, ed. Arun Saldanha and Jason Michael Adams (Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 7.

223 Saldanha, “Introduction,” 8.

224 Browne, *Dark Matters*; Chen, *Animacies*; Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*; Schuller, *The Biopolitics of Feeling*; Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*. Weheliye argues for abandoning biopolitics discourse in favor of “racializing assemblages.” I follow Saldanha in theorizing racism as a biocultural element in the exercise of power—hence, why I operate along the lines of biopolitics. Also see Holly Randell-Moon and Ryan Tippet, *Security, Race, Biopower: Essays on Technology and Corporeality* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

225 Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 44–5. Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” *October* 59 (1992): 3–7.

discipline and control, as Foucault does in *Discipline and Punish*, Browne's reinvention of power diagnostics positions the *Brooks* slave ship as a central example of capture. The change has far-reaching effects for how we theorize discipline and biopolitics, not least of which is shifting citational practices to recognize the contributions of black and ethnic studies and under- and ill-considered bodies in history. Browne illuminates how racism is endemic to discipline and biopolitics and that these modes of power, whether hard or soft, often aim toward racial capture. Schuller explains that racism's logic is to preserve the health of a population by "managing the variability of the species as it evolves by regulating the interactions among species' members."²²⁶ Racism makes race one of the social determinants of who is allowed to live or who is subjected to premature death.

Fanon's notion of "phobogenics" is useful for analyzing race in the context of biopolitics and security, even while he works along psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic lines. Racial phobogenics are premised on continual failures of a self to gather itself together in a unity. He puts Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler in conversation describe foundational misalignments of a self: "I am willing to work on the psychoanalytical level—in other words, the level of the 'failures,' in the sense in which one speaks of engine failures."²²⁷ According to David Marriott's reading of Fanon, self-invention is a "kind of stricture (or endless deferral and complication)."²²⁸ A subject is made "black insofar as, paradoxically, it grasps its own impossible whiteness."²²⁹ This describes the affective bribe of whiteness: the hope that one can become human by becoming-white, thus promising to alleviate anxious sidestepping between identity-masks. Phobogenesis has to do with the *becoming* of anxieties, or how anxieties secure oppressive relations between bodies. It can

²²⁶ Schuller, *The Biopolitics of Feeling*, 50.

²²⁷ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 23.

²²⁸ David Marriott, "Inventions of Existence: Sylvia Wynter, Frantz Fanon, Sociogeny, and 'the Damned,'" *CR: The New Centennial Review* 11, no. 3 (2011): 50.

²²⁹ Marriott, "Inventions of Existence," 60.

therefore help explain how security and surveillance practices operate through affective means, while insisting on foregrounding analysis of their racializing, or even racist, effects.

Fanon writes that the phobic racial body is integrated into an epidermal racial schema, and Browne usefully translates the language of epidermalization to a digital surveillance context. Saldanha defines the epidermal schema as “a pattern of behavior, a set of capabilities and constraints dividing people on the basis of their skin color into two separate worlds: white colonizer or black Arab native.”²³⁰ The epidermal schema is, as the name indicates, dermal. Its set of affordances and constrictions work at the level of the skin and, according to Fanon, *below* the skin. The fixed look of whiteness gets *under* black skin through “introjection and imposition.”²³¹ Digital epidermalization is the process of introjection and imposition, the stripping of bodies of humanness *qua* an-other, through data categorization.²³² Biometric technologies that scan traces of people’s identities (facial features) at borders are part and parcel of racializing surveillance, to render bodies that do not meet the thresholds of personhood or citizen waylaid, delayed, and denied.

Whether digital or non-digital, the schema’s “complex system of coercions and complicities” *is an aggregation of affect*, “affects adding up.”²³³ The aggregation of anxious affects between “natives” and “colonizers” operates below critical registers: “it keeps both native and colonizer anxiously preoccupied with the impossibilities of their position towards each other. The former is doomed to incompleteness and envy, the latter to self-destructive decadence and paranoia.”²³⁴ Affective aggregation installs epidermal schemas below conscious reach: “like all power relations, racism operates first of all through the materialities of desire and landscape far ‘below’ any mental or linguistic

230 Saldanha, “Skin, Affect, Aggregation,” 2412.

231 Marriott, “Inventions of Existence,” 85.

232 Browne, *Dark Matters*, 109.

233 Saldanha, “Skin, Affect, Aggregation,” 2411, 2412.

234 Saldanha, “Skin, Affect, Aggregation,” 2413.

detectability.”²³⁵ I explore the ways affective taxonomies related to race become embedded in surveillance infrastructures like fusion centers. Affects add up, in repetition. Affects act as exercises of power and enable systems of population control. As I show in the next section, “situational awareness” is a series of congealed affective taxonomies of racial anxiety, about what is *out of place* and what is *inflammatory*.

AFFECTIVE TAXONOMIES OF “SITUATIONAL AWARENESS”

“Situational awareness” is a psychological term found in behavioral cognitive science that denotes mental consciousness of relevant information within a situation. Fusion centers issue situational awareness reports, which operate as “FYI’s”: be aware of this, in case it becomes relevant. One of the goals of the “National Strategy for Fusion Centers” for 2014-2017 was to increase situational awareness efforts: “Increase the overall connectivity between fusion centers and the federal government to strengthen analytic and information sharing capabilities and enhance situational awareness through collaborative efforts to protect the homeland.”²³⁶ Collaborative efforts of fusion are made possible through extensive sharing of databases. While the ACLU undercut the extent to which fusion centers could use live video feeds and facial recognition technology on videos (though a topic of conversation at the conference was how to circumvent this by using facial recognition on profile pictures), fusion centers host myriad databases as well as access databases hosted on private servers. Centralized databases are, in Browne’s words, “techniques for knowing the body and behavioral traits through the accumulation of records.”²³⁷ Its identity documents “fragment individuals... into body components and

235 Saldanha, “Introduction,” 7.

236 “2014-2017 National Strategy for the National Network of Fusion Centers,” 13.

237 Simone Browne, “Digital Epidermalization: Race, Identity, and Biometrics,” *Critical Sociology* 36, no. 1 (2009): 136.

features (sex, height, hair color, eye color... for the purposes of reading, sorting, or categorizing the body, and sometimes for profiling and preemption.”²³⁸ Fusion databases are mobile elaborations of older paper-formed police dossiers and profiles, and they are extensive. Fusion workers communicate with each other across emails, a Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN), COPLINK, and Guardian databases (a threat-tracking system with different FBI and fusion-level programs).²³⁹ The extent of access to databases and data repositories is difficult to track. At the conference, one fusion director in Texas boasted of hosting 30 databases within his fusion center.

Sharing information through databases to further “situational awareness” has become justification to conflate military and nonmilitary intelligence. The USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 contained measures to mobilize law enforcement against terroristic threats. Fusion centers are an extension of this immediate impulse to couple security, police, and military intelligences. Former Director of National Intelligence (DNI) under President Barack Obama, Admiral Dennis C. Blair, called for a national intelligence strategy in 2009 that would blur the line between military and nonmilitary intelligence: “The IC will deliver actionable intelligence to support diplomats, military units, interagency organizations in the field, and domestic law enforcement organizations at all levels.”²⁴⁰ Homeland security personnel therefore begin to “capitalize on what patrol officers already did when dealing

238 Browne, “Digital Epidermalization,” 137.

239 The Guardian Program replaced the Defense Department’s controversial TALON (Threat and Local Observation Notice) intelligence program, which the ACLU criticized for permitting government spying on domestic anti-war dissenters. Walter Pincus, “Protesters Found in Database,” *Washington Post*, January 17, 2007, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/16/AR2007011601731.html>. “Privacy Impact Assessment for the eGuardian Threat Tracking System,” *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, November 25, 2008, https://www.aclu.org/files/pdfs/spyfiles/ma_16fbi_attach_eGuardianprivacythreat.pdf. A North Texas fusion center has a database housed in the Center for Criminal Justice Research at the University of Texas Arlington that consists of ordinances. See Evenson, “The Texas Law Enforcement Resource Center.” The center has an advisory board that includes executive managers of criminal justice in North Central Texas, private companies like Office Depot, and university criminal justice departments.

240 “The National Intelligence Strategy of the United States of America,” National Intelligence, August 2009, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nis2009.pdf>, 5.

with the general public.”²⁴¹ The cops are the eyes and ears for homeland security and military intelligence. As one fusion center worker explained to me, the cops “don’t have time to have absorbed what happened on CNN or Fox News or on the internet.” The fusion center opens police officers to sharing information (“let everybody nibble at your cheese,” in the words of one director). The fusion center I observed has a military liaison sit in the center twice a week to catch wind of any intelligence that may affect the military installations in the city.

The cultivation of situational awareness in fusion centers allows for blurred interests between private sector security and public security. Fusion centers allow security firms access to databases that were previously inaccessible. As the ACLU documented in 2008, security groups gain access to fusion centers *because* fusion centers can access databases beyond any accountability: “fusion centers often have subscriptions with private data brokers such as Accurint, ChoicePoint, LexisNexus, and LocatePlus, a database containing cellphone numbers and unpublished telephone records.”²⁴² Janet Napolitano, a vocal supporter for the fusion network, explains the joint awareness of having multiple personnel next to each other: “In a typical fusion center, an FBI agent might be sitting next to a state highway patrol officer. They don’t merely share space. They share databases and techniques.”²⁴³ Fusion centers share information with private companies as well. For instance, through one partnership, the fusion center I observed can access bank cameras.

Situational awareness, the collective consciousness provided by these databases, is hardly relegated to shared cognitive functions. Through detailed reading of fusion center

241 Meg Stalcup, “Policing Uncertainty: On Suspicious Activity Reporting,” in *Modes of Uncertainty: Anthropological Cases*, ed. Limor Samimian-Darash and Paul Rabinow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 70.

242 Mike German and Jay Stanley, “Fusion Center Update,” ACLU, July 29, 2008, https://www.aclu.org/files/pdfs/privacy/fusion_update_20080729.pdf, 3.

243 Quoted in “Transcripts: Fusion Centers at Hub of Government Tracking,” *CNN*, September 30, 2009, <http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0909/30/ltn.02.html>.

observations and interviews, I isolate the taxonomies of hypersensitive anxiety that comprise “situational awareness.” These hypersensitivities revolve around: first, what is out of place, and second, what is inflammatory. Classification systems allow safe passage for the expression of racial anxiety and allow raced bodies to be imbued as phobogenic objects. In Saldanha’s terms, they allow for the aggregation of anxiety. While these taxonomies in question predate fusion centers, these affective taxonomies *become* the interoperations of intelligence through nationwide installation of fusion centers—an installation likely to continue.²⁴⁴

What is Out of Place

This section indicates that Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) are digital skins for racial minorities that fix them, in the sense that law enforcement can keep tabs on racialized bodies with greater ease and with more longitudinal methods. The affective taxonomy of SARs is hypersensitivity to missing terroristic threats in myriad categories of criminal activity. Fusion workers’ guts therefore become more susceptible to the influence of anxiety, the scrambling of objects and the inability to control the future. As my observations and interviews indicate, anxieties about missing threats concentrate around racialized objects, namely Orientalized objects. Affective truths, facts at the level of the gut, form about these objects and the bodies to which they are attached. The affective taxonomy of hypersensitivity shows that the affective economy of threat surrounding Middle Eastern and South Asian nationalities as well as Muslims is embedded in intelligence infrastructures.²⁴⁵ This chapter shows that the embeddedness happens *because* fusion diffuses responsibility for judging the credibility to the JTTF and the FBI. Contrary

²⁴⁴ Since beginning my research, another fusion center received official certification.

²⁴⁵ See Sara Ahmed, “Affective Economies,” *Social Text* 22, no. 2 (2004): 117-139.

to their spoken role of vetting out racial stereotypes, a common fusion refrain, fusion allows safer passage for racial anxieties between residents and police and law enforcement. The anxious lateral surveillance of “If You See Something, Say Something” that pushes tips to the fusion center from police and residents is made to be a well-oiled machine; the anxiety of threat gets pushed to higher authorities where it can take on a more fixed position. Even when analysts in the particular center in question know the report is based off a racial stereotype, they pass the information along to others in case it could be credible.

Priscilla M. Regan, Torin Monahan, and Krista Craven write that it is rather shocking that fusion centers still rely on SARs, given that SARs are relatively anachronistic.²⁴⁶ The reports are slow to fill out, provide general knowledge, and lack clear indicators of suspicious behavior. They do initiate circuits of follow-up with residents and police to see if the initial reporter has any more actionable information to provide, like a photograph of a vehicle rather than a general description of a person. SARs range in terms of suspicious activity categories; there are typically 10+ categories for suspicious behavior on SARs (Figures 3.1 and 3.2). Surveillance scholars know little about how SARs invite racial profiling, but one audit of LA County indicated that they disproportionately targeted racial minorities.²⁴⁷ Within the SARs, abbreviations were used for the racial make-up of suspects. Through SARs, police or resident suspicion is transferred to fusion centers and, after vetting, transferred to semi-permanent databases. The report sits there in case the information can become useful within the five years the fusion center is allowed to hold it.²⁴⁸

246 Regan, Monahan, and Craven, “Constructing the Suspicious.”

247 See Reeves, *Citizen Spies*, 155-159.

248 “Retain information for no more than five years to work a tip or lead or SAR information to determine its credibility and value, assign a —disposition|| label (for example, undetermined or unresolved, cleared or unfounded, or under active investigation) so that a subsequently authorized user knows that status and purpose for the retention and will retain the information based on the retention period associated with the disposition label.” “Privacy Policy,” *Texas Fusion Center*, November 30, 2011, <https://www.dps.texas.gov/docs/TxFCPrivacyPolicy113010.pdf>.

In Texas, police can submit SARs through an online portal and residents can submit SARs through an online app or on the Texas Department of Public Safety website (Figures 3.3 and 3.4). In 2016, there were 2,347 reports filed into the TX DPS sites in the SARN statewide.²⁴⁹ Of these, 1,173 were categorized under “pre-operational surveillance.” The second highest number was 430 for “drug/narcotic offenses” and third highest was 279 for “alien smuggling.” Using the SAR Data Repository, SAR analysts provide real-time data analytics (Figure 3.5).²⁵⁰ SAR analysts can map patterns spatially and temporally. At the national fusion conference, the director of the SAR program statewide provided a success story that involved working with a Walmart in Texas to disrupt a criminal pattern in late 2014. Digital analytic systems like COPLINK provide detailed pattern visualization, such as when suspects (Person 10 and 11) showed up at the parking lot in Walmart and when two suspects appeared together. In Texas, tips also come in through Crime Stoppers whereby residents could get paid through Crime Stoppers for providing tips, as a supervisor recounts: “we’ll vet that information. We might even get our investigators involved. And then they will go out to validate information.” The clearest example of digital epidermalization through data charts is the monitoring of the North Dakota Access Pipeline protests by the North Dakota fusion center. One chart demonstrates alleged connections between North Dakota Access Pipeline protesters, Anonymous, and Black Lives Matter (Figure 3.6).²⁵¹ The chart shows how relationships between movements become visualized, arrests become charted, and embodied activist leaders become clickable, criminalized avatars. SARs help fusion workers fill in data charts.

249 Lexi Quinney, “Suspicious Activity Reporting in Texas” (presentation, National Fusion Center Association Convention, Alexandria, Virginia, November 6, 2017).

250 The image can be viewed online: “Information Sharing Environment-Suspicious Activity Report, aka ISE-SAR, Functional Standard v. 1.5.5,” *Office of the Director of National Intelligence*, February 23, 2015, https://www.dni.gov/files/ISE/documents/DocumentLibrary/SAR/SAR_FS_1.5.5_IssuedFeb2015.pdf.

251 The chart was originally published by *The Intercept*: Will Parrish, “An Activist Stands Accused of Firing a Gun At Standing Rock. It Belonged to Her Lover — An FBI Informant,” *The Intercept*, December 11, 2017, <https://theintercept.com/2017/12/11/standing-rock-dakota-access-pipeline-fbi-informant-red-fawn-fallis/>.

The intelligence value of Suspicious Activity Reports has been called into question numerous times by others writing about fusion centers,²⁵² yet one predominant reason it should continue to be questioned is how it acts as a form of digital epidermalization per phobogenics. Through lateral surveillance under “If You See Something, Say Something,” the embodied presences of individuals and populations are converted into thin files, data skins. The ownership over one’s “own” data skins can be superseded by police and security procedures in fusion centers; and so the potentially terrorizing effects of racial profiling can be downplayed as a banal part of the job. Joshua Reeves writes, “Given the ambiguous signs of terrorism that circulate among the public, the intelligence value of lateral surveillance is more dubious than ever.”²⁵³ I discuss two examples of dubious digital epidermalization inspired by phobogenics.

In the first case, I observed police officers in the fusion center watch center discuss an event for which another officer later made an SAR:

[A fusion] police officer... heard murmurings of “Islamic paperwork” that was found at a bus station. “Some Islamic writing or whatever” – a worker had to email people at the FBI or JTTF to alert them. Maybe an hour after these murmurings, a[nother] police officer, who these four men have not met, it seems, brings in the paperwork in question. There are two copies of The Qu’ran. When explaining why he brought the materials in, the cop explains “The Qu’ran, ok whatever,” and seems interested in the odd addresses on the recovered letters. He says there’s some “crazy stuff in there” “some weird stuff is going on” – and believes the individual who the letters belong to might be trying to “recruit” others. Recruit for what? I wonder. The cop and two of the monitoring center people start looking through the mail and letters, with the cop listing them: “Charles Manson,” “The Ultimate Punisher,” “Christopher Thomas...” Another agent, who I later learn likes watching the live camera footage from around the building because he “got into it,” suggests there might have been cameras in the Greyhound station where the letters were found. The police officer keeps repeating that he does not even know if the person to whom the items belong was even present at the scene.²⁵⁴

252 See Regan, Monahan, and Craven, “Constructing the Suspicious”; Stalcup, “Policing Uncertainty.”

253 Reeves, *Citizen Spies*, 139.

254 Field note, October 2, 2017.

The police officer momentarily deactivates anxiety surrounding the Qu'ran ("ok whatever"), but curiously, the threat-event first reached the fusion center as "Islamic paperwork." The police officers in the watch center began murmuring about "Islamic paperwork" as I scribbled in my notebook. In the passage above, we can sense the building of suspicions: murmurs, Islamic, papers, letters, pseudonyms, an absent passenger. The threat become re-narrativized (first, it is about the copies of the Qu'ran, then it is about the letters stuffed into the copies of the Qu'ran). The gap remains (Is it Islamic threat or not?). Anxiety builds. A case is opened. And the case can remain open for at least five years.

In the second case, a police officer filed a Suspicious Activity Report over a homeless man's machete that the police officer reported had "Arabic writing" on the side. As a fusion analyst explained to me, the data analysts at the fusion center realized the phrase on the machete was in Kurdish. The analysts contextualized the written phrase, because they believed it to be a common cultural phrase. They decided that violence is part of the Kurdish culture, where they "cut off hands" in the culture, in the words of the analyst. They decided to send along to Homeland Security but advised in the report to "take it with a grain of salt." At all stages of the objects' circulation is it and the previous owner Orientalized. A thin layer of a person stands in for the rest of the individual: violent, Oriental, homeless threat. In a new post-script for *Terrorist Assemblages*, Jasbir Puar points out that the "tremors" of Islamophobias could be felt well before 9/11.²⁵⁵ The data skins available for those coded as Middle Eastern or South Asian are brittle, hollow, from over fifty years of "terrorist" threat discourse from Western allied forces.²⁵⁶ Even when fusion staff knew the object could be relinquished of *some* over this overdetermined phobic

²⁵⁵ Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 232.

²⁵⁶ See Kundnani, *The Muslims are Coming!*; Said, *Covering Islam*.

energy, they decided to *fuse* anxiety to the object and *diffuse* responsibility for the threat further. They kept the anxiety alive, sustained it, by passing it along to other judges.

The push for racial, ethnic, and religious profiling became less implicit in some of my observations, which demonstrates that phobogenics permit the creation of affective truths about suspects. I had interviewed one supervisor in the fusion center who wanted to explain a few more things to me, and another person, who works the night-shift, joined our conversation:

The conversation turned to “common sense” policing, and I felt my stomach drop. I knew what was coming and dreaded it all the same. The fusion center workers took turns explaining why the police should be able to use markers like race, ethnicity, and religion, which, they explained, the police can use in Europe. The supervisor I interviewed explained that... [in the] Bronx... people know what is out of place. He pointed to the other worker, a white man—or this worker pointed to himself—who was wearing a bright orange short sleeve button-down, and said that he would be out of place... A duck in a turtle pond? Some sort of idiom like that. The point is: people would know he was out of place, one of them explained. Something would be off. The supervisor explained, bragged? boasted? that he was able to detect someone’s criminal activity because a really expensive car was out of place in the Bronx. He was with someone who knew a lot about cars and knew that the Land Rover was an expensive vehicle. They called in the license plate and, sure enough, it was a stolen car. Some things are out of place.²⁵⁷

I wondered at the time how these examples correlated with racial, ethnic, and religious profiling in any way, except as depoliticized justifications. The suspicions about their rhetoric began stirring in my gut, where a knot of dread weighed me down on the spot. Browne points to how identity markers, codified on official documentation, become means to deny a body of “its specificity.”²⁵⁸ For police work, these categories might feel like they *are* honoring specificity. Within the context of “common sense” policing, however, these markers permit the creation of “ontological insecurity of a body made out of place” by

²⁵⁷ Field note, October 3, 2017.

²⁵⁸ Browne, “Digital Epidermalization,” 134.

refracting the body through others who frustrate its movements.²⁵⁹ This refraction, argues Fanon and Browne, is the denial of this being's "humanness."²⁶⁰ Browne further points out that, in terms of digital epidermalization, markers of race, ethnicity, and religion become archivable *evidence* of an *affective truth* about the epidermalized body to keep it in a *more indefinite* state of "certain uncertainty."²⁶¹ The epidermalization is an "exercise of power."²⁶²

As I have argued elsewhere, one key exercise of power performed by the "If You See Something, Say Something" public training is the power to lower gut-threshold for all parties reporting suspicious activity.²⁶³ Under lateral surveillance, an object or person need not be dangerous; they only need the potential to be dangerous: "The lower threshold means that an employee need only feel like another person engages in terrorist behavior to justify calling them a terrorist. An individual can be taken outside the bounds of law... by giving an impression of off-putting activity."²⁶⁴ As one high-level staff member told me, the justification for pursuing surveillance under "situational awareness" is that it "doesn't hurt":

The beauty of that is that we tried to tell our officers on our department that are taking reports like this that look use your common sense and see that they're okay. There's something wrong here and let us have it. Let us have it, let us into it. And then if it looks like it needs to go up we'll set it up and it's not really a—a manner of or we judge and jury on. If something should go further, there's nothing wrong with sending it up and having them look at it. If they log in and said there's nothing here, then there's nothing there. We have a record of it.

It is important to slow down over the reflex of this justification: If nothing is here, there's nothing there. The effects of the initial instance of profiling and its subsequent diffusion

259 Browne, "Digital Epidermalization," 134..

260 Browne, "Digital Epidermalization," 134.

261 Browne, "Digital Epidermalization," 135.

262 Browne, "Digital Epidermalization," 135.

263 Ritchie, "Feeling for the State."

264 Ritchie, "Feeling for the State," 193.

disappear. There is simply nothing to see here. Move along. Keep it moving. This logic is the *sin qua non* of police activity, and while this fusion center serves “two masters” (the local government and the police), they adopt the surveillance justification of the police. On the famous description of interpellation by police in Louis Althusser’s *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Jacques Rancière writes:

It is, first of all, a reminder of the obviousness of what there is, or rather, of what there isn’t: ‘Move along! There is nothing to see here!’ The police says that there is nothing to see on a road, that there is nothing to do but move along. It asserts that the space of circulating is nothing other than the space of circulation. Politics, in contrast, consists in transforming this space of ‘moving-along’ into a space for the appearance of a subject: i.e., the people, the workers, the citizens: It consists in refiguring the space, of what there is to do there, what is to be seen or named therein.²⁶⁵

The fusion worker issues a reminder of “what there isn’t”: if nothing is here, there’s nothing there. Notably, an analyst gave me an example of a Trump supporter who frequently reported racial minorities in one bank in the city and, yet, the analyst felt obligated to take the information down, follow up on the report, and give an “FYI” to supervisors. Fusion keeps the information flowing, moving from one suspicion to the next, often without knowing whether the suspicions were credible. The credibility of a suspicious hardly matters at the level of affect; as a police officer explained, “all threats are credible threats” until disproven.

Fusion workers’ guts are therefore more sensitive, or susceptible to anxiety, than those their information serves. Because fusion centers are responsible for making sure other, more senior security and police officials do not miss crucial information, they are “hypersensitive” to the information coming in:

Now, we were real hypersensitive to things. You're going to write a report. And if it rises to the level that it doesn't fit that we're... asking guys let us know. There's

²⁶⁵ Jacques Rancière, “Ten Theses on Politics,” *Theory & Event* 5, no. 3 (2001).

nothing wrong. You see something, say something... It's a cliché-ish now in a way... It's getting people conditioned to not be afraid to say something because I think a lot of people have over the years been conditioned in a way of not to report things. They don't think it's their place.

The director indicates there is nothing the matter with writing a report and sending it up, if the threat turns out to be either debunked or confirmed by the JTTF or the FBI. The structure is such that fusion is not “judge and jury.” Fusion’s inhibitions for passing information along are almost as low as the general public’s. For instance, fusion centers often do not make conclusions about criminal motives: “That’s more of really, like, deep, deep stuff. Ours is more surface.” They perform a similar hypersensitivity to suspicious behavior as employees who work in the private sector to protect critical infrastructure. They “feel for/as the state” meaning they experience “certain bodies as out of place, so as to encourage state action to police or detain them.”²⁶⁶ These reflexive sensitivities are the “legitimizing feelings of state surveillance” for even higher level authorities.²⁶⁷ The hypersensitivity takes place in the gut, with a little pressure from anxiety.

The anxiety attached to the phobic objects of the Qu-ran or the Kurdish machete does not dissipate when the JTTF or FBI clears it of credible threat, let alone those times when they reinvest these objects with anxiety: “the alarm creates the affective reality” of the so-called “suspicious” object and body.²⁶⁸ Fusion intelligence is jumpy; it moves quickly from object to object, body to body, trying to touch as many as it can in the chance that one becomes threatening later. The classification system of SARs generates a suspicious species body that is “off” from the rest of the normal species body. The “awareness” of this body is affective awareness in the body of intelligence workers. Another awareness revolves around threat-inflammation.

266 Ritchie, “Feeling for the State,” 193.

267 Ritchie, “Feeling for the State,” 194.

268 Ritchie, “Feeling for the State,” 191.

What is Inflammatory

The center engages in digital epidermalization by monitoring what is inflammatory on social media. An affective taxonomy of hypersensitivity to inflammation is part of fusion intelligence. The center uses an information processing program called Dataminr, which I am told was “used in Lebanon” before becoming available to fusion centers, according to the director. Dataminr is a real-time information discovery platform. I sat with a data analyst as he interfaced through five screens with different analytic systems that gather information for him. There seemed to be lenience in terms of what search terms this center can use. Because of attacks in Brussels, this center monitored social media where suspected terrorists disseminated kill lists. Other monitored terms include “Allahu Akbar” and “‘praise’ or some shit,” in the words of an analyst, and I heard from this analyst that another center in Texas “gets a lot of ‘Praise Allah.’” These markers’ function is reductive; they allow for the aggregation of information about suspects in workers’ stations and databases on the basis of inflammation, or the inflammation of language beyond a normal, acceptable intensity of discourse.

In September 2017, DHS revealed that it monitors the social media of immigrants, including naturalized citizens, and users who interact with them. DHS clarified that these powers are not new; they are just making transparent, under a Privacy Act, what they already do.²⁶⁹ Available records include social media handles, aliases, associated identifiable information, and search results. Fusion centers can see names, handles, and aliases, and many centers hope to form information sharing agreements with social media

²⁶⁹ Matt Novak, “US Homeland Security Will Start Collecting Social Media Info on All Immigrants October 18th,” *Gizmodo*, September 26, 2017, <https://gizmodo.com/us-homeland-security-will-start-collecting-social-media-1818777094>.

companies (one lament at the conference is how Facebook and Twitter partner with private companies but not law enforcement).

The political motivations behind “inflammatory rhetoric” matter little to an analyst; the analyst’s job is to discern whether the rhetoric has enough likelihood to become a threat-event and raise concerns to superiors. The analyst I observed uses an interface called Bluestacks to catch many social media platforms at once. The analyst showed me an “extremist” video of a man, who lives outside of Texas, preaching online in Arabic through What’s App. We then clicked over to Bluestack’s Facebook monitoring capacities. We clicked through a profile of one suspected terrorist, as I recount here:

I see his son, a small black boy, he has his arm over his son in his cover photo on Facebook; I see another body, small. Is that his other son on his other side? I see he’s married. I see he’s commented on what happened in Las Vegas with the shooting. I am told by the analyst he is a black Muslim man. I wonder what he’s done to warrant this type of monitoring. The data analyst tells me that they only monitor people who have credible threats associated with them, but I also know that all it takes to trigger the center’s monitoring is inflammatory rhetoric online. Was this man in the TERRORISM folder? Is he just someone they check in on now and then? I can’t stop thinking about that little boy’s face, staring at the camera. Who am I to look in on his father, from this setting? It is out there in the world, it is the cover photo on Facebook, but now his father has been marked, by me, in this space. I’m seeing this not through the white Facebook screen but here everything is inverted; the screen shows up black through Bluestacks.²⁷⁰

I am mortified at the distance between my position in the center and this man who is in the city, unaware that I am seeing his life, his sons, his face. He has been marked as a suspected terrorist. I am reminded of Fanon on the black man’s unassimilability, which Fanon describes in terms of a disjuncture in time: “You come too late, much too late. There will always be a world—a white world—between you and us.”²⁷¹ Bluestacks allows for the strengthening of this white world between those viewing him from the center and his life.

²⁷⁰ Field note, October 2, 2017.

²⁷¹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 101.

I gathered details about him, even from the little time the analyst and I scrolled through his profile. You can tell he is critical of anti-black racism in the US. I see he studied rhetoric and at one point lived in Morocco. In older pictures, his two sons hold guns in the woods. He has posted videos of police vehicles stopping people, one with a caption referencing Trayvon Martin. He arrives too late to be understood by the fusion center and by me watching him.

The degree of rhetoric-inflammation is measured in terms of a threat's conditionality. Conditional threats are talk that says violence *should* happen but does explicitly say *will* happen. One data analyst explains:

They say something to effect of, "We should really kill all, you know, that stand in the way of sharia law." And that's violent in nature but it's still conditional... They're not saying that they're going to do it. So that kind of person if... we see that and we don't know a whole lot about them then we'll keep it on the radar for a while. And when I mean keep it on the radar for awhile, like you know actively like go back to their—to their social media whatever platform. Kind of like look and then provide some sort of assessment or reports on what we should do and then either it rises to the level where we send it to JTTF and then they acknowledge it or we kind of log in the system.

Conditional threats warrant continued but perhaps less systematic monitoring. These threats are kept "on the radar" for a length of time and, at some point, become worthy or a report or not. The data analyst continues:

And then if there's additional reporting later on, then we'll take a second look, I guess. And there's all these things we have to comply where... if it's not matching, if it doesn't mean a threshold of suspicious activity... then we have to discount it. We have to technically you know put it aside and we do that a lot to some grainy says hey guy with the beard [sic]. Kind of weird. Well, we can't look at so then we discard it, and then we were sometimes it will follow up and say, "Well, was he doing something suspicious?" And if they give a pretty stereotypical or you know biased response, we just leave it alone...

While the analyst comes at the products with an awareness of stereotypical responses, the technology already performs some of the labor of determining threat-urgency, or flagging

irregular online activity. Analysts can sign up for emails of varied regulatory that correspond to the threat inflammation. If an agent wants to receive updates twice a date with collated threat information, an agent can elect that option. Dataminr sends flash alerts for events around the city that warrant attention. For instance, if there is chatter on Twitter about active shooters, Dataminr sends an alert to the center (and the analyst can see the users tweeting about the threat), sometimes before local news learns of the ongoing development.

The logic that justifies preemptive monitoring is the idea that the profile is already public and so those surveilled *consented* to the monitoring. If a person did not want to be monitored, so one staff members says, the person should know to make a profile private:

[W]e have... restrictions as to what we can collect on people and there has to be—there has to be defined criminal practically associated with things like that way. But in the same respect we're not—we're not discounting the people's behavior to—to post things online that they want people to know about. You know if you're—if you're a local junior thug... and you want to post on Facebook or Instagram your pictures with—with a giant pile of weed and all the guns that you have accumulated... It's in the public forum. I mean it's not like we're collecting things on you that you haven't put out there yourself.

This was reflected in further comments from a supervisor:

[I]f you commit a crime it's usually hard for you to keep it inside. You wanna tell somebody. So these criminals and these people tend to be open and just flaunting it out they're not thinking anybody's looking or not understanding that what they're doing is—is open to the public which is good for us because it helps us identify people who are doing bad things. Pick a crime, and it's probably being advertised.

The given reason for monitoring is that those monitored are already out in the world on social media, and the inflammatory nature of their public presence itself opens up speculation. Showiness, braggadocio, criminal flaunting: these are *invitations* for police and fusion surveillance. The inflammatory rhetoric from suspected criminals tempts and tests the fusion center.

This slippage in privacy builds the case for large-scale punishment. I attended a presentation at the fusion center conference about how data analysts could get around new restrictions on geolocation technologies. Centers in Texas utilize technologies like Google Earth and TxMap, a border-mapping system used by the Border Security Operations team in Austin, to get around restrictions in geolocation.²⁷² Geolocators help fusion centers target suspected criminals by tracking their movements. For instance, if a person allows Twitter to use their location, suspected terrorists' tweets then reveal their location. In one presentation, a Twitter analyst told a story about a suspected jihadist named "Kiwi Jihadi," a white ISIS sympathizer from New Zealand, who traveled to Syria and did not turn his location off on Twitter. In Syria, he tweeted his "last tweet ever," because the US initiated a drone strike shortly after he tweeted. I could not tell if the audience at the presentation laughed genuinely or nervously in response. All the same, fusion centers heard the same message delivered by the Honorable Lieutenant General Michael Nagata, Director of Strategic Operational Planning at the National Counterterrorism Center about the need for these kinds of preventative tactics. While prevention is the "hardest thing to do" and there is "nothing more controversial," if we are not aware of "demographic trends," "we'll be left with no tools." He provides the analogy: "We run out of bullets before we kill all the terrorists who are coming." The phrase "demographic trends" does not seat easily; it provides a wink of support for racial profiling for fusion center staff in the audience. The term is a code word for incorporating identity markers. Prevention-based analysis allows for preemptive punishment, even while fusion centers claim that procedures prevent policing non-credible threats.

²⁷² See Jason Buch, "Border Security Team in Austin Focuses on Valley," *My San Antonio*, June 10, 2012, https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/Border-security-s-brain-3622485.php.

At a local level, the spatialization of crime and production of criminal statistics based on crime movements means that data statistics determine threat-affect. Using statistics, the police can more efficiently move across the city like a “little invading army” to meet pockets of crime, the director recounts: “And we’re—we’re moving officers to those areas to do some high, high visibility enforcement to kind of deal with those issues. So it’s like a little invading army that will go occupy a neighborhood for three, four, or five days.” Crimes flare up and police match the intensity of the flare-up. The question is not whether to deploy police but “an appropriate dosage of police activity,” according to the director. The fusion center is aided not just by local police but the Sheriff’s office, troopers, and deputies who can be part of the reactive force against areas with more threat-intensity. Police are a use of “force-against-force,” and the initial forcefulness is determined by irregularities in data statistics across a territory.²⁷³ Fusion taxonomizes intensities through statistics and threat mapping.

Fusion is not always able to be preventative (it is still largely reactive), yet anxiety about missing threats pulls the center toward more preventative tactics. Fusion centers provide technical support for forces that are already responding to emergencies, like fire, EMTs, and police. As I heard over and over in the interviews, fusion is not “pre-crime.” There is “no Magic 8 Ball” to predict crime, according to the director, though the center receives pressure from police to become more predictive. Fusion is about probabilities, according to a high-level fusion worker: “There’s no such thing as certainty in all the books will teach you that that you notice is that you never you never approach a problem with certainty. It’s always probability. And that’s what analysis is in a nutshell.” I asked another high-level, civilian worker about the preventative status of fusion centers directly. He answered that the value of intelligence-led policing is not to be found in mimicking

²⁷³ Massumi, *Ontopower*, 76.

Minority Report: “it’s not *Minority Report* and the red ball and the three people in Jell-O. That doesn’t always exist.” Still, there is a viscous, diffuse affect that pulls fusion workers to prevention. Anxiety is the glue, the goo, the Jell-O. The anxiety pressing on fusion staff is to “not drop the ball”:

Q: I know that one of the impetuses for fusion centers was that they would almost be preventative, right, for terrorism specifically... How do you feel like fusion centers, can, though... do that preventative, I mean, prediction-based policing as well... that people have wanted fusion centers to do, in terms of terrorism?

A: It’s like anything else. They’ve found a sufficient amount of Monday morning quarterbacking on events that have been high profile... in the Boston marathon bombing, other events that have happened that there was a significant amount of chatter that existed and was generated before those events happened. So, the idea is that you just need to be aware and address that chatter when you become aware of it. And fully vet the threats. And if they're determined not to not to be valid, you move on to the next one... But the biggest challenge is not to drop the ball and not discount threats that are viable threats.

Fusion staff feel the pressure to never discount a threat and so their tactics become more preventative. Threats are abnormalities in crime as well as potential traces of terrorism, like spikes in homicides or increased online chatter online about a target. While fusion is responsible for not dropping the ball, it also extends responsibility for crime-abnormalities across a wider field. As one police officer stationed in the center told me, because bulletins go out across the board, “Now who's going to point a finger at who?”

FUSING RACE

The biopolitics of fusing race refers to the soft power over raced bodies exercised by nationwide fusion intelligence. Fusing race is part of a state network of the larger rhetorical activities of fusion. The public security pedagogy, reflected in “If You See Something, Say Something,” along with the informational systems in place between private, police, and security partners comprise the plane on which race can be fused,

meaning brought into “situational awareness,” in repetition. In this sense, this fusion center is one profiler among a host of profilers nationwide. The biopolitics of fusing race has three features: an affective prelogic of phobogenics; trained installation of the prelogic to render it continuous; and regulation over the dosage of public anxiety.

Affective Prelogic

Fusing race is the adoption of affective prelogic inherent in racial phobogenics. In Fanon’s words, “In the phobic, affect has a priority that defies all rational thinking. As we can see, the phobic is a person governed by the laws of prelogical rationality and affectivity.”²⁷⁴ The biopolitics of fusing race relies on affective prelogic. Larsson writes that suspicion has become “integrated” as a technique in participatory policing.²⁷⁵ Suspicion, however, is more than a technique for policing. It is the *affective prelogic* of the fusion-intelligence matrix: the *necessary* anxiety that *predetermines* what matters. Fanon again:

The choice of the phobic object is thus *overdetermined*. Such an object does not come out of the void of nothingness; in some situations it has previously evoked an affect in the patient. The phobia is the latent presence of this affect on the core of his world; there is an organization that has been given a form. For the object, naturally, need not be there, it is enough that somewhere the object *exists*: is a possibility. Such an object is endowed with evil intentions and with all the attributes of a malefic power.²⁷⁶

Phobic objects are overdetermined, meaning anxiety accumulates on them and calls them back during future moments of anxiety. Even if the object is *not there* (and, of course, we know that anxiety’s object *is nowhere*), it is enough that it *could* be *too* present. Phobia’s

274 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 133.

275 Sebastian Larsson, “A First Line of Defense? Vigilant Surveillance, Participatory Policing, and the Reporting of ‘Suspicious’ Activity,” *Surveillance & Society* 15, no. 1 (2016): 94.

276 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 133. Fanon discusses how these revulsions are sexual in nature; “everything in fact takes place at the genital level” (135).

affective prelogic is an exercise of power. Massumi writes that affect becomes a form of political decision. It is especially pressing that homeland security has engaged in a “colonization of the micro-perceptual” through situational awareness, because the effects become more insidious.²⁷⁷ As Massumi writes, “the skin is faster than the word.”²⁷⁸

Continuous Profiling

One primary effect of housing phobogenics in fusion centers is to make profiling continuous, across public and private sectors. Instead of tracking independent groups like al-Qaeda, ISIS, Hezbollah, or Hamas in US states, fusion centers track sympathizers. Puar describes how homeland security makes anxiety fluid across sites: “the profile disperses control through circuits catching multiple interpenetrating sites of anxiety.”²⁷⁹ When asked what the fusion center needs most, the director told me he needs more time with the data because five years is too short a time to build a case. The data becomes irrelevant after five years, and then the center has nothing on suspects. Fusion aims toward permanent profiles, a continuous, unending digital epidermalization.

The profiling already available through other public database practices, especially at the border, could become a mainstay of local policing, where the border travels further inward to communities in Texas. Partnerships between fusion centers and ICE, including one center in Texas who houses an ICE liaison, show the extent to which profiling could become part of fusion’s functioning. As an indicative example, an article by security scholars Carla Lewandowski, Jeff Rojek, and Victor M. Manjarrez called “Using a Fusion Center Model to Manage and Improve Border Security” makes the case for using fusion to

²⁷⁷ Massumi, *Politics of Affect*, 64-65.

²⁷⁸ Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 25.

²⁷⁹ Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 198.

“secure” the US-Mexico border.²⁸⁰ Fusion could continue to market to ends-users that categorize illegal behavior. Fusion has the potential to make profiling more continuous, or easier to swallow, across local, federal, and state levels.

Anxiety Dosage

In order to normalize profiling, fusing race requires approximating the proper dosage of public anxiety. Multiple interviews confirmed that the center does not want the public *too* on edge: the center “need[s] to signal that they [the public] are safe but do not want it to get ridiculous,” according to one director. One police officer explains that his job is to shield me, a member of the public, from “the ugly stuff,” while still educating the public about trends. Police and fusion staff therefore have an inside glimpse on anxiety-inspiring events that they hope to disseminate to the public. The director indicates that making sure that police personnel and cameras are visible for the public at events would create the impression of public safety for them. These concerns revolve around anxiety-dosage: how much anxiety can the body of the public take before it becomes destructive to them and to fusion intelligence?

Regulation of anxiety-dosage is not up to the public, according to the rhetoric of this fusion center. The administration of anxiety and safety is a matter of fusion-signaling—signaling to the public the familiar markers of safety. The fusion center does not know if it gets the dosage right; there is little feedback that comes from the public or its partners about how it has administered anxiety. But the fusion center allows for open experimentation with the city’s health in terms of whether it feels safe or unsafe. A dose of police in a flared-up area, a dose of intel to the police during a meeting, a dose of

280 Carla Lewandowski, Jeff Rojek, and Victor M. Manjarrez, “Using a Fusion Center Model to Manage and Improve Border Security,” *Journal of Applied Security Research* 12, no. 1 (2017): 160-178.

reassurance to private sector partners—these are experimental. Fusion centers attempt to control the proper timing and proportion of activation, when and how the public becomes anxious over threats, yet they react to these ever-modulating panics.

One of the reasons for fusion centers before and after 9/11 was their *adaptability*, or how their *local* nature meant they could be *modular*. They could test security out over a smaller territory than other intelligence centers. There is no model of a fusion center, so this particular center changes through trial and error. One research subject with knowledge of how this center opened jokes, “Congratulations, ‘You’re a fusion center.’ What now? There’s no ‘How-To’ for dummies.” Fusion centers are local testing sites for different dosages of public anxiety. Through disseminating reports to the public, hosting private partners, providing briefings for police, and responding to real-time threat events, they modulate the urgency of threats, based on perceived needs of a small territory.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning, this chapter asked: Can the lateral surveillance of suspiciousness under the aegis of “situational awareness” ever become decoupled from racialization? Because they are one node along a long line of lateral surveillance, fusion centers could partially *deactivate* the anxiety surrounding phobic objects, bodies, and chatter. What if the data analyst had *not* sent up the report about the machete? What if he refused to concentrate anxiety over the object? What if he did not diffuse responsibility of it in this pass-the-buck infrastructure, where no one is judge and jury and so everything is permitted? The illogical logic of the “better safe than sorry” mantra of “If You See Something, Say Something” in this particular case could be rethought. The paradoxical cautionary haste of fusion would slow down or stop altogether. Their affective training to feel on behalf of the higher-up’s

might give way to a different training, not to feel on behalf of police anxiety, to feel on behalf of a precarious public. The infrastructure of anxious hypersensitivities might shift, however slightly. But, is feeling for a shaky public not already what fusion imagines itself to do? Their feeling-for-others, shielding them from the “ugly” threats out there, is part of the reason they do not advertise their existence.

The object of fear in post-9/11 governance, Massumi argues, is threat, a potential for dangerous that exhibits “formlessness and contentlessness.”²⁸¹ Assessing threat is a matter of tracking “quasi-causality,” the extent to which a threat has the *virtual power* in the future to affect the present.²⁸² Fusion therefore operates through probabilities, the best guess of what could happen. The object of *anxiety* in fusion’s taxonomies—adopted by much more extensive taxonomies reflected in national rhetoric—is something even more imperceptible: the seemingly unending *potential* for a raced body, in its potential movements, to scramble the switchboards of US intelligence. This potential is grasped through the crafting of data skins. Race is refracted through procedural rhetoric that categories a species-body, or a population, in terms of suspiciousness. Blackness and brownness become dictated by SARs, Dataminr, and other analytic methods: the *refraction* of a body through its conversion into data. These technologies provide the affective reality of anxiety; they ring the alert. They issue the performative utterance, “Look!” at a raced body. The moment of stricken anxiety from the hail, Fanon writes, fixes: “My body has returned to me spread-eagled, disjointed, redone, draped in mourning on this white winter’s day.”²⁸³

281 Massumi, *Ontopower*, 175.

282 Massumi, *Ontopower*, 175.

283 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 93.

Figure 3.1. One model of Law Enforcement SAR Reporting, page 1. Police Records Request W164861-041617, May 12, 2017.

Law Enforcement SAR Reporting

Submitter's First Name: *

Submitter's Last Name: *

Agency / Organization Name: *

Best Contact Number: (###) ###-#### *

Email Address: *

Incident Date: (mm/dd/yyyy) Time: (e.g. 10 pm)

Description of Activity (Help): *

- ☐ Breach/Attempted Intrusion
- ☐ Gang Related
- ☐ Misrepresentation
- ☐ Theft/Loss/Diversion
- ☐ Sabotage/Tampering/ Vandalism
- ☐ Cyber Attack
- ☐ Expressed or Implied Threat
- ☐ Aviation Activity
- ☐ Eliciting Information
- ☐ Testing or Probing of Security
- ☐ Recruiting
- ☐ Photography
- ☐ Observation/Surveillance
- ☐ Materials Acquisition/Storage
- ☐ Acquisition of Expertise
- ☐ Weapons Discovery
- ☐ Sector-Specific Incident

Figure 3.2. One model of Law Enforcement SAR Reporting, page 2. Police Records Request W164861-041617, May 12, 2017.

☐ Officer Safety
☐ Regional Crime Trends
☐ Other (describe below) _____

Brief summary: *

Case or Incident Number: _____

Name of Subject(s):(If available) _____

Subject Identification: (DOB; Drivers License #; Phone Numbers) _____

Incident Location - Street Address or Cross Streets: * _____

City: _____ **State:** * **Zip:** *

TX

Please attach police reports and photos: (combined limit 10 MB)

Optional Information

Secondary Contact Name:(if applicable) _____

Alternate Contact Number:(###) ###-#### (if applicable) _____

Alternate Email Address:(if applicable) _____

Figure 3.3. Texas DPS “iWatch Texas” (1). Retrieved on personal phone, February 18, 2018.

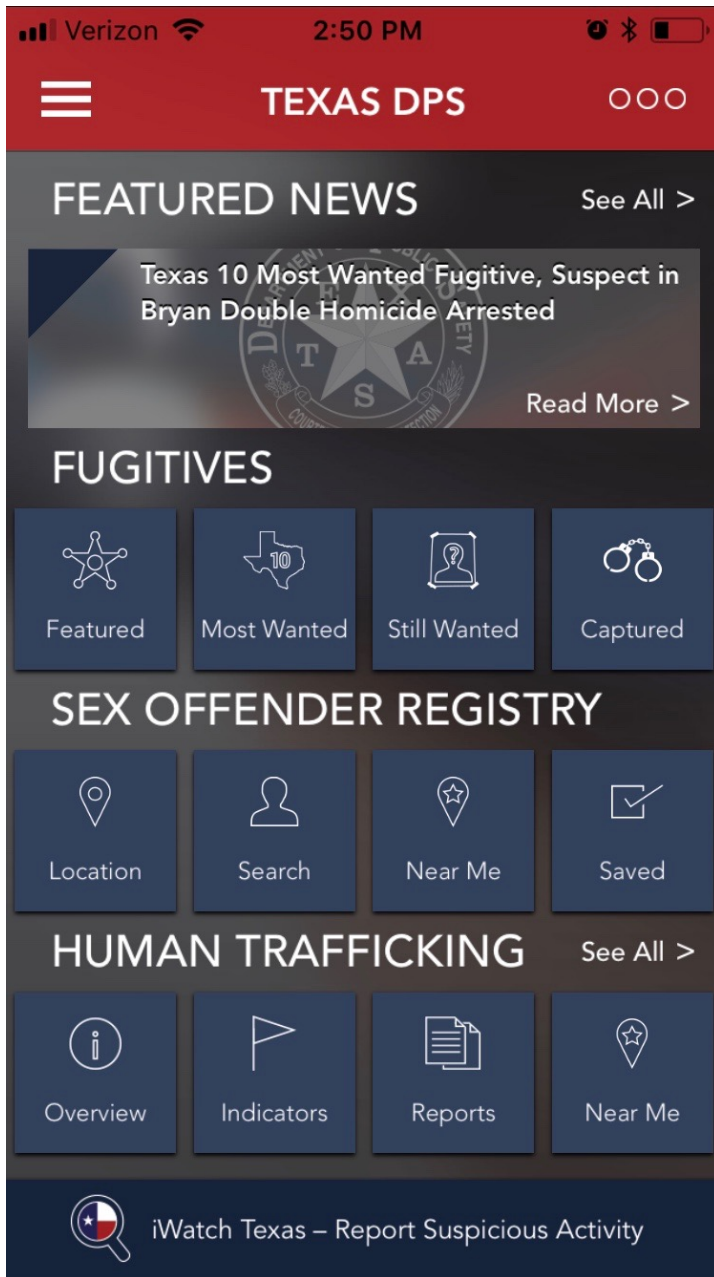
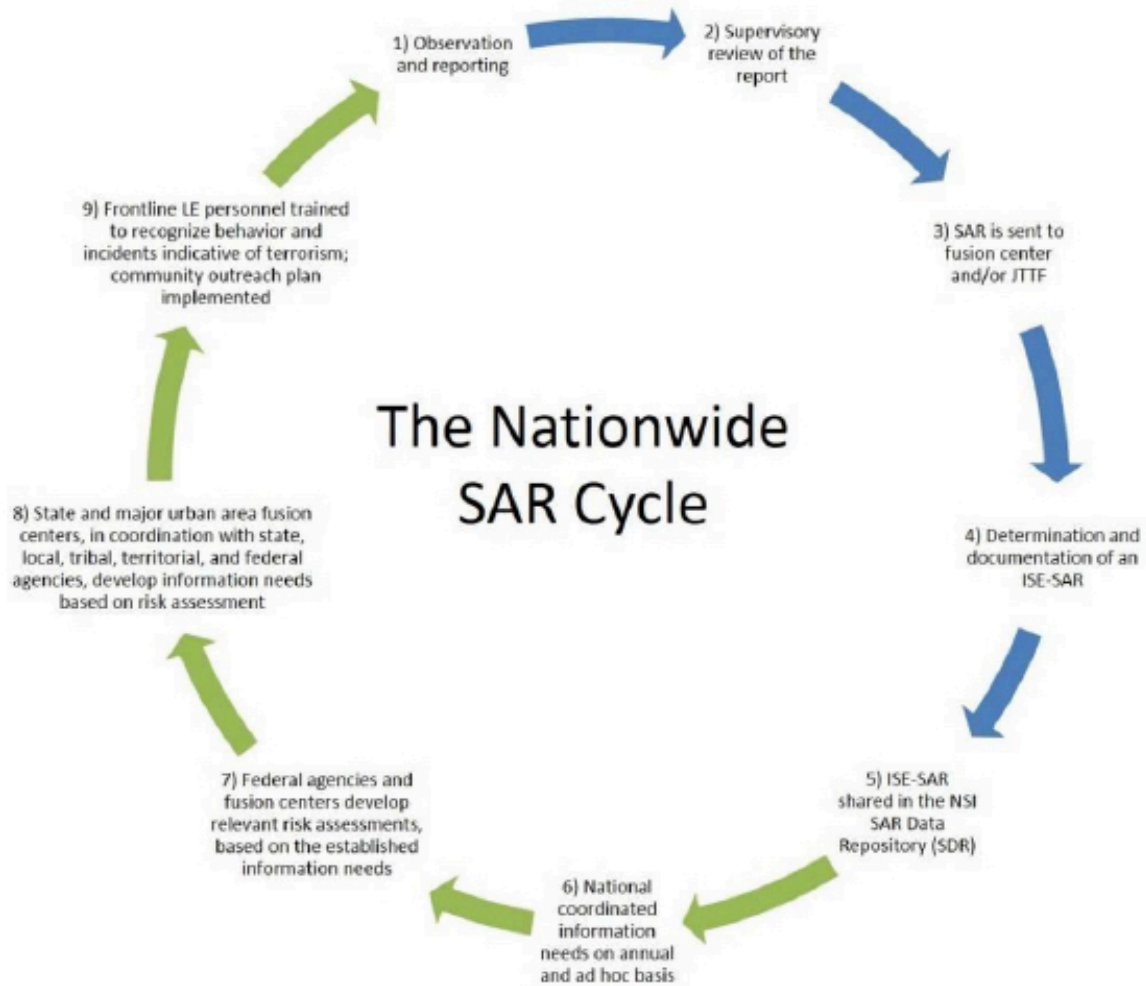


Figure 3.4. Texas DPS “iWatch Texas.” (2) Retrieved on personal phone, February 18, 2018.

The screenshot shows the 'iWatch Texas' mobile application interface. At the top, the status bar displays 'Verizon', signal strength, Wi-Fi, the time '2:51 PM', and battery level. The app's header bar is dark blue with 'Cancel' on the left, a magnifying glass icon with the Texas state flag in the center, and 'Submit' on the right. Below the header, the section 'Person Reporting' is displayed. It contains seven input fields: 'Your name', 'Street Address (no P.O. Boxes)', 'City', 'State', 'Zip Code', 'Telephone', and 'Email (optional)'. Below these fields is the question 'When did the suspicious activity occur?' followed by a single input field with the placeholder text 'When did the suspicious activity occur? (Required)'. At the bottom of the visible section is the label 'Location'.

Figure 3.5. The “Nationwide SAR Cycle.” “Information Sharing Environment-Suspicious Activity Report, aka ISE-SAR, Functional Standard v. 1.5.5,” *Office of the Director of National Intelligence*, February 23, 2015, <https://www.dni.gov/>.



Chapter Four:
**“Bureau of Hurt Feelings”: The Anguished Affective Labor of Local
Fusion Intelligence**

INTRODUCTION

This chapter argues that local intelligence fusion in fusion centers is a form of affective labor—labor that generates affects, defined as non-conscious, pre-personal intensities (incipient activity, like love, boredom, etc.) registered on a body—that reproduces anguished white masculine insecurity about recognition and relevance.²⁸⁴ The post-9/11 Nationwide Suspicious Activity Report Initiative established fusion centers as critical nodes in a national information sharing environment, because fusion centers link the police, counterterrorism analysts, intelligence officers, businesses, the military, and immigration officials. Fusion centers continue the work of intelligence centers housed in state or municipal police departments, but fusion centers’ new roles and responsibilities are not well known. Carla Lewandowski, Jeremy G. Carter, and Walter L. Campbell write, “The scholarly knowledgebase of fusion centers and other information sharing agencies is rather sparse given the integral role they play in the law enforcement intelligence landscape and the substantial financial commitment invested by federal and state governments to keep them operational.”²⁸⁵ Previous scholarship on fusion centers has explored lack of oversight and transparency,²⁸⁶ the relationship between state surveillance and public trust,²⁸⁷ poor

284 I am indebted to Brian Massumi’s definition of affect as an intensity, or “incipient” activity prior to action, like a gravitational vibration in process. He writes affect is thus potential, it is what a body “can do or become.” Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 106, 125. I clarify that affects, because they register on a body, are felt, even if this body is a rock. Andrea Long Chu puts it best: “Occasionally, an affect is discrete, easily identified, and localizable within subjective experience, and then we call it an emotion: anger or sadness, for example. Most of the time, however, affects are vague, fuzzy, overlapping, inconsistent, or unevenly distributed between subject and object.” Andrea Long Chu, “Study in Blue: Trauma, Affect, Event,” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 27, no. 3 (2017): 313.

285 Carla Lewandowski, Jeremy G. Carter, and Walter L. Campbell, “The Role of People in Information-Sharing: Perceptions from an Analytic Unit of a Regional Fusion Center,” *Police Practice & Research* 18, no. 2 (2017): 174.

286 Jeremy G. Carter, Carla Lewandowski, and Gabrielle A. May, “Disparity Between Fusion Center Web Content and Self-Reported Activity,” *Criminal Justice Review* 4, no. 3 (2016): 335-351; Monahan, “The Murky World of ‘Fusion Centers’”; Monahan, “The Future of Security?”; Newkirk, “The Rise of the Fusion-Intelligence Complex”; Monahan and Regan, “Zones of Opacity.”

287 Craven, Monahan, and Regan, “Compromised Trust.”

analytic capacities,²⁸⁸ institutional support,²⁸⁹ integration of digital technologies,²⁹⁰ and the bureaucratic struggles between fusion workers and law enforcement.²⁹¹ Yet fusion remains an opaque form of labor, considering how varied the roles in each center are and how difficult the centers are to access. Lewandowski, Carter, and Campbell continue, “Far less is known about the experiences of fusion center employees within primary state fusion centers, much less regional fusion centers.”²⁹² Whereas these authors plumb the specific analytic capabilities of local centers, this chapter seeks to understand the connections made by fusion workers across counterterrorism units, police, businesses, and the military in a local fusion center. To do so, I frame fusion as a form of labor premised on producing affects.

In this chapter, I closely read 120 hours of field observations and 14 interviews conducted over the course of 10 months (June 2017 to March 2018) in one fusion center in a moderately-sized US city in Texas. An additional 30 hours of observations of this particular fusion team and other nationwide fusion center staff come from a three-day National Fusion Association Convention from November 7-9, 2017 in Alexandria, Virginia. Ethnographic methods in security environments have become more common, and studies of fusion centers that use interviews bring into focus centers’ variance in geography, jurisdiction, and staff.²⁹³ In this chapter, I write with an ethnographic sensibility

288 Justin Lewis Abold, Ray Guidetti, and Douglas Keyer, “Strengthening the Value of the National Network of Fusion Centers by Leveraging Specialization: Defining ‘Centers for Analytical Excellence,’” *Homeland Security Affairs* 8 (2012), <https://www.hsaj.org/articles/223>; Renee Graphia-Joyal, “Are Fusion Centers Achieving their Intended Purposes? Findings from a Qualitative Study on the Internal Efficacy of State Fusion Centers,” *IALEIA Journal* 19, no. 1 (2010): 54–76; McQuade, “The Puzzle of Intelligence Expertise.”

289 Lewandowski, Carter, and Campbell, “The Role of People in Information-Sharing.”

290 Joseph W. Pfeifer, “Network Fusion: Information and Intelligence Sharing for a Networked World,” *Homeland Security Affairs* 8 (2012), <https://www.hsaj.org/articles/232>; Jennifer Sims, “Intelligence to Counter-Terror: The Importance of All-Source Fusion,” *Intelligence and National Security* 22, no. 1 (2007): 38–56.

291 McQuade, “Police and the Post-9/11 Surveillance Surge”; Robert W. Taylor and Amanda L. Russell, “The Failure of Police ‘Fusion’ Centers and the Concept of a National Intelligence Sharing Plan,” *Police Practice and Research* 13, no. 2 (2012): 184–200.

292 Lewandowski, Carter, and Campbell, “The Role of People in Information-Sharing,” 175.

293 See Jacob L. Stump, “What’s the Use of Fieldwork with an Ethnographic Sensibility for Security Studies?” *Critical Studies on Security* 5, no. 2 (2017): 192–193.

that “reads the room.” I am trying to get at not just what is said, but the kinds of intermittencies that often seem ineffable but that leave trackable residues, like lingering anxiety over potentially painful political implications related to whiteness and gender. I take my cue here from Avital Ronell, who often finds herself in the role of “chief symptomatologist and head of the Existential Complaint Bureau,” labor that involves “sizing the climate of resistance in any given situation that thickens with ethical anxiety.”²⁹⁴ Toward sizing up the pressure points of situations, I perform the work of spinning my wheels recalling encounters, backpedaling and pedaling again in anxious movements. As this chapter shows, what is produced out of this spinning is the capacity to pause, listen, and complain.

From these observations, I propose that *fusion is a form of affective labor*, labor that produces a surplus value of affect. In this case, the produced affect is an abundance of anguish linked to white male victimage. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri delineate affective labor as any work that produces inchoate intensities that register on a body, like the potential for safety produced by caregivers.²⁹⁵ While numerous scholars have critiqued Hardt and Negri and other new materialists for obscuring industrial global labor,²⁹⁶ the use of affective labor makes sense for the privileged kinds of work like intelligence for one predominant reason: the “products,” as fusion centers call them, generated by fusion workers are knowledge, social networks, and affects. Fusion is a communicative lubricant that links disparate parties. Importantly, this chapter explores how connections form not just through *shared information*, but also through *shared anguish* reflected in racist, xenophobic, gendered, homophobic, and transphobic language. Most perniciously, the

294 Avital Ronell, *Complaint: Grievance Among Friends* (University of Illinois Press, 2018), 1.

295 Michael Hardt, “Affective Labor,” *boundary 2* 26, no. 2 (1999): 89-100; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

296 See Dana Cloud, Steve Macek, and James Aune, “‘The Limbo of Ethical Simulacra’: A Reply to Ron Greene,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 39, no. 1 (2006): 72-84.

affective labor of fusion frames those with social grievances against white masculinity as butt-hurt members of a “Bureau of Hurt Feelings,” in the words of one liaison in the observed fusion center.²⁹⁷ So while fusion centers are “supposed to be the ‘brains’ within police agencies,”²⁹⁸ they are also its beating hearts of insecurity.

To prove the above, this chapter proceeds in three movements. First, I theoretically fuse affective labor, national security, and victimage. I propose thinking of victimage as an affective labor that reproduces *angst*. Second, I explicate two perceived sources of hurt feelings revolving masculinity and whiteness: protecting the homeland and protecting white institutions. Third, to counteract the rhetoric of condescension surrounding hurt feelings of marginalized populations, I open a Bureau of Hurt Feelings to field complaints about fusion centers. I end by considering how the concept of anguished affective labor has wider theoretical import for rhetorical studies.

SORE SUBJECTS: WHITE MALE VICTIMAGE AS SECURITY LABOR

This section fulfills two tasks. First, it theorizes white male victimage as affective labor, the upshot of which is showing that victimage takes work to maintain. Second, this section proposes that all labor is affective because work produces a surplus value of affects, meaning an *excess* that is not immediately reinvested. In their more specific definition, Hardt and Negri write, “What affective labor produces are social networks, forms of community, biopower,” or the power to control life at the level of the “species body.”²⁹⁹ Studies of affective labor in rhetorical studies often follow from Ronald Walter Greene’s theorization of rhetorical materialism given Greene’s influence by Hardt and Negri’s

²⁹⁷ Field note, November 6, 2017.

²⁹⁸ Taylor and Russell, “The Failure of Police ‘Fusion’ Centers,” 185.

²⁹⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 293.

Empire. Greene proposes that agency is best thought of as communicative labor, meaning communication affords capacities to affect and be affected by others. Greene argues that thinking about communicative labor as a form of labor that produces a surplus value of joy that cannot be immediately re-integrated into the machinations of capital expands political engagement beyond traditional spheres, like voting; instead, labor is inextricably political because it is reproductive of social life itself.³⁰⁰

Hardt notes that affective labor is not a term he coined. Instead, it has been articulated by Marx, Freud, and feminists: “Theoretical frameworks that have brought together Marx and Freud have conceived of affective labor using terms such as *desiring production*, and, more significantly, numerous feminist investigations analyzing the potentials within what has been designated traditionally as women's work have grasped affective labor with terms such as kin work and caring.”³⁰¹ What Hardt and Negri do is situate affective labor in a post-Fordist economy, which, for them, marks a global shift in the development of capitalism. Fordist economies separate production and reproduction in the spheres of the factory and the home, and Fordist labor is represented by the figure of the male proletariat worker who exhibits an internalized work ethic to please a hierarchical management structure. Post-Fordist economies, on the other hand, create a decentralized work environment where personal growth, teamwork, and creativity motivate workers’ own self-management. Kathi Weeks explains the distinction through how the model of “flexible, caring, emotional, cooperative, and communicative model of femininity has come to represent the ideal worker” itself.³⁰² She continues that the boundaries “that were

300 Ronald Walter Greene, “Rhetoric and Capitalism: Rhetorical Agency as Communicative Labor,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 37, no. 3 (2004): 189.

301 Hardt, “Affective Labor,” 89.

302 Kathi Weeks, “Down with Love: Feminist Critique and the New Ideologies of Work,” *WSQ: Women’s Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 3 and 4 (2017): 38.

once thought to separate waged work from nonwork time, spaces, practices, and relations are widely acknowledged to have broken down.”³⁰³

In an influential critique of rhetorical materialism, Dana Cloud, Steve Macek, and James Aune argue that rhetorical materialism forfeits fidelity to working class interests, elides agency to build coalitional power around normative goals, and misunderstands global production (the ubiquity of industrial labor, sweatshops, and fieldwork in the global South, trade’s localization in advanced countries in select industries, and the manual work of those who support the information economy).³⁰⁴ Indeed, these criticisms highlight how information economies *intensify* so-called “old” forms of labor exploitation. The “new shop floor,” in the words of Christian Parenti, of “informatization” is built on the back of other shop floors globally.³⁰⁵ In factory work, for instance, the boundaries between work and life have long been blurred. As an example, in Foxconn, a large-scale Asian manufacturer for Silicon Valley companies Intel, HP, and Apple, workers have attempted suicide because they live on site of the factory. While workers labor under conditions of what Joshua Reeves calls “hyper-Fordist regimes of labor,” “loving the job,” a hallmark of post-Fordist labor, in Foxconn’s industrial park in Shenzhen, China is not a suggestion, but an enforcement; the factory has suffused workers’ identities to the extent that the workers spend their wages on site, have been reported to work 24-hour shifts, and publicly confess their underperformance to their peers.³⁰⁶

As a critical maneuver, then, I propose that affective labor is not unique to any *one kind* of labor, but a function of *all labor*; in other words, all labor is “not just the labor of

303 Weeks, “Down with Love,” 38.

304 Cloud, Macek, and Aune, “The Limbo of Ethical Simulacra.”

305 Quoted in Hardt, “Affective Labor,” 90.

306 Joshua Reeves, “Of Social Networks and Suicide Nets: Biopolitics and the Suicide Screen,” *Television & New Media* 18, no. 6 (2017): 519.

the hand, but the labors of the head and the heart.”³⁰⁷ For instance, while privileged office labor demands pleasant sociality during after-hour drinks,³⁰⁸ factory line production of iPhones demands the flat affects associated with focus and compliance. Therefore, the question is not one of which labor produces *more or less* affect, but a question of *qualitative differences in produced affects*. Said more plainly, there is no *affectless* labor. What distinguishes so-called “affective labor” is that its *product* is predominantly affects without an output of other kinds of products, like an iPhone, a textile, or an energy resource. The main *commodity* to be traded and exchanged is affect rather than a physical item. Sara Ahmed helpfully proposes that affect is produced by the circulation of objects: “Affect does not reside in an object or sign, but is an affect [sic?] of the circulation between objects and signs (= the accumulation of affective value over time).”³⁰⁹ For instance, when a fusion center worker produces and disseminates a product—which could be a threat assessment, a security procedure for a business, or a report of suspicious activity—the worker does not just produce and transmit information; the worker produces “security affects,” bodily intensities operationalized by security rhetorics like fear, anguish, insecurity, safety, trust, and boredom.³¹⁰ Information dissemination tethers the fusion worker and ends-user together affectively through shared felt-threat. If a fusion center in Texas transmits information about an undocumented resident to an Ohio fusion center—an example from my observations—the fusion process verifies that the undocumented resident is a threat to the safety and security of the US. As I outline in another piece, security is a form of

307 Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 69. Hardt points out that affective labor is corporeal and bodily, and so it involves physical labor. Hardt, “Affective Labor,” 96. Physical labor, however, is not a regular feature of intelligence work, except for the strains that come from sitting at a desk or standing during plain-clothes surveillance.

308 Melissa Gregg, *Work’s Intimacy* (Polity Press, 2011).

309 Ahmed, “Affective Economies,” 120.

310 See Anderson, “Morale and the Affective Geographies of the ‘War on Terror’”; Jessy Ohl, “Nothing to See or Fear: Light War and the Boring Visual Rhetoric of US Drone Imagery,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101, no. 4 (2015): 612-32; Ott, Bean, and Marin, “On the Aesthetic Production of Atmospheres.”

affective labor because it “works through affective modulation at the level of presubjective intensities.”³¹¹

What seems common across US intelligence work is a culture of white masculinity, defined by material and discursive patterns enacted to maintain male control over social relations and re-center whiteness, or take whiteness as the origin and end of social life. Masculinity is not reducible to male bodies, and whiteness is not merely re-centered by white individuals and groups. As Jasbir Puar theorizes, white masculinity involves a number of techniques for governing others, and non-white, non-male populations engage in these techniques.³¹² Hamilton Carroll situates white masculinity in the larger context of the War on Terror to show how the response to 9/11 “produced an acceleration or amplification of preexisting American cultural formations” and “required Americans to internalize the [Bush] administration’s policies at the level of affect.”³¹³ Like the show *24*’s overhyped masculine time compression, analyzed by Carroll, it becomes clear through observations and interviews that US intelligence work like *fusion* assumed a new sense that threats are ticking bombs that white masculine professionals have a public duty to defuse. If intelligence work produces the kinds of affects we associate with white masculinity, how can researchers account for the produced affects?

I propose that we think of white masculine victimage as affective labor that re-produces *anguish* (*angst*, *l’angoisse*). It is important to emphasize that the affect produced is “anguish,” because “anguish” implies a quality of perceived pain and despair. Anguished affective labor guards against the “stripping away of masculinity, the faggotizing of the male body, or in robbing the feminine of its symbolic and reproductive centrality to

311 Ritchie, “Feeling for the State,” 183.

312 See Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*.

313 Hamilton Carroll, *Affirmative Reaction: New Formations of White Masculinity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 18, 40.

national-normative sexualities.”³¹⁴ White masculinity is affective in nature; it relies on melodramatic, shared anguish that stems from an imaginary source of blame. This imaginary source of blame becomes a vertical pole around which a white masculine subject can articulate its social value and issue complaints. For Jacques Lacan, who wrote the book on *angst* (his reproduced 1962-1963 seminar), anguish is produced not when the ego becomes threatened, but when an object of desire is unbearably close to a not-yet-quite-formed subject who pursues it.³¹⁵ Michelle Rodino-Colocino’s study of white masculinity in tech industries underscores the pursuit of desired objects (status, security, equality) that targets “displacements of class anxieties onto racialized and gendered others.”³¹⁶ Masculinity, Rodino-Colocino writes, has “conspired with whiteness to confer public and psychological wages,” a phrase W. E. B. Dubois used to describe white privileged labor, and saddle non-white workers with “ideological baggage.”³¹⁷ The labor of white masculine victimage creates *sore subjects*, both in the sense of sensitive topics and positions of power over life that white men can more easily occupy.

In the case of the fusion center in question, this chapter posits that what anguishes workers non-consciously is unbearable proximity to two sources of social recognition, which I analyze in turn: their roles protecting the homeland; and their alleged targeting from a “society” at large who does not value white institutions like the police. The anguished affective labor of fusion work is just one among many reasons scholars should be wary of how law enforcement and intelligence communities become integrated within the “fusion-intelligence complex.”³¹⁸ While the relationship between fusion workers and

314 Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 100.

315 Lacan, *Anxiety*, 53: “What provokes anxiety is everything that announces to us, that lets us glimpse, that we’re going to be taken back onto the lap.”

316 Michelle Rodino-Colocino, “Geek Jeremiads: Speaking the Crisis of Job Loss by Opposing Offshored and H-1B Labor,” *Communication and Critical Cultural Studies* 9, no. 1 (2012): 26.

317 Rodino-Colocino, “Geek Jeremiads,” 28, 27.

318 Newkirk, “The Rise of the Fusion-Intelligence Complex,” 43-60.

police departments can be strained,³¹⁹ what links them is the reproduction of a shared *affect*—a shared anguish that communicates white masculinity is under threat.

MEASURING UP: OBSERVING SECURITY WHILE-FEMALE

This section isolates the first source of perceived anguish in fusion labor: “measuring up” to masculine expectations to secure the homeland. Security conferences, and security fields in general, are known for being “boys’ clubs.” Skirmishes between law enforcement and intelligence agencies are often referred to as “pissing contest[s].”³²⁰ So there was no real reason for me to be surprised by masculine communicative patterns within my fieldwork; still, I could feel myself preparing to laugh nervously at various junctures throughout my ethnographic work as I sensed the pressure to perform masculinity-privileging actions and emotional dispositions. For instance, I remember doing a double-take when a white blonde female data analyst who works in a fusion center—who I had just met moments prior—called me a “sexy librarian” in front of an all-male table, stacked with approximately 50 empty beer glasses (and counting). The open bar, she later indicated, was a regular fixture at these types of events so that people could blow off steam. This section attends to these sites of remasculinization, where subjects re-up their virility, their felt-capacity to protect the homeland, through the promise of recognition from women. Measuring up in fusion underwrites the labor of recentering of white male desire and delineating which lives are emotional assets to the nation.

Joshua Gunn has shown that measuring up is part of disciplinarity, the delimiting of a field, premised on singular recognition, or love.³²¹ I could sense throughout this

319 McQuade, “Police and the Post-9/11 Surveillance Surge.”

320 Buckley, *Managing Intelligence*, 466.

321 Joshua Gunn, “Size Matters: Polytoning Rhetoric’s Perverse Apocalypse,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2008): 82–108.

conference that fusion center workers with feel insecure. These workers seem to be the “losers” of the intelligence world, with the least defined roles, public success stories, and praise from authority. A Report in 2012 from the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs office revealed fusion centers as, the *Washington Post* summarized, “pools of ineptitude.”³²² Three of the keynote speakers at the National Fusion Center Association Conference—including Attorney General Jeff Sessions—noted that fusion workers do not get the praise they deserve. Fusion center labor, they noted, was largely invisible from and taken for granted by the American public.

Anxieties about measuring up come to be reflected in concerns about size: staff, resources, and institutional “buy-in” from police officers (who “stovepipe,” or guard cases from outsiders), state and federal funding sources, and institutional partners. These insecurities cropped up in numerous Question and Answer conference sessions and private interviews. In each, workers reiterated that small fusion centers cannot compete with big ones, because the big fusion centers have more gadgets and funding; these are the fusion centers who win awards at the national conference each year. This particular fusion center in my ethnography “lacks” the technology that other fusion centers in Texas have, according to one liaison.³²³ There is external pressure for fusion centers to measure up, because the Department of Homeland Security quantifies the success of each recognized fusion center in a public rating system.³²⁴ I was struck from the beginning of my research how much fusion workers, despite or perhaps because they work in an opaque field, wanted attention for their labor. For instance, I was only able to gain access to the center by

322 Robert O’Harrow, Jr. “DHS’ Fusion Centers Portrayed as Pools of Ineptitude and Civil Liberties Intrusion,” *Washington Post*, October 2, 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/dhs-fusion-centers-portrayed-as-pools-of-ineptitude-and-civil-liberties-intrusions/2012/10/02/10014440-0cb1-11e2-bd1a-b868e65d57eb_story.html.

323 Field note, March 6, 2018.

324 “2013 Fusion Center Assessment Individual Report,” U.S. Department of Homeland Security, June 2014.

<https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2013%20National%20Network%20of%20Fusion%20Centers%20Final%20Report.pdf>.

flattering a data scientist: by telling him that I had watched him on the local news. The measure of fusion importance was expressed in a number of ways, including the size of their TV's, as I noted in June 2017 during an observation:

CNN is playing on the most enormous TV screen I've ever seen. Trump is descending Air Force One. No one seems to watch the TV, it plays on mute. It is quite large relative to the size of the center. Desks are long L-shapes, and they each have a computer screen sitting at the corner of the L shape. Many of the desks face the TV. One of the workers jokingly and almost mockingly says the men who come through the center are obsessed with the size of the TV screens. He mimes their obsessive, gawking body language. I laugh because we know he's talking about their weird masculine hang-up's. I hear that sometimes baseball plays on one of the screens here, right next to another huge TV screen with an interfacing map of the city. I joke that the baseball must be good for morale.³²⁵

In addition to a correlation between technology, size, and masculinity, the question of size was explicitly sexualized. The self-deprecating humor of fusion workers involved a lot of mention of penises, balls, and sexual acts. In one noteworthy encounter during drinks at an Irish Pub at the fusion center conference, two female analysts explained a new interface in their center where analysts could select either red balls or blue balls to indicate a particular threat-inflection. A male fusion worker responded, "I know a lot about blue balls... I'm kidding, I'm kidding."³²⁶ The female analyst speaking pretended not to hear his comment (or maybe she did not hear it) and continued talking about the interface. A pervasive environment of attention-seeking related to sexual humor was a form of labor that reproduced male insecurity and asked for its remediation by women.

This insecurity was further reflected in how some male fusion center workers held onto the premise that women have an inherently seductive power over men. The idea that women are seductresses came up numerous times in my observations. At the open bar at the fusion conference, one fusion center male worker joked that I am an "attractive woman"

³²⁵ Field note, June 7, 2017.

³²⁶ Field note, November 8, 2017.

so I should get them a table. I made a quip about not prostituting myself for them. In another notable example, a firefighter stationed in the fusion center claimed that her daughter's husband was "pussy-whipped," insisting he should man up against her for her bossy behavior. Another interviewed worker expressed pride at how his teenage daughter, who he gendered as a traditional girl in appearance, could fire a gun better than boys. This fixation on women's overbearing excess of influence shown through in the attention a group of male fusion center workers gave women as they walked by their drinking table. After they began yelling at women who walked by the table with loud "AY's!," one male worker's attention turned to a 24-year-old white female analyst because he was shocked that the woman was so young. Another young white female analyst told the table that she had accumulated nine drink tickets. A male worker responded, "They must like you for your personality," meaning she had accumulated them because of her appearance. Within my conference experience, I received hyper-attention on my physical appearance—from how tall my heels made me and how I should not climb into an Uber with such high heels on, to a ten-minute running joke about the rebellious nature of my nose ring (and whether it indicated whether I was liberal or a young Republican in Austin). The communicative labor of fusion in this setting was feigned submission to women's powerful sexuality—an infantilized position.

Self-infantilizing was not disempowering for the male subjects who labored within that position. In fact, the reproduction of childlike anguish positioned them where they could thereby control women with more ease, in order to confirm their virility. As one notable example, I recount anxiety surrounding exposure as a female researcher in these settings:

I don't really know why so many of the male workers felt comfortable touching me. A little shoulder touch here and there, as they were moving around me, or after I interviewed them. It must have happened six times today in the five hours I was

there [at the center]. I do not understand these touching-relations... I felt a little weirded out... It may be a matter of common workplace intimacy. But the availability of a female body... passing between cubicles, interviewees, conversations. I think it was a matter that my body felt too available, a bit too exposed, a bit too participatory in this space. What was I silently agreeing to by letting myself be touched? I cringed it off later, shaking my shoulders. Ick. ???³²⁷

Aside from the physical discomfort a female researcher might have in this space, one wonders how self-infantilizing spills over into surveillance work. One way is that the police are self-deprecating, joking that they are the “dumb” ones relative to their intelligence peers. They are the “knuckle-draggers” of the bunch. The workplace tchotchke reflected boyish humor: “Bumper stickers, handcuffs pen-holder, fusion center football bracket championship belt, funny printed out memes like, ‘When a regular dog sees a police dog, do you think he goes, ‘Oh shit.’”³²⁸ Feigned naiveté and the jovial work environment run cover for some of the more pernicious police-behaviors, namely how much natural-given authority the fusion center workers believe cops should have.

Along similar lines, jokes relying on homophobia and transphobia performed the remasculinization of measuring up. One especially anguishing encounter was a running joke about a tech promoter who wore a white latex glove and who, these workers presumed, tried to pick up a fusion center director. The latex glove was figured in the conversation as an intrusive, threatening queer object, something that would be “hanging out of his [the director’s] ass” in the morning. One worker showed me a picture he had surreptitiously snapped of the apparent predator, and from the image, it was clear that the man in the glove was using it to guard his hand from smelling like smoke as he held a lit cigarette. This joke resurfaced months later:

On my way out of the center. I was joking with the Director that they could choose their pseudonyms. Director joked about his “affirmative lifestyle” encounter at the

³²⁷ Field note, March 6, 2018.

³²⁸ Field note, March 6, 2018.

*conference last November, after saying how I heard already about their pseudonym ideas. “Alternative lifestyle” being the “PC” way of putting it, according to him. I said his pseudonym could be “Alternative Lifestyle Lover.” I thought this subversive at the time, calling him gay... but realize it was probably not because disgust and shame still cling to the referent of queerness within the joke. It affirms the initial aberration—the initial threat of queerness to his bodily autonomy.*³²⁹

This same group of fusion staff told me a story about a person whose partner came into their center with someone with a gender they could not identify. One person sang “Dude looks like a lady” aloud as another person laughed. Someone else made a joke about “checking the plumbing.” During some of the more inappropriate humor, a lieutenant looked embarrassed and asked me to tune out. It was—if I inferred his meaning correctly—a way in which they related to one another, a process of affective cathexis.

What exactly is *becoming fused*, or cathected, in these encounters? The affective labor described herein reproduces a surplus of anguish that only some can share in. To feel this anguish signals worker’s commitment to the nation. The anguish to measure up becomes converted into a “misguided affection,” or “misguided patriotism.”³³⁰ Puar, reading Sara Ahmed, writes that given how national love is a “form of waiting,” there are numerous ways citizens simulate “affective modes of belonging to the state, modes that assuage the angst of unrequited love.”³³¹ The affect of national masculinity within fusion security space is an *angst*, meaning it *pressurizes*. Because national love is a form of waiting, fusion angst wills a future time in which their work and their masculinity matter—when it is seen, finally.

Fusion anguish acts as a pressurizing force in two respects. First, the anguish screams for attention to redress white male social desires and drowns out the capacity to hear other desires. In other words, anguish is a force that *insists* on, even *cries out for*

329 Field note, March 6, 2018.

330 Kumarini Silva, “Having the Time of Our Lives: Love-Cruelty as Patriotic Impulse,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1 (2018): 80.

331 Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 26.

remasculinization. Second, the shared anguish delineates who is an emotional asset and who is an emotional burden on the nation. The anguish convinces male fusion workers that they are emotional assets to the nation-state, whereas others contaminate their masculine work with femininity and queerness. To consider politics in this setting would *weigh down* the workers, *increasing* their *anguish*.

Given this environment, the most mortifying thought of observing security as a white woman is how easy it is to collude with this security infrastructure: to humanize and even encourage abhorrent behavior to receive recognition. I feel lingering anxiety at the thought that I might have been acting like Kendall Jenner in her highly troubling 2017 Pepsi commercial: giving a Pepsi to police officers during a deeply offensive fictional reenactment of Black Lives Matter protests—in other words, colluding with police to seem like a good citizen and thus throwing meddlers under the bus. I gave an almost-flattering-if-obsessive attentiveness to workers by writing down everything they said and did, as well as sidestepped uncomfortable moments and passing as a non-threatening insider. I wanted to measure up, and this meant identifying with white male security culture in an affective register. Certainly, according to Lewandowski, Carter, and Campbell, a researcher building rapport through interviews in fusion centers, where typically workers are reticent to share, can “maximize the collection of desired data.”³³² Perhaps the most pressing question of researcher positionality is how to operationalize anxious moments, when a researcher is peddling and back-peddling in interviews, encounters, and during coding and interpretation, to challenge the reproduction of anguish.

One way to leverage passing within security settings is to monitor fusion centers’ monitoring. Consider the following scene: I remember sitting at the desk of the social media surveillance expert in the fusion center, waiting as he searched for a word other than

³³² Lewandowski, Carter, and Campbell, “The Role of People in Information-Sharing,” 178.

“monitoring” to describe his work of watching online threats on What’s App, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites through Bluebook. He settled on the word “assessing.” He explained the hesitation: since the “ACLU thing,” people have been on edge around the office.³³³ I looked around at the work area to see if anyone looked spooked. In the background, a large TV screen was set on NBC news and muted. I wrote the following note during my visit, as I sat at the desk:

The news shows images from the Las Vegas shooting, where an older white man killed 59 people and injured 500 others; the numbers of dead and injured tick up in real-time as I watch the Vegas police hold a short press conference. No one’s watching the news... I see workers at large L-shaped desks, each worker set in front of three large computer monitors. They’re preoccupied, the quiet broken only by the sound of a sneeze or cough. I see a poster hanging on the inside panel of a desk across the room: a modified Uncle Sam [poster] with large print that reads, “HOMELAND SECURITY IS YOUR JOB, TOO!” ... Is everyone hearing our conversation? People do not seem all that tuned into anything but their work; sleepy, slow, bored, maybe...³³⁴

This worker seemed slightly anxious about the ACLU watching him—to the point where he uses more innocuous language than “monitoring”—and this Uncle Sam poster seemed anxious about getting staff to personally invest in protecting the homeland. But the excess of anguish expressed in the poster does not seem to spill over into the immediate environment; the analyst seems mildly irritated that he has to use a different term, and no one explicitly responds to the poster’s demand. Yet, there is a shared jumpiness surrounding the need to keep belaboring on behalf of the state. I later learn the desk with the poster belongs to a Joint Terrorism Task Force liaison. The liaison’s desk also includes a green stuffed alien toy that says “Illegal Alien” on it. This toy makes me uncomfortable,

333 He was referring to how the ACLU challenged fusion centers’ capacity to use Geofeedia, a location technology for social media surveillance, through Dataminr. Fusion centers can no longer use the entire “firehose” of publicly available Tweets. See Nicole Ozer, “Twitter Cuts Off Fusion Spy Centers’ Access to Social Media Surveillance Tool,” ACLU, December 15, 2016, <https://www.aclu.org/blog/privacy-technology/internet-privacy/twitter-cuts-fusion-spy-centers-access-social-media>. The ACLU found that Geofeedia was being used by centers to track Black Lives Matter protests.

334 Field note, October 2, 2017.

and my eyes flicker to another uncomfortable object: ICE “swag” (a black brimmed hat with yellow “ICE” letters on it) sitting atop the desks of some workers—a gift from when ICE officials visited the center. The virtue of sleuthing within a center is that a researcher can take stock of shared sore subjects like civic duty, protecting the homeland, anxiety about “aliens,” etc., discernible from repetitive expressed anguish. Monitoring means taking stock: registering what is off and stockpiling it as evidence. In that spirit, I document another important source of anguish from which fusion victimage stems.

THE BUREAU OF HURT FEELINGS

This section locates a second source of white male victimage in fusion center rhetoric: perceived threat to white institutions. The affective labor described herein reproduces collective anguish over the familiar markers of national identity. Importantly, though workers’ *explicit* speech might denigrate white supremacists, a *shared anguish* across interviewed workers was the seriousness of threat to police officers and traditional historical myths of white heritage like the Confederacy. What has taken place in the mixture of security and policing through fusion is that civilian workers in national security *inherit* some of the white privilege of “blue lives” by virtue of protecting and informing them. While law enforcement officers and fusion civilians have an uneasy partnership (due to territorial disputes, lack of communication, styles of intelligence collection and processing, and personal disagreements),³³⁵ the wheels between them are greased by a *shared affirmation of blue lives*. While the police force within the fusion city is among the most diverse in terms of its Hispanic recruitment, shared anguish safeguards the innocence of white institutions. In a rhetorical world of equivalences between the value of lives, *we*

335 McQuade, “Police and the Post-9/11 Surveillance Surge.”

see a corresponding rhetorical equivalence between the legitimacy of each life's affective labor. If those opposed to white institutions feel feelings, then, it becomes *belabored*, *special work* for the social body to even register these feelings.

Answering the question of why “white lives matter,” “blue lives matter,” and “all lives matter” feel like an appropriate response to “black lives matters,” despite their obvious misfires, Barbara Biesecker argues that the affirmations rely on a statement, or modality of existence proper to a group of signs, that life should be captured at the level of “vital, yet otherwise unqualified life.”³³⁶ The organization of this statement demands an *equivalence* in value between lives and a dehistoricization of how control comes to be enacted over the object of life itself. The political speech that blue, white, and all lives matter scales politics at the level of “molecularization,” which is the statement’s political rationality: we can apprehend “life” at the level of the organism. Biesecker details that the statement and political rationality give way to a “newly energized” rhetoric of “democratic indifference,” or “the appearance of *undifferentiated* substance,” namely *life*. Biesecker notes, the rhetoric of indifferent lives’ tropological function is to reproduce the same economy in which only some lives can matter: this rhetoric is “not a democratizing materialism but a *specularization*, an *enchanted tropological abstraction* available for use by late neoliberal biopolitics/biocapitalism.”³³⁷ White anguish operates as a similar specularization; because white anguish is, wrongfully, perceived as having no avenue for social expression or grievance, expressing white anguish becomes the means to *make uncounted lives feel counted*. As Biesecker notes, this organization of the social body—the obliterating and depoliticization of difference through substitutions between life—comes to be through “rhetorical slight[s] of hand” that *equalize*. We have *white sensitivity* on one

336 Barbara A. Biesecker, “From General History to Philosophy: Black Lives Matter, Late Neoliberal Molecular Biopolitics, and Rhetoric,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 50, No. 4 (2017): 409-430.

337 Biesecker, “From General History to Philosophy,” 424.

hand and, as Puar writes, “the racialization of bodies that are expected to endure pain, suffering, and injury on the other.”³³⁸

One key sleight of hand in the context of fusion is a victimage surrounding funding—when the city’s lack of funding shows that “society” writ large does not recognize how important fusion is. Perhaps the starkest example of shared white victimage between police and fusion staff comes from an interaction in which a fusion center fire department worker described how the city wastes money taking down confederate statues rather than funding security work:

I was at dinner with fusion center staff yesterday, and the conversation turned to the proliferation of acronyms at events like these... A few people went around making some fake ones up just for fun... One staff member had joked earlier in the day that the center should make a “bureau” with many acronyms to sound more official like the other fusion centers...

Later, as I asked what had been scariest for the fusion center group as a whole, the conversation turned to the open physical layout of the department building they are in... The conversation whittled down into a common theme I’m hearing: money determines fusion capacities. Crucial security changes would not be made to the building because the city likely wouldn’t have the money for it. We got talking about how the city spends money, and a source of waste quickly surfaced: taking down a confederate statue. “You wanna talk about wasting money...” someone leaned in to me and exclaimed loudly.

Taking down this statue had apparently cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. There was a lot of head-shaking at the table before I even heard the figure. Apparently “everyone” had to go out to this site to provide back-up. Though, I heard, there will be a legal challenge because the statue was owned by a revolutionary war group rather than the city. Someone remarked that people who were upset at that statue should open a “Bureau of Hurt Feelings.” ...

“Bureau of Hurt Feelings.” I texted my girl friends later that day flabbergasted and amused by this phrase. I joked that the “Bureau of Hurt Feelings” is “my whole life.” I think of all the grievances we’ve stockpiled as a group over the course of our professional lives... which echo a lot of visible harassment at this conference. I think of the injurious nature of these confederate statue comments and how best people can archive hurt in this bureau—to not let these feelings go, because the

338 Jasbir K. Puar, “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot!” *The New Inquiry*, September 15, 2017, <https://thenewinquiry.com/hands-up-dont-shoot/>.

*hurt continues whether black Americans choose it or not. I am thinking right now, in fact, that this Bureau's cases are already open, ready for investigation. But: not without serious inquiry into how white hurt feelings not only detract attention from the pain of others, but also make others' pain a source of perceived injury.*³³⁹

The joke is only funny to the liaison because hurt feelings are not so serious as to warrant a *bureau*. Who would *archive* hurt feelings? What value do feelings have for serious inquiry or, I daresay, investigation? Within the liaison's comments, funding stands in for the indistinct value between lives (Shouldn't we all get the same amount of money? Or, shouldn't those who *add value* to the city through protection be given *the most* money?). Money becomes a battleground for valuation, and fusion anguish becomes a signal of sore devaluation. Removing the Confederate statue is an extravagant gift to placate hurt feelings rather than a matter of national security that would make residents feel safer.

White victimage's oversensitivity is expressed in how fusion workers voice that police are exceptional targets of violent protests. A fusion center director explained to me in a rather impressed tone that he met someone who was "there" during the Ferguson "riots." I asked if protests like that would happen in his city; another male worker interjected that there would not be demonstrations because there is not the "same kind of anger." I noticed quite a bit of head-shaking about how scary Ferguson was. This anguish about the intensity of Black Lives Matter protests was expressed a number of times during the security conference, yet none so acutely as in this particular moment:

I felt like excusing myself from a panel today but I sat there riveted. It was too much to take in: the sheer horror of it. Head spinning, looking for someone to step in and defect... to challenge. I stayed silent. I felt, after all, like I did not want to blow my cover. I wonder now who is and is not allowed to reveal themselves in these spaces: who can pass freely between doors, into conversations, into communities, without being-questioned. So many assumptions that I am not just along for the ride but also one of the drivers of this fusion machine. By staying, I became a witness to

339 Field note, November 9, 2017.

injustice, and, by passing-by silently, I can't help but feel that I also became an author of it.

I was in a panel about "lessons learned" from law enforcement-targeting shootings, and [sic] two fusion center workers, both women (one woman was white, and one was black, based on my own assumptions), discussed the fatal police shooting of Alton Sterling as an example of how communities target law enforcement. Sterling died from a police shooting him point blank in the chest after tackling him. We had all seen the video. We knew what happened. To discuss his death as a threat-event for police—it was appalling. There was no moment of silence for Sterling, no sympathetic acknowledgment, nor even any platitudes. Instead: a description of the event that re-criminalized him: that focused on the minor moments in which Sterling took his hands off the cruiser (must have been the first strike) and then argued with police (must have been the second)... and then... it's not clear, they say. The police shot him.

The logic was that because people were upset about the shooting in Baton Rouge, the fusion center then had to field threats related to retaliation against police. They opened up a number of "leads" through their online system. The "success story" they had, in their words, was that they foiled a protest that would have disrupted traffic on a main highway. Success story? Success?

I feel appalled now at the brazenness of this public discourse, because I fear that people in the audience of the panel were part of a consensus community in which there is no "?" inserted into the discursive field. No interval, no pause, no cough or clearing of throats that says, "No," even if minimally. Had someone screamed in this panel, I feel it would have been justified. But I quietly stayed. The suffocating discourse was twice-injuring: killing Sterling and then saying his death is a threat. His death is a threat. His death is a threat to the people who killed him.³⁴⁰

It is difficult to overstate the offense of the above rhetorical summersault. It becomes the workers' job within this panel to delineate who should live and who should die, as well as who should have the right to kill and when. But the workers also delineate how Sterling should have experienced what Achille Mbembe, in his remapping of control over life and death through an extrapolation of the "living dead," calls "social death (expulsion from humanity altogether)," for how his afterlife mobilized protesters on his behalf.³⁴¹ Because it is the job of fusion centers to get control over chaos, or regain control over territory, they can claim that any violence should be disrupted. But fusion centers, which work both for

³⁴⁰ Field note, November 9, 2017.

³⁴¹ Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," trans. Libby Meintjes, *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 21.

and *independently* of police, adopt the pressures of protecting blue lives. Fusion workers must therefore perform anguish on behalf of blue lives. Other anguish, black anguish, gets squeezed out of the space. Sterling was a threat to white existence even from beyond the grave, even when *inactionable*—like when Stephon Clark was handcuffed *after* being shot 20 times in his backyard in Sacramento, California.

Within the fusion center, blue lives matter flags hang outside offices and over doorways, thresholds of fidelity workers cross each day. Working in the same space as police officers produces *affective tests* as to whether you anguish on their behalf. Consider my documented interaction with a police officer before an interview:

An officer who works in the real-time center didn't "mean" to "interrogate" me before he signed off on the interview, but it felt like an interrogation to me. He asked me how I felt about law enforcement—what my "views" were. What he was getting at, he explained, was whether I was a typical 23, 24-year-old (he guessed) liberal who says, "Fuck the police." I clarified I was 29. I said, "I think the police are not well-understood, and that's why I want to interview them." He seemed skeptical: "Are you just saying that?" He asked if I owned a gun. I said no and that I did not own one because I would be scared that I would shoot myself. I laughed nervously as he gave me a sad look. It occurred to me in a flash to mention that the man I'm dating owns three guns. He initially seemed satisfied with this answer... He pressed, asking me my political beliefs. I stated that I do not tell my political leanings to people I interview, because to disclose them would affect how interviewees respond.

I was slightly panicked throughout this encounter.

This line of questioning was a test. The test was whether he could trust me—whether I bore the familiar markers of someone who respected authority. I feel as if I did not "give in," so to speak; I did not say that I affirm the police, but I also did not denounce them. I think I engaged in a series of anxious sidesteps... but I also worry this kind of neutrality is a comfortable place. Not challenging for myself or this particular officer.³⁴²

This is a painful interaction. Already defensive, the police officer I interviewed is jumpy about my affiliations, already sensitive about the assault on police officers by young

342 Field note, March 6, 2018.

liberals. Am I someone he could trust? Would I use his words to confirm a liberal bias? The test was not just about the police, but about guns. I learn that this person worked in the Army training soldiers how to fire guns, and he taught his teenage daughter to fire them. He shows me a video of her reloading her first clip. Did I understand how he was misunderstood? Did I respect the skill involved in shooting a gun?

The fusion of anguish between intelligence and police comes from a fundamental sensitivity: that terrorism feels *more proximate* to local communities than ever before. Fusion centers miraculously still derive their justification from the public feeling of exceptional national victimage surrounding the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. This tired victimage rhetoric continues nearly two decades later—when the attacks have become, in Jeffrey Melnick’s elaboration, more of a social “citation” than an organizing principle.³⁴³ Melnick describes the participation in 9/11 mourning *not* as a universal experience, despite the diversity rhetoric produced after 9/11, but very much a *white* shared affect. In the context of fusion, we see a fixation on 9/11 as a point of local confusion. When I asked about the scariest thing to happen to the fusion center in Texas, a director, without pause, and with a sarcastic tone (as if to say “duh”) stated, “9/11 was pretty scary.”³⁴⁴ In a keynote address to the fusion center conference, an assistant to the associate deputy director of the FBI stated that law enforcement and intelligence became sutured after 9/11 by President George Bush. He told the story of how former FBI Director Robert Mueller briefed President Bush about the numbers of agents and collectors on the scenes, and Bush turned to him and stated, “I don’t care about all that. What are you going to do to prevent the next one?” According to the conference speaker, that moment fused law enforcement and intelligence in a “difficult marriage.”³⁴⁵ Similarly,

343 Jeffrey Melnick, *9/11 Culture: America Under Construction* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

344 Field note, November 7, 2017. It should be noted that the fusion center was not open yet during 9/11; it would open years later.

345 Field note, November 6, 2017.

a promotional video at the fusion conference produced by a Florida fusion center—played day one of the fusion conference—explains 9/11 as a “devastating” day from which fusion centers were born, “to fill the void of the unknown.”³⁴⁶ Because of the events of 9/11, fusion centers generated a new intelligence mantra: “all terrorism is local.” Without the spatialization of 9/11 as *local*, fusion centers would lose their *raison d’état*. The threat of terrorism must thus feel closer than ever to fusion workers, even while, one director put it, “you won’t see al-Qaeda walking down [the street]” in his city.³⁴⁷

While the first object of fusion anguish is recognition surrounding male protection of the homeland, the second source of anguish is perceived threat to white institutions. White anguish supervenes when the common sense of equivalent life (each one counts the same as the next) becomes threatened. Rather than re-equalize the value of feelings, however, fusion’s anguished affective labor is conservative; it preserves an infrastructure of feelings with disproportionate values. Fusion’s anguished affective labor values the affects that protect the sensitivity of white institutions first and denies that there should be a “special” bureau to register the pain, anger, disgust, and despair of non-white populations.

NOW FIELDING COMPLAINTS

In response to the force of insensitivity to non-white anguish, then, I momentarily open up a Bureau of Hurt Feelings to conduct another kind of affective labor: fielding complaints. Criticizing white masculine insecurity risks making one’s work apprehensible as a complaint. But rather than deny the complaining character of this chapter (marked by collective grievances and personal affronts), I explore here rhetorical criticism *qua* complaining may perform critical work. A number of feminists have elaborated the

³⁴⁶ Field note, November 7, 2017.

³⁴⁷ Field note, June 7, 2017.

structure of the complaint as a mode of political appeal, including Lauren Berlant, Avital Ronell, and Sara Ahmed.³⁴⁸

In what follows, I outline eight grievances with fusion centers, in order to register and amplify collective feelings about the national security state. In other words, these grievances are not mine alone from my field work; they derive from other scholars who criticize security culture. Whether the grievances fall on sympathetic ears remains an open question.³⁴⁹

Grievances

1. Whiteness: Fusion centers re-center whiteness by overvaluing white affects and engaging in racializing surveillance, the systematic monitoring of raced bodies in ways that render them out of place.³⁵⁰
2. Masculine Security Culture: Fusion centers perpetuate a masculine security culture that reproduces male control over life.
3. Lack of Accountability: Fusion centers are not accountable to the public, which leads to privacy abuses, ambiguity surrounding legal measures, and difficulty documenting fusion's effects.³⁵¹

348 Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Ronell, *Complaint*. Ahmed's newest project revolves around how complainers are quickly turned into the source of a problem by virtue of presenting a complaint, i.e. the idea that talking about race produces racism. See Sara Ahmed, "Complaint as Diversity Work," Feminist Kill Joys (blog), Sara Ahmed, November 10, 2017, <https://feministkilljoys.com/2017/11/10/complaint-as-diversity-work/>.

349 I will present my findings to fusion centers in Fall 2018.

350 I take this definition from Browne, *Dark Matters*.

351 See Danielle Keats Citron and Frank Pasquale, "Network Accountability for Domestic Intelligence Apparatus," *Hastings Law Journal* 62, no. 6 (2011): 1441-1493; Jeremy G. Carter, David L. Carter, Steve Chermak, and Edmund McGarrell, "Law Enforcement Fusion Centers: Cultivating an Information Sharing Environment while Safeguarding Privacy," *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* 32, no. 1 (2017): 11-27; Monahan and Regan, "Zones of Opacity."

4. Militarizing the Police: Fusion center national security grants contribute to the militarization of the police, which leads to overzealous use of paramilitary technologies for low-level crimes and aggressive border-policing.³⁵²
5. Data Hoarding: Fusion centers' "Collect It All" intelligence strategy and data storage monitor innocent subjects without any connection to terrorism, put a premium on employee trust to guard against abuse, and elevate data sifters and lateral tips that reproduce structural inequalities.³⁵³
6. Monitoring Protest: Fusion centers' covert surveillance targets include animal rights, anti-war, Occupy, antifa, Black Lives Matter, and anti-Dakota Access Pipeline protesters. This monitoring provides data for law enforcement to disrupt these protests.³⁵⁴
7. Lateral Surveillance: Fusion centers operate as nodes in security campaigns like DHS's "If You See Something, Say Something" devoted to lateral surveillance, monitoring-relations in which (non)citizens spy on one another. Lateral surveillance programs contribute to "the ambiguation of individuals"

352 See Priest and Arkin, "Monitoring America"; Radley Balko, "A Decade After 9/11, Police Departments Are Increasingly Militarized," *Huffington Post*, September 12, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/12/police-militarization-9-11-september-11_n_955508.html; Chávez, "Border Interventions." As the former Memphis Police Director Larry Godwin states, "We have our own terrorists, and they are taking lives every day... No, we don't have suicide bombers—not yet. But you need to remain vigilant and realize how vulnerable you can be if you let up." Quoted in Priest and Arkin, "Monitoring America."

353 Glenn Greenwald, *No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the US Surveillance State* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014). Fusion centers produce and share data within two nationwide databases: eGuardian and the Shared Data Repository (SDR). eGuardian is part of the FBI's "Guardian Program," a database system that significantly underreports the number of civilians killed by police officers. Technically, information should stay in eGuardian for no more than 180 days if it has no clear nexus to terrorism yet some incidents can sit in limbo for five years. The eGuardian system feeds into more permanent databases: Guardian (under the FBI) and the SDR (under the DHS). "'Guardian' Database Highlights Underreporting Of People Killed By Police," *NPR: National Public Radio*, June 5, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/2015/06/05/412305542/guardian-database-highlights-underreporting-of-people-killed-by-police>. The Guardian Program also contains the classified Guardian Threat Tracking System (called "Guardian"), a database reserved for FBI analysts. The Guardian Program replaced the Defense Department's controversial TALON (Threat and Local Observation Notice) intelligence program, which the ACLU criticized for permitting government spying on domestic anti-war dissenters. Pincus, "Protesters Found in Database." See Steve Gorman, "ACLU Faults 'Suspicious Activity' Reporting by Law Enforcement," *Reuters*, September 19, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-security-profiling-idUSBRE98J01N20130920>; Daniel Zwerdling, "Mall Counterterrorism Files ID Mostly Minorities," *WBUR*, September 8, 2011, <http://www.wbur.org/npr/140262005/mall-counterterrorism-files-id-mostly-minorities>.

354 See Craven, Monahan, and Regan, "Compromised Trust"; Colin Moynihan and Scott Shane, "For Anarchist, Details of Life as FBI Target," *New York Times*, May 29, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/29/us/29surveillance.html>.

citizen/officer/suspect roles” such that “the public’s everyday social practices are coming to closely resemble the activities of the police.”³⁵⁵

8. Exhaustion: An awful part of the social life of a complainer is that she often has to repeat complaints several times to be heard. Perhaps the Bureau of Hurt Feelings needs more staff members to archive complaints and respond to cases.

CONCLUSION: ANGUISHED AFFECTIVE LABOR

This chapter has argued, from anxious observations and interviews in one local center and observations at a national conference, that local fusion intelligence is a form of affective labor that produces white male anguish. Fusions’ objects of anguish are protecting the homeland and protecting white institutions. The continued pulsation of anguish surrounding these objects produces exceptional sites of national security sensitivity, or *sore subjects*: masculine security culture, the disposability of black life, and historical and structural white supremacy. To even touch on them triggers resistance. Framing intelligence work as affective work shows that the intelligence product is not just an exchange of information but an exchange of *affects*. One concludes that fusion centers *are* bureaus of hurt feelings—institutions that prioritize which complaints are heard and validated.

The rhetorical-critic-as-complainer role opens us to rethink the value of personal affronts to rhetorical scholarship. At least part of the theoretical purchase of a concept like “affective labor” is how it centers the personal. Indeed, affect theory ushers in a newfound

³⁵⁵ Joshua Reeves, “If You See Something, Say Something: Lateral Surveillance and the Uses of Responsibility,” *Surveillance & Society* 10, no. 3/4 (2012): 243, 244. As Reeves writes that when neighbors are asked to complain about one another—to become racial policing forces through SARs, he discusses in the conclusion of his book *Citizen Spies*—the best course of action may simply be to “shut up.” Reeves, *Citizen Spies*, 172.

appreciation for the personal.³⁵⁶ There is a risk, however, that affective descriptions—as one mode of documenting affect—will be purely about a private experience of one individual. Eugenie Brinkema defines this as an “affective fallacy”: if affect is what affects a body, scholarship can look primarily to the theorist’s body to find affect’s effects.³⁵⁷ Brinkema writes, “Affect is taken as always being, in the end, *for us*.”³⁵⁸ The belief that prevails is “this affect stuff, it tolls for me.”³⁵⁹ Brinkema claims that there are two effects of this fallacy: first, it invites scholarship that stops at the effect of skin-stirring; and second, oddly enough, its effect is to “preserve a kernel of humanism in any discussion of affect.”³⁶⁰ I propose that rhetorical theory can instead focus on *shared affective labor power*. Questions about the complaint as *a collective speech act* thus come to the fore: To what extent is a complaint reflective of a collective grievance? Why are hurt feelings shared by some groups/populations and not by others? Who complains to whom? Who provides the labor necessary for a complaint to be heard?

One collective complaint (or even demand) affect theory would then need to address is how it takes white affective experience as universal. Looking to the works of Audre Lorde, Natalia A. Martinez, and Maya Chinchilla, Claudia Garcia-Rojas argues women of color feminism challenges White affect studies, an epistemic practice that “privileges White affects and White histories”: “women of color feminists enact a resistance and refusal to abide to disciplined futures that are anchored in dominant Western social scripts. In their continued pursuit to cultivate words and worlds that enable them to think new social erotics, women of color feminists contest a structure of White affects and

356 See Cvetkovich, *Depression*.

357 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 31.

358 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 31.

359 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 32.

360 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 32.

social emotions instituted through White affect studies.”³⁶¹ White affects become our everyday structures, our instituted, normalized baseline of our collective sensory experiences, in and through scholarship. In other words, through disciplinary norms, scholarship about affect has perpetuated asymmetries of anguish.

The Bureau of Hurt Feelings opened by this chapter insists on keeping the office of complaints about fusion centers, and affect theory, open. Kicking up the dirt of national security infrastructures requires that the infrastructure become more open to criticism. Ronell writes that the “office of friendship” remains structurally open to the possibility of a complaint to be registered: “structurally at least, the friend remains open for business during psychic droughts, listening in for the pings and pangs of disillusionment, the advent of compounded pain, the spread of disturbance on existential and mortal lines of disappointed expectation.”³⁶² Ronell checks herself, though: “*Okay, a girl can dream.*”³⁶³ I am reminded of how I texted female friends about the phrase “Bureau of Hurt Feelings” soon after hearing it. The work of friendship—which involves the mundane tasks of bureaucracy (filing complaints, opening cases, tracking down leads)—builds collective power through a shared sense that something is off. Keeping the office of friend-complaints open means registering one final meta-complaint: how friendship is subject to dynamics of power and control. Would I call the fusion center workers I observed friends? Is friendship, in the form of sisterhood, universally shared? No.³⁶⁴ But, perhaps we can use “rhetoric, then, as [a] lever” to keep the doors of the Bureau of Hurt Feelings pried open.³⁶⁵

361 Claudia Garcia-Rojas, “(Un)Disciplined futures: Women of Color Feminism as a Disruptive to White Affect Studies,” *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 21, no. 3 (2017): 16, 14. Also see Bryan McCann, “Affect, Black Rage, and False Alternatives to the Hip-Hop Nation,” *Cultural Studies* 13, no. 5 (2013): 408-418.

362 Ronell, *Complaint*, 7.

363 Ronell, *Complaint*, 7. Original emphasis.

364 See Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017); bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (South End Press, 1984).

365 Biesecker, “From General History to Philosophy,” 412.

In that spirit, jumping off from these close investigations into a fusion center in Texas, we can zoom out to how other surveillance structures in Texas become emboldened by fusion. In the next section, we go further from the centers proper. I first explore acoustic surveillance in San Antonio and then informant surveillance in Houston. In both cases, fusion expedited the work of policing. I then zoom out to consider US counterterrorism from a meta-level. If our Bureau of Hurt Feelings about fusion remains open, there are still other complaints to be registered and filed.

FURTHER

Chapter Five:
Anxious Ears: Shotspotter and Sensorial Preemption in San Antonio

INTRODUCTION

Fusion centers in Texas accelerate community policing by compiling data statistics. One such case of data support involves a gunfire detection software used in San Antonio. ShotSpotter is an acoustic gunfire detection software currently used by police in over 90 US cities, including Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, D.C. ShotSpotter is designed to detect sounds that have the audio signature of gunshots — the muzzle blast, or “bang,” of a weapon and, sometimes, the bullet shock wave, or “crack,” detected by multiple sensory arrays. Shotspotter records these sounds through microphones, typically placed on rooftops and utility poles, concealed yet visible in light grey boxes (Figure 5.1).³⁶⁶ The technology then time-stamps the shots, triangulates their location, and sends that information to ShotSpotter headquarters.³⁶⁷ ShotSpotter personnel then quickly verify the information, and send a digital alert, or cry, with coordinates to the gunfire and number of shots registered to the “Shotspotter Interface Portal.” The portal is accessible to law enforcement and fusion center staff on smart phones, police cruisers, and desktop computers. Like “smart cameras” that use sensory technologies to visually monitor so-called “criminal” body language,³⁶⁸ ShotSpotter combines sensors and predictive analytics to monitor “criminal” sound. At its most basic level, ShotSpotter responds in real-time by lending additional ears to police.

Considering how SpotSpotter was afforded objectivity in the case of off-duty police officer James Haskell shooting and killing 14-year-old black child DeOnté Rawlings in Washington, D.C., Andrew Merrill argues that ShotSpotter is “mobilized in the service of structural racism and the racial management of space” through “logics of control and

³⁶⁶ “ShotSpotter: How it Works,” *ShotSpotter*, accessed November 1, 2017, <http://www.shotspotter.com/technology>.

³⁶⁷ Three sensors must be triggered before ShotSpotter is activated.

³⁶⁸ See Andrew Guthrie Ferguson, *The Rise of Big Data Policing: Surveillance, Race, and the Future of Law Enforcement* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 70.

anticipatory risk.”³⁶⁹ He argues that to account for ShotSpotter’s racial management and logics of control, scholars should “engage the particular spatial dimensions of surveillance systems from both a *spatialization* and *infrastructural* perspective.”³⁷⁰ ShotSpotter’s material infrastructure “includes the microphone, algorithm, map, crime statistics, datapoints, incident reports, policy, law, and further.”³⁷¹ I argue that ShotSpotter is also an *affective infrastructure*, or “the *enabling* architecture of a system” at the level of bodily viscera.³⁷²

This chapter argues that acoustic gunfire detection software constitutes a non-human affective infrastructure of anxiety, a subterranean network of anxious ears that preempt the quasi-traceability of gunfire, its incapacity to be tracked fully, within urban security environments. The benefit of this theorization is showing how ShotSpotter reflects a wider law enforcement and homeland security anxiety about their inability to *over*-hear, meaning both to hear without being-heard or seen and to hear more than is necessary.³⁷³ As anxious ears that partially perform reactive paranoia for residents and police, ShotSpotter allows the police to leverage control over movements within a space. As an affect—a bodily intensity that operates in subterranean networks below understanding and signification—anxiety is a primordial response to a subject’s unbearable openness to a non-programmatic future, a future that cannot be predicted or preempted. This chapter details how ShotSpotter’s anxious infrastructure operates through anxiety’s *intermittency*, *latency*, and *circularity*. Anxiety’s movements are installed in a city’s infrastructure when police

369 Andrew Merrill, “The Life of a Gunshot: Space, Sound, and the Political Contours of Acoustic Gunshot Detection,” *Surveillance & Society* 15, no. 1 (2017): 43, 52.

370 Merrill, “The Life of a Gunshot,” 53. Original emphasis.

371 Merrill, “The Life of a Gunshot,” 49.

372 Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 33. My emphasis.

373 Peter Szendy, *All Ears: The Aesthetics of Espionage* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017).

confront gunfire's quasi-traceable, i.e. that its quick, refractory sound makes it difficult to register even *as* gunfire and track back to a source.

Gun violence related to drug and gang activities have become critical targets in the networked War on Terror, often acting as symbols of broader concerns about illegal immigration and the US-Mexico border. Ostensibly due to lack of public reporting about drug and gang-related gunfire, San Antonio was the first city in Texas to test ShotSpotter between April 2016 until August 2017 in the Eastside Promise Zone and in the Westside Hope neighborhoods. San Antonio was not the first city in Texas to test gunfire detection, however; between October and December 1996, Dallas tested the first technology meant to translate acoustic gunfire technology from battlefields to urban spaces, called Systems for the Effective Control of Urban Environment Security (SECURES), in a predominantly Hispanic suburb called Oak Cliff.³⁷⁴ Acoustic detection software is not a new technology; the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) commissioned a series of counter-sniper acoustic detection software for implementation in foreign wars during the 1990s. The integration of these technologies into urban security environments, however, represents a transmutation from war battlefields in foreign locations to local communities, and their integration, including in San Antonio, speaks to fluctuating trust between police and residents.³⁷⁵

By reading San Antonio's ShotSpotter installation as an anxious infrastructure, this chapter outlines two overall effects of acoustic gunfire technology. First, acoustic gunfire espionage *circumvents* residents' agency to respond to gun violence. Part of the circumvention of resident agency results from resident reticence to involve the police,

374 See Lorraine Green Mazerolle, Cory Watkins, Dennis Rogan, and James Frank, "Using Gunfire Detection Systems in Police Departments: The Impact on Police Response Times and Officer Workloads," *Police Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1998): 21-49.

375 See Phil Anaya, "Shot Spotter Already Alerting Police to Gunfire," *KENS5 San Antonio*, May 16, 2016, <http://www.kens5.com/news/local/shot-spotter-already-alerting-sapd-to-gunfire/197784905>.

given a climate hostile to those with vulnerable legal status, an anti-snitching culture, and an overall “chilling effect.” When residents do not perform the civic duty that asks them to be the eyes and ears of the police, surveillance measures offer security actors “sensory extension[s].”³⁷⁶ Second, ShotSpotter’s status as a *failed* intervention in San Antonio—the city government decided to scrap the program—exposes the limitations of policing tactics that try to *secure territory* by *over-hearing* black and Hispanic residents. The most essential limitation is the visceral animosity of being-over-heard. Because of limitations, it is all the more important to act like a switchboard operator and drop the calls to/from the police, meaning dipping out of call of public duty to support asymmetrical, unaccountable police surveillance. Disrupting the police call means jamming up anxious circuits that render ShotSpotter even *testable* within spaces.³⁷⁷

I first theorize acoustic surveillance as an affective infrastructure. I then outline the aesthetic features of its anxious infrastructure. Given the infrastructure’s intermittent, latent, and circular movements of anxiety, I analyze how ShotSpotter circumvents the agency of residents to mediate guns. I then explore how ShotSpotter’s failure in San Antonio presents an opportunity to *deactivate* acoustic surveillance. I end by considering three ways in which scholarship can drop the call, meaning quit answering a cry, from city officials and police to test acoustic gunfire detection in US cities.

376 Reeves, *Citizen Spies*, 56. See Jeremy Packer, “Screens in the Sky: SAGE, Surveillance, and the Automation of the Perceptual, Mnemonic, and Epistemological Labor,” *Social Semiotics* 23, no. 2 (2013): 173-195.

377 Ronell writes that her writing makes a connection that threatens to jam up circuit boards: “When I’m on the job, I shall try to make a connection on a somewhat complicated switchboard that always threatens to jam up.” Ronell, *Finitude’s Score*, 221. On the switchboard operator, see Avital Ronell, *The Telephone Book: Technology, Schizophrenia, Electric Speech* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

THE AFFECTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE OF ACOUSTIC SURVEILLANCE

The purpose of this section is to theorize the notion of “anxious affective infrastructure” and demonstrate how acoustic surveillance constitutes an anxious affective infrastructure. By figuring acoustic gunfire detection software as an anxious infrastructure, this chapter contributes to a growing body of literature about race and acoustic surveillance and their convergence in the contexts of intelligence-led policing.

I use “affective infrastructure” to describe the distribution, institutionalization, and normalization of affect through technology in security societies. In another context, Hannah Knox theorizes the roads of the northern Peruvian Amazon as an affective infrastructure; the roads might invite lamentation about the state of Peru, frustration with the slow politics of construction, as well as the thrill of traveling faster down a path.³⁷⁸ For Knox, affect “provides a language to point to the concatenation of forces that ebb and flow and manifest in and between bodies.”³⁷⁹ These ebbs and flows are infrastructural elements, manipulated parts of a substructure that sustain other material structures and invite their use. Attending to an affective infrastructure can highlight what is taken to be too ineffable for explanation yet provides crucial justification for the symbolic and imaginative landscapes through which beings live. Like technical infrastructures, affective infrastructures can fail those who most need them. The thrill of a new highway can trample on the abjection residents might feel when cut off from parts of a city, displaced from their homes, or subject to noise pollution. Indeed, Ash Amin writes, “Some cities are let down by failed, incomplete or mismanaged infrastructures, forever patched up by improvised measures that most tax the poor.”³⁸⁰

378 Hannah Knox, “Affective Infrastructures and the Political Imaginary,” *Public Culture* 29, no. 2 (2017): 375.

379 Knox, “Affective Infrastructures and the Political Imaginary,” 375.

380 Ash Amin, “Lively Infrastructure,” *Theory, Culture, & Society* 31, no. 7/8 (2014): 138

An *anxious* affective infrastructure is a substructure of anxieties that become installed in a landscape and so become normalized elements of that landscape.³⁸¹ ShotSpotter operates as an anxious affective infrastructure in its role as a mechanism of acoustic surveillance. According to Peter Szendy, acoustic surveillance is systematic monitoring from a place of listening. Acoustic surveillance instrumentalizes *over-hearing*, meaning hearing without being seen or heard. Szendy writes that over-hearing is inherent in all listening: “[I]sn’t there an urge toward spying in every listening? Does not listening always participate in a work of *intelligence*, as one says in English?”³⁸² Over-hearing creates distance between a listener and an object of listening. In fact, eavesdropping has its roots in listening from the eaves, or the attic.³⁸³ Over-hearing is never about a one-to-one relationship between a listener and speaker, however. Rather, over-hearing involves multiple *lines of listening*. As Jacques Derrida unpacks through a close reading of Nietzsche’s autobiography *Ecce Homo*, one always listens through the ear(s) of an-other.³⁸⁴ Acoustic surveillance thus involves multiple communicative circuits between hearing parties and listening technologies.

Acoustic surveillance technology has developed from physical listening by military officers to listening devices that partially perform the labor of listening. Listening devices institute new pedagogies for optimized listening. The history of hearing through military technology involves myriad aids: “[b]ells, horns, observation towers, turrets, mirrors, telescopes, periscopes, flags, smoke signals, hot air balloons, drums, flag and light semaphores, telegraph, radio, searchlights, acoustic horn locators, optical altitude finders,

381 Presumably, one can think of affective infrastructures that would be comprised of multiple affect or other affects, i.e. an affective infrastructure of disgust, like various ways we communicate disgust about a septic system or its absence.

382 Szendy, *All Ears*, 10.

383 Szendy, *All Ears*, 18.

384 Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*, trans. Peggy Kamuf and Avital Ronell (University of Nebraska Press, 1988).

sound mirrors, radio detection finders, radar and others.”³⁸⁵ Packer explains the human-horn devices used for aircraft detection required a special pedagogy of listening:

From WWI and into WWII, acoustic locators were developed to naturally amplify the distant sounds of aircraft by connecting large horns to headphones. These devices usually demanded the specialized labor of more than one person as some worked to aim the horns while another listened. The military carefully selected and trained soldiers who had long attention spans and keen auditory ability. Soldiers from rural areas were often selected, as their hearing was more sensitive compared to urban dwellers who had grown up bombarded by the noise of the city.³⁸⁶

The use of listening devices still demands keen auditory ability; ShotSpotter similarly trains its employees to quickly distinguish gunshot sounds from fireworks and cars backfiring. The employees perform what J. Martin Daughtry in his study of war sounds calls “virtuistic audition”: showing literacy between various auditory regimes.³⁸⁷

Guns are objects of anxious affective infrastructures, especially when they surface in so-called “war zones,” where their signifier (“he’s got a gun”) carries lethal potential. Daughtry coins the term “belliphonic” sounds (from Latin *bellum* for war and Greek *phone* for voice): the taxonomy of sounds produced during war. As he notes, part of the violence of gunfire *is* sound, the range of bangs and cracks specific to particular guns. Given the transportation of battlefield acoustic surveillance into cities, domestic gunfire may now fit within the taxonomy of belliphonic, or war, sounds. The movement of battlefield listening technology to urban environments results from a rhetorical history that primes these spaces for police intervention, in particular how the War on Drugs rhetorically figures inner-cities as “war zones” over drugs and gangs.³⁸⁸

385 Packer, “Screens in the Sky,” 180.

386 Packer, “Screens in the Sky,” 181.

387 J. Martin Daughtry, *Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 151.

388 See Bryan J. McCann, *The Mark of Criminality: Rhetoric, Race, and Gangsta Rap in the War-on-Crime Era* (University of Alabama Press, 2017).

As I describe in the next section, critics can reconstruct anxious affective infrastructures by following *tracts of anxiety*, meaning the passages through which anxiety moves in its *intermittency*, *latency*, and *circularity*.³⁸⁹ ShotSpotter both constitutes and links up with anxious affective infrastructures. ShotSpotter installs intermittent anxieties to bolster an insecure listening-state, activates latent anxieties about racialized neighborhoods, and circles around the non-localizability of gunfire. Predictive listening has become a modern form of racializing surveillance, the rendering of raced bodies as out of place, “where the outcome is often discriminatory and violent treatment.”³⁹⁰

PREDICTIVE LISTENING: INTERMITTENCY, LATENCY, CIRCULARITY

The affective infrastructure of ShotSpotter aims to catch criminal acts through a web of human actors, sensors, buildings, and sound waves (Figure 5.2).³⁹¹ We might say that ShotSpotter operates off the paranoid question: If a gunfire is shot and no technology is around to hear it, how do we know it happened? We are dealing with multiple lines of listening that become *hooked up* in new ways: the automated response of ShotSpotter’s sensors and predictive software, residents on the scene, and law enforcement officers who can play the gunfire sounds back and follow up with residents.

This section details how ShotSpotter overhears according to three aesthetic features of anxiety: intermittency, latency, and circularity. Given these aesthetic qualities of the anxious affective infrastructure of ShotSpotter, we can better discern the effects of anxiety’s movements.

389 Avital Ronell, working through Heidegger, calls anxiety both a movement and a mood. I focus on movement, given its distribution through acoustic surveillance. Avital Ronell, “Anxiety, Contract, and Philosophy,” Lecture, European Graduate School, 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43vECqI_NH4.

390 Browne, *Dark Matters*, 8.

391 Chris Weller, “There’s a Secret Technology in 90 US Cities that Listens for Gunfire 24/7,” *Business Insider*, June 27, 2017, <http://www.businessinsider.com/how-shotspotter-works-microphones-detecting-gunshots-2017-6>.

Intermittency

ShotSpotter shows that law enforcement anxiety in San Antonio is anxious about the openness of a city, the movement of bodies in and out of its jurisdiction. Anxiety is an intermittent affect, meaning it comes to be form as a repetitive but irregular interval in signification, as a subject might confront multiple failures to predict an open future. Anxiety has etymological linkage with *angustus* (narrow) and *angere* (to choke).³⁹² Thus, anxiety's intermittency can result both from a narrowing of a passage or an opening of a passage—when the future discloses itself to be uncontrollable and irrepresentational and thus chokes a body exposed to what cannot be predicted. Eugenie Brinkema, for instance, traces “[a] lack of breath not from being shut in tight, but from, perhaps, choking on *too much space*—the expansive exposed space.”³⁹³

ShoSpotter secures movement within open streets by performing for both residents and law enforcement the “stance of perpetual anxious diligence” that Marc Andrejevic argues is an endemic part of post-9/11 surveillance risk culture.³⁹⁴ ShotSpotter assumes a stance of anticipation of an intermittent phenomenon that will activate it; no gunfire-like sound presumably can get through its sensory sieve. At one level, this stance frees up residents and law enforcement from having to care about registering gunfire. The technology has “got this.” At another level, ShotSpotter's anxiety makes the task of interpreting gunfire the sole purview of the police, who have privileged hearing rights to listen-in on resident behavior. The anxious cry of ShotSpotter occurs at irregular times rather than continuously or steadily, due to the unpredictability of gunfire.

392 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 199.

393 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 200.

394 Marc Andrejevic, “Interactive (In)security: The Participatory Promise of ready.gov,” *Cultural Studies* 20, no. 4-5 (2006): 443.

Latency

Second, anxiety is latent. Acoustic surveillance secures supposedly unruly bodies and spaces, whose threat-quality is overdetermined, meaning an effect of historical threat rhetoric. Anxiety lies in wait, activated by regressive movements that stir it, making it pop up *as if* spontaneous and sudden. For instance, we can again consider the young white man who stabbed cab driver Ahmed Sharif in the throat in New York in 2010. The event followed the Ground Mosque controversy. The controversy reactivated the public anxiety about Muslims that reached fever pitch after 9/11. Acoustic surveillance technology's anxious cry always arrives too late; the tracked sound already has been emitted, and acoustic surveillance catches it after the fact.

The latent anxieties of ShotSpotter are about race, particularly as it intersects with the history of the War on Drugs, dispossessive infrastructures like the organization of highways and commerce, and neoliberal gentrification.³⁹⁵ The Westhope and East San Antonio neighborhoods are predominantly Hispanic and black.³⁹⁶ East San Antonio is an historically black neighborhood, home of Ellis Alley, a street purchased by former slaves, and St. Paul Methodist Church, the oldest primarily black congregation in San Antonio. Certain areas of the city have adopted anxiety as a fetish quality, becoming a hot zone that pulsates with criminality. Ahmed explains how bodies and areas assume anxious interiorities: “[T]he narratives that seek to preserve the present through working on

395 Part of the economic languishing of this neighborhood in particular has to do with the construction of highways, which created de facto segregation from the downtown tourist areas. In 2011, President Barack Obama designated East Austin as a federal “Promise Zone,” opening the area to economic incentives like federal grants. One resident of East San Antonio, Mildred Bailey, recounts that the new apartments like Cherry Street Modern set by a recently-constructed Alamo Brewery increase prices. These complexes stand in contrast to her experience, where when it rains, her street floods. Mark Reagan, “SA’s East Side Seems Renaissance Bound, But at Whose Expense?” *San Antonio Current*, April 8, 2015, <https://m.sacurrent.com/sanantonio/sa-east-side-seems-renaissance-bound-but-at-whose-expense/Content?oid=2420792>.

396 Kelsey Bradshaw, “Maps Show Racial Diversity of San Antonio-area Neighborhoods,” *My San Antonio*, February 7, 2018, <https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local/article/Map-shows-diversity-of-S-A-regions-12555271.php#photo-14999861>.

anxieties of death as the necessary consequence of the demise of social forms also seek to locate that anxiety in some bodies, which then take on fetish qualities.³⁹⁷ Some bodies and areas take on a fetish quality of an unruly object and are then more susceptible to control by law enforcement. ShotSpotter re-fetishized, for a time, Westhope and East San Antonio, based on dormant citywide anxieties about crime, drugs, and zones and long-term resident anxieties about dispossession from infrastructural needs.

Circularity

Third, anxiety *circles* around something that is missing. As my analysis shows, ShotSpotter encourages law enforcement to anxiously swarm around areas in which gunfire will have happened. Sara Ahmed explains that fear's object is felt to be "not *quite* present," whereas anxiety's is felt to be "nowhere at all."³⁹⁸ Anxiety is intensified by the inability to get footing. An anxious being or system might circle around, rehearsing and reproducing anxiety in repetition. As Avital Ronell puts it, we are always working around the abyss of what is missing, and anxiety's grammar lacks a way of articulating what exactly is missing.³⁹⁹ Looping around what is felt to be nowhere at all creates a feedback loop of increased security that is difficult to break. The sound of gunfire is, again, uniquely troubling because of its ineffability.

Anxious Infrastructures

With the vocabulary of anxious affective infrastructures marked by intermittency, latency, and circularity, we can better glean how ShotSpotter installs and operates along

397 Ahmed, "Affective Economies," 129.

398 Ahmed, "Affective Economies," 125. My emphasis.

399 Ronell, "Anxiety, Contract, and Philosophy."

tracts of anxiety about what cannot be controlled by the police and national security personnel within the landscape of the city. What comes into focus is that bugging two areas of San Antonio re-marked racialized areas of San Antonio as sources of city-wide anxiety. The areas in question become concentrated “hot zones,” rather than safe “cold zones,” as one might monitor the weather. The technology intensifies the community-based model of policing where police circle around potential objects and areas of crime while being removed from the police communities.

The next section argues that ShotSpotter’s tracts of anxiety circumvent resident agency to mediate the fatal consequences of gunfire, leaving them to spin their wheels, while police can use ShotSpotter to amplify their own anxieties. ShotSpotter’s anxiety about gunfire runs along tracts of police anxiety.

CIRCUMVENTING RESIDENTS, PROTECTING POLICE

This section argues that ShotSpotter created an unequal distribution of resident-police anxiety by enabling police to feel less exposed to gun violence. ShotSpotter illuminates police anxieties, which include *lacking resident reporting*, *missing gunfire*, and *becoming a target*.

San Antonio has numerous ties to military, cybersecurity, and anti-terrorism institutions. All the same, the city is not known for its militaristic policing, relative to other US cities; its SWAT has participated in the federal government’s 1033 program, which allows police departments to purchase military-grade technology, for parachute netting, camouflage screening, knives, gun magazines, a bomb-defusing robot, and gym

equipment.⁴⁰⁰ The San Antonio Police Department prides itself on its philosophy of intelligence-led policing (ILP), which it outlines on its website:

[T]he traditional hierarchal structure of the department has been replaced with a *flattened, cooperative structure that can increase the collection of information and more rapidly deliver criminal intelligence to field units*. A key element of the ILP process is a commitment to *engaging the community as a partner in crime reduction efforts*. The San Antonio Police Department actively engages in *collaborative partnerships* with the community to increase information gathering and improve intelligence, building on the philosophy of other models such as Community Oriented Policing and Problem-Oriented Policing.”⁴⁰¹

In the service of intelligence-led policing, the city has adopted the larger national trend of collusion between police and homeland security. The Southwest fusion center helps fund technological innovations then adopted by police, such as mobile cameras for large events. The city has integrated new information networks, like COPLINK, between the fusion center and police to facilitate information-sharing. While stockpiling 4,000 guns of their own,⁴⁰² the police and fusion workers utilize the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), a database that compiles ballistic information. San Antonio police and fusion center workers struggle with gang violence, larceny theft, homicide, and human trafficking, which are underwritten by concerns over border immigration.

The rhetoric surrounding the need for ShotSpotter locates the problem of gun violence in *lack of reporting*—in other words, in *the residents’ failures* to perform their civic duty and call the police. Joshua Reeves’ *Citizen Spies* shows that the history of US citizen-spying through 911 phone lines meant a series of public awareness campaigns to

400 Mark Reagan, “Bexar County’s Many Police are Well Armed but Not Its Military,” *San Antonio Current*, November 19, 2014, <https://www.sacurrent.com/sanantonio/sapd-didnt-get-guns-from-military-surplus-program/Content?oid=2324823>. One county’s police force does have a Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle. Michael Marks, “New Rules on Federal Military Gear Won’t Impact SAPD,” *San Antonio Current*, May 18, 2015, <https://www.sacurrent.com/the-daily/archives/2015/05/18/new-rules-on-federal-military-gear-wont-impact-sapd>.

401 San Antonio Police Department, “Intelligence Led Policing,” SanAntonio.gov, 2018, <http://www.sanantonio.gov/SAPD/Intelligence-Led-Policing>. My emphasis.

402 Kevin W. Barthold, “Audit of San Antonio Police Department: Armory Inventory Management,” SanAntonio.gov, June 29, 2017, <https://www.sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/CityAuditor/Reports/FY2017/AU16-025.pdf>. A police unit was also selected to be on COPS in 2017.

build a sense of duty and civic responsibility in residents, making it their responsibility to monitor their neighbors.⁴⁰³ The “See Something, Say Something” Department of Homeland Security public awareness campaign, along with CrimeStoppers and the Southwest fusion center, commission the public to act on their anxious suspicions of their neighbors. Through ShotSpotter “See Something, Say Something” becomes “Hear Something, No Need to Say Something.” The *disconnect* between the police and 911 calls thus becomes a key nodal point of public anxiety to justify ShotSpotter. District 2 Councilmember Alan Warrick, who pushed most strongly for ShotSpotter and recently lost re-election, tells *ABC 12 San Antonio*: “The issues that we have in communities like the Near East Side and here in Eastpoint is that gunshots happen and don’t get detected.”⁴⁰⁴ David Chipman of ShotSpotter explains in the same news program, “Right now the challenge for law enforcement is in cities only 20% of gunfire is ever reported to police.”⁴⁰⁵ Warrick also states that the calls that *do* come into police are disproportionately from East San Antonio: “We’ve had the most calls for gun violence in the city. Since April [2015], I believe we’ve had 308 calls about gun violence.”⁴⁰⁶ Police responded to 785 incidents in the two zones, according to San Antonio-Express News, and 341 of these were solely based on ShotSpotter alerts. 55% of the time, there is no notification from residents: “Police received both a ShotSpotter alert and a resident’s 911 call about gunfire in about 30 percent of the incidents in the ShotSpotter zones.”⁴⁰⁷ ShotSpotter does not require resident involvement in 911 calls; it tells the police where and when gunfire takes place. One local news report claims that police distribute flyers to residents if ShotSpotter has been activated

403 See Reeves, *Citizen Spies*, 51-76.

404 Stefanie Serna, “New App Sends Alert When Shots are Fired,” *KSAT ABC 12*, March 3, 2015, <https://www.ksat.com/news/new-app-sends-alert-when-shots-are-fired>.

405 Serna, “New App Sends Alert When Shots are Fired.”

406 Serna, “New App Sends Alert When Shots are Fire.”

407 Vianna Davila, “San Antonio Police Cut Pricey Gunshot Detection System,” *San Antonio Express News*, August 16, 2017, <http://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/San-Antonio-police-cut-pricey-gunshot-detection-11824797.php>.

in their neighborhoods, but the police claim that no such flyer exists.⁴⁰⁸ The justification for ShotSpotter, then, was that residents do not act as the ears of the police; the problem of gunfire is placed on the shoulders of inactive residents.

ShotSpotter speaks to police anxiety about the undetectability of gunfire. ShotSpotter reveals the rate of gunfire in these areas of the city and shows just how much police miss gunfire. Anxiety in this case is about the difficulty of tracing bullets. As a common example of gunfire anxiogenics, meaning sources of anxiety, we might consider how numerous films contain the trope of a gunshot going off at the top of a musical crescendo. Masking a shot with another sound the perfect crime, because the gun leaves no audio trace, no way of tracking sound to a source, the killer.⁴⁰⁹ The ephemerality of gunfire troubles citizen-reporting efforts, because, as Lorraine Green Mazarolle, et. al., note in a study of Dallas's SECURES technology, gunfire is an especially tricky auditory object: "citizen reporting of a shot being fired is dependent upon (1) the citizen hearing the shot, (2) the citizen being able to discern the noise as gunfire, (3) the citizen making the decision to call the police within seconds (or within a 'reasonable' time frame) of the shot being fired and (4) the citizen being able to tell the police exactly from where the shot was fired."⁴¹⁰ Ahmed reiterates that the accumulation of missed objects (in this case, fired bullets) threatens to produce more anxiety: "The detachment from a given object allows anxiety to accumulate through gathering more and more objects, until it overwhelms other possible affective relations to the world."⁴¹¹ Because gunfire is notoriously diffuse (it could be muffled, not many people know what it sounds like, it sounds like it could be coming

408 Personal communication, Police Records Request, "W166762-050117," April 16, 2017.

409 Szendy, *All Ears*, 65-66.

410 Mazarolle, Watkins, Rogan, and Frank, "Using Gunfire Detection Systems in Police Departments," 25.

411 Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 66.

from numerous directions, it can be rapid), it is an easy target, so to speak, for police anxiety and shame.

San Antonio police exhibit shame about missing gunfire in the East and Westhope neighborhoods, because such acts of missing put on public display their inability to close cases, especially those that involve young residents outsmarting or distrusting the police. ShotSpotter reveals an embarrassing *stuckness*: the incapacity of San Antonio police to bring prolonged criminal activity into focus. As Brinkema explains from Jacques Lacan's *Anxiety* seminar, anxiety marks the embarrassment of no longer knowing what to do with yourself; when you have exhausted the options and feel constricted locomotor movements from a lack of progress.⁴¹² The figure of the smart young gang member with a gun is racially coded. For instance, one intelligence officer who is privy to gang violence in San Antonio described generationally-influenced gang members as "young thugs."⁴¹³ Another officer explains, "What's happening in parts of the East Side is generational... [a]nd that just doesn't disappear overnight."⁴¹⁴ The obstacle, for San Antonio law enforcement, is distrust of police. One difficult moment is captured in the *San Antonio Express News* 2016 story about crime on the Eastside:

One day late last summer, SAFFE Officers David Nouhan, Michael Trainor and Peter Ovalle walked into the Walters Food Mart across from the new East Meadows apartments, still then under construction.

Two little boys in blue polo shirts and khaki pants walked inside.

"How you doing boys?" Trainor called out to them as Ovalle pulled out a roll of stickers shaped like police badges and peeled off two.

A few minutes later, another little boy poked his head into the store.

"They say the police being nosy," he shouted, to no one in particular.

"Who said that?" answered Officer Trainor.

"My sister," the boy replied.

412 Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 204.

413 This is from the fusion center conference. Field note, November 6, 2017.

414 This is from the fusion center conference. Field note, November 6, 2017. The 2013 murder of a young white woman Lauren Bump by Christian Bautista, who had alleged ties to the Mexican mafia, became rallying cry for more security in the city.

These are common occurrences. The officers tried to make nice and hand stickers to the boy and his sister.

“You tell me at four years old, where does that come from?” Trainor said, after the children had left. “It’s learned behavior.”⁴¹⁵

Here, Officer Trainor meets the embarrassing limit of his sticker marketing campaign: while offering a token of trust, a young girl exclaims openly that she does not trust the police and warns her brother about their presence. Trainor seems confounded by the insurmountable task of garnering trust—already resigned to a shamed position before those influenced against him by “learned behavior.” The anxiety about undetectable gunfire reveals the extreme point of police’s lack of control; police frequently *miss* gunshots because, they presume, they cannot mitigate a generational distrust that would commission residents in their cause.

ShotSpotter meets the anxiogenic of quasi-detectable gunfire with triangulation and speed. For starters, the ShotSpotter Interface Portal, accessible to police on dashboards and digitally, lists the audio of gunfire from all the triggered sensors. The interface shows the number of shots registered, longitude and latitude, and the district and “beat” in which the shots were captured. ShotSpotter thus captures the uncapturable by putting ears where no police could hear. It then makes police *de facto* trackers of these sounds. ShotSpotter sends police directly to the scene, reportedly pinpointing the location up to two feet of where the gunshot was fired.⁴¹⁶ ShotSpotter promises to convert any single shot into a criminal scene, a general vicinity that then becomes justifiably concerning for police. Furthermore, police meet the quasi-traceability of gunfire with speed. ShotSpotter reportedly helped Warrick make gunshots a Priority 1 police concern, so that the police could be dispatched sooner and put their cruiser lights on to get to a location. Warrick claims that ShotSpotter reduced

415 Vianna Davila, “Promises to Keep: Fighting Crime on the East Side,” *San Antonio Express News*, March 23, 2016, <http://projects.expressnews.com/promises-to-keep-fighting-crime-on-the-east-side>.

416 See Andras Pethos, David S. Fallis, and Dan Keating, “ShotSpotter Detection System Documents 39,000 Shooting Incidents in the District,” *Washington Post*, November 2, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/shotspotter-detection-system-documents-39000-shooting-incidents-in-the-district/2013/11/02/055f8e9c-2ab1-11e3-8ade-a1f23cda135e_story.html.

police response times on the East from 9 minutes to 3 minutes and 30 seconds.⁴¹⁷ The anxious reaction to become faster, however—the sudden spark of paranoia—has done little to resolve gun violence; police often do not know what they should looking for when they arrive on the scene. It can feel like “a wild goose chase,” as one police officer in a ShotSpotter city put it.⁴¹⁸ According to San Antonio Police Chief William McManus, 80 percent of the times when ShotSpotter was activated, police could find no evidence of a shooting at the scene.⁴¹⁹

ShotSpotter’s “smart” triangulations shield police from open neighborhood patrols, where they felt they could be targets. So, even while it anxiously activated San Antonio police officers to be “on the scene,” ShotSpotter *performed* anxiety so that police did not have to. In particular, ShotSpotter performed the work of police who were anxious to conduct new community-patrols of neighborhoods after Micah Johnson killed five police officers in Dallas in July 2016. One San Antonio officer explains the culture of intensified police safety concerns: “After that, some of the San Antonio officers felt exposed and uneasy walking around in the open... Rather than walk whole blocks, officers would instead drive to a location and go inside that particular business or walk the four corners of the intersection.”⁴²⁰ ShotSpotter offered anxious officers less exposure outside their vehicles.

Ultimately, the failed attempt to *externalize intelligence* through ShotSpotter microphones (above the ground) has led to a public reinvestment in constructing an *internal microphone* from within residents hearable only by police officers. In other words, in the

417 Kevin Schwaller, “How Technology Could Help Austin Police Prevent Shootings,” *KXAN.com*, February 3, 2017, <http://kxan.com/2017/02/03/how-technology-could-help-austin-police-prevent-shootings/>.

418 Quoted in Sarah Gonzalez, “In Newark, Gunshot Detection System Falls Short of Booker’s Claims,” *wNYC.org*, August 9, 2013, <https://www.wnyc.org/story/311533-gunshot-detection-sensors-newark-result-17-arrests-over-three-years/>.

419 Davila, “San Antonio Police Cut Pricey Gunshot Detection System.”

420 Quoted in Davila, “Promises to Keep.”

wake of ShotSpotter, San Antonio police have reinvested in providing closer police ears that can connect to the neighborhoods and thwart criminal activity. Police Chief William McManus asked for police ears that do not increase the workload of existing officers—a fundamental reason why Dallas ended the use of SECURES in 1996, as well. The police force has invested in eight new community policing officers after ShotSpotter’s deactivation for the Westhope and Eastside.

San Antonio’s community policing initiative called the San Antonio Fear Free Environment (SAFFE) mimics asymmetrical acoustic surveillance on the ground: providing similar anxious, automatic reactions to abnormal sounds, based not in the audio signature of a gunshot but in the signature of sounds the police find unfamiliar. Whereas ShotSpotter installed microphones to listen from the “eaves” and summon police officers from a distance, SAFFE installs police officer liaisons on the ground in closer proximity to overhear residents. Even though these liaisons may not always detect gunfire, they claim to have a “situational” knowledge of their patrol routes so that they can better pick out suspicious behaviors, including sounds.

SAFFE was established in 1994 with 60 officers as part of a community policing program, and it now involves approximately 100 agents and six SAPD sub-stations across the city. Through SAFFE, police have enacted a number of campaigns to build community trust.⁴²¹ Residents are asked to reenergize their participation in crime monitoring, such as online through the LexisNexis “Community Crime Map,” where residents can see up-to-date information on the location and details of a crime.⁴²² The tracking of crime through

421 These include as Coffee with Cops, a program where residents and organizations can observe cadets in training at the police academy, a diversity campaign (currently 52% Hispanic and 91% male), and an online Twitter hashtag #SASpeakUp. Warrick praised community efforts to build community gardens and paint murals, and encourage residents to contribute to the police’s “Crime Prevention Plan.” The city also has issued body cameras to police: “Since February 2016, when 55 officers with the downtown bike patrol unit received the first cameras, the number of times officers themselves reported using force has dropped 42 percent.” Emilie Eaton, “In San Antonio, Body Worn Cameras Appear to Be Cutting Complaints,” *Houston Chronicle*, February 19, 21018, <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/In-San-Antonio-body-worn-cameras-on-police-12625803.php>.

422 See “Crime and Call Information,” SanAntonio.gov, 2018, <http://www.sanantonio.gov/SAPD/Crime-and-Call-Information>.

criminal statistics puts the heat on racialized areas of San Antonio. In one news program, a newscaster physically zooms in on the East Side with his hands on his *Bing* television and points to a homicide location (Figure 5.3).⁴²³

Criminal statistics have helped police track “hot zones” of crime in the city, where police-swarms then anxiously congregate. In particular, shots have moved from outside a Handy Stop gas station to the Hayes Food Mart. Foot patrols around the food mart make crime audible. One notable community policing encounter is recounted in the *SA-Express News*. In the encounter, SAFFE patrolmen saw two men and a little boy talking under a pecan tree next to the Hayes Food Mart. One of the officers told the three that they had to leave because the officers “did not recognize” the three from their patrols.⁴²⁴ Other police officers were patrolling the area and saw the two policemen there, and decided to offer back-up. Soon, there were six uniformed cops there to vacate these three from underneath the tree. An image from the *San Antonio Express News* shows 60-year-old resident Larry Miller moving using his walker as the six-officer police hive buzzed behind him (Figure 5.4).⁴²⁵ The abnormality that activated the policing was not just the *sight* of the three people under the tree; the abnormality identified by police was a private conversation, inaccessible and thus unfamiliar to police ears. And these sounds are indeed *unfamiliar* to police: “Currently, less than half — only 47 percent — of San Antonio Police Officers live in the city of San Antonio.”⁴²⁶

Analyzing ShotSpotter as an anxious infrastructural component reveals that responsible policing extends to preempting what is sensorially suspicious. SAFFE police

423 Jessie Degollado, “East Side Looks to Problem-Oriented Policing,” *KSAT ABC 12*, February 15, 2016, <https://www.ksat.com/community/east-side-looks-to-problem-oriented-policing>.

424 Davila, “Promises to Keep.”

425 Davila, “Promises to Keep.”

426 Sheryl Sculley, “Crime Down, Police Recruiting is up in SA,” *My San Antonio*, January 23, 2018, <https://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/commentary/article/Crime-down-police-recruiting-is-up-in-S-A-12519015.php>.

demonstrate formal similarities with the computational impulse of ShotSpotter: an automatic alertness deemed by police as *a priori* trustworthy because it is *over-extended*. I next explain how ShotSpotter's failure in San Antonio shows the limitations of anxious affective infrastructures.

DITCHING THE POLICE EARS

One ShotSpotter node on the Eastside was shot at 80 times before its removal.⁴²⁷ The flagrant resistance—shooting at a device that *registers* the shots—tells us that police anxiety cannot monopolize the space of other tracts of anxiety within the city, such as lingering residential trauma and outrage over police murders, a chilling effect amongst undocumented residents, and an anti-snitching culture, given how the San Antonio police and the fusion center have utilized informants and detectives to police drug and gang activity. As two indicative recent examples of police brutality, Officer Robert Encina shot 23-year old Marquise Jones in 2014 in a traffic stop, and, in August 2015, two policemen killed Gilbert Flores as his hands were raised in his mother's driveway. William Cruz Shaw, who defeated Warrick in District 2, says of ShotSpotter, "It doesn't make the community feel safer, it doesn't reduce the number of gunshots in our community... It doesn't prevent you from being shot."⁴²⁸

There is plenty of reason to be distrustful of ShotSpotter's over-hearing in particular. ShotSpotter hears *reverberations* of gunfire-like sounds and its microphones can register non-gunfire related sounds. During a shooting in 2012 in Oakland, California,

427 This is based on hearsay within an observation at the fusion center conference, November 9, 2017.

428 San Antonio police reviewed ShotSpotter's efficacy and recommended that the city not renew the contract in August 2017. They indicated that SpotShoter helped police make four arrests: three for discharging a firearm (a class A misdemeanor) and one for narcotics possession. ShotSpotter also allowed police to confiscate seven weapons, yet they have not confiscated any pertinent casings from the ShotSpotter zones. ShotSpotter cost the city \$168,000 in overtime pay, because it required police officers who could answer its cry between 5 p.m. and 3 a.m. Davila, "San Antonio Police Cut Pricey Gunshot Detection System."

ShotSpotter picked up someone who would later be a victim saying a suspect's name. When white police officer James Haskel murdered 14-year-old Rawlings in September 2007 in D.C., ShotSpotter picked up the gunshots. The gunshots may have been *echoes* of shots booming off the walls within an apartment complex (the "boomerang effect"), meaning Rawlings may have been tagged with the gunfire from police. ShotSpotter thus suffers from a similar flaw of radar: its inability to distinguish between the gunfire of friend and foe.⁴²⁹

These concerns about ShotSpotter are rarely hearable. To try to make them audible is to rearrange the purpose of police and fusion after ShotSpotter's failure. Dropping and re-making connections with police demands *de*-activation, both of ShotSpotter and SAFFE's swarming tactics. Because ShotSpotter has stopped listening *for* residents, we can confront an exigence: to reevaluate how we hear ourselves and others *through police alerts*. There is resistance to snitching culture, because of a refusal to hear oneself, to account for oneself, through the ears of the police. Reeves writes that to "recapture our sight and speech in the service of a more promising future" may mean shutting up.⁴³⁰ Meeting the surveillance infrastructures that amplify police anxiety, deactivating means dis-assembling any force that contribute to the reactivity of police. Through deactivation, we can hear ourselves differently.

CONCLUSION

Trump has issued a rash of new national rhetoric surrounding "inner city" "carnage" from gun violence, and Sessions has outlined a new national strategy called "Project Safe Neighborhoods" that focuses on enforced criminalization of immigrants and

⁴²⁹ Packer, "Screens in the Sky," 190.

⁴³⁰ Reeves, *Citizen Spies*, 170.

gang members.⁴³¹ While Texas culture openly expresses gun-philosophy and a gun availability that allowed white terrorist Devin Kelley, slipping through an FBI database, to buy an assault rifle and kill 26 people in church despite his prior domestic abuse charge, there are some forms of gun possession that are not sanctioned and thus become object-targets for a colluded effort between police and homeland security.⁴³² I end with three observations that speak to how scholarship can challenge the basis of anxieties that animate strategies of overhearing in intelligence-led policing.

First, as Merrill has written, the use of acoustic detection ShotSpotter and its many predecessors demonstrates the continued under-theorization of the acoustic in security and surveillance studies.⁴³³ But, this chapter has sought to highlight something more than enclosed listening in disciplinary environments, like solitary confinement or an interrogation; acoustic surveillance technologies like ShotSpotter secure open streets, where people, cars, and weapons are mobile. ShotSpotter operates as an agent of control, which Gilles Deleuze famously figures in terms of a sieve “whose mesh will transmute from point to point.”⁴³⁴ Considering audio sensors as sensitive sieve-ears shows how control operates through multiple lines of listening: police, residents, technology, fusion workers, and ShotSpotter staff. We might further look to how acoustics integrates visual spatializing technologies, to localize an acousmatic sound through triangulation.

Second, ShotSpotter confronts us with considering the materialities of anxious affective infrastructures. Merrill writes, “Understanding ShotSpotter Flex requires a theoretical framework which accounts for not only the particular materialities of sensing

431 “Attorney General Sessions Delivers Remarks to the National Fusion Center Association,” *United States Department of Justice*, November 9, 2017, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/attorney-general-sessions-delivers-remarks-national-fusion-center-association>.

432 As of January 2016, Texas is an open-carry state for handguns.

433 Merrill, “The Life of a Gunshot,” 48. We might tune further into the Panacousticon, the ordered arrangements of sound that allow police to listen-in within enclosed spaces to render people docile. On Athanasius Kircher’s “Panacousticon,” see Szendy, *All Ears*, 16-22.

434 Deleuze, “Postscript on Control Societies,” 4.

acoustical vibrations, but which also account for the imbrications of humans, nonhumans, software, law, and policy.”⁴³⁵ It is not just that urban security *relies* on affective infrastructures; security systems *are* interlocking affective infrastructures. Bryan Taylor, et. al., similarly writes, “Alternately enabled and constrained, we think and feel *through* ‘security.’ It is our new existential companion.”⁴³⁶ Affective infrastructure captures the sense in which affective responses, reactivity to gunfire, are coordinated *en masse*. Infrastructures are continually “unfolding” in terms of “the frame of values and affects, the grid of neighbourhood, and the matter of wellbeing, sociality and struggle.”⁴³⁷ Anxiety is an essential material unfolding that comprises an infrastructure.

Tracing anxious infrastructures shows that there is a vested material interest in the overcriminalization of black and Hispanic residents within US cities; anxieties about black and brown bodies are baked into the city’s material structures. Meant to be imperceptible to residents, ShotSpotter’s sensors, microphones, and predictive software *fix* racialized police anxieties about residential neighborhoods in place. Racializing surveillance is harder to challenge when it is embedded, invisible, and inaudible to residents.

Third, and finally, unlike 90 cities in the US, Shotspotter is a failed technology in San Antonio: a testament to the limitations of predictive audio surveillance. Surveillance is an inherently communicative endeavor.⁴³⁸ Surveillance establishes or cuts off feedback loops between surveilled and surveilling parties. The installation of acoustic gunfire detection software in San Antonio failed to create effective circuits of communication between ShotSpotter staff, fusion centers, police, homeland security officers, and residents. ShotSpotter’s alert in San Antonio has been dropped. However, ShotSpotter still cries out

435 Merrill, “The Life of a Gunshot,” 53.

436 Bryan C. Taylor, Hamilton Bean, Ned O’Gorman, and Rebecca Rice, “A Fearful Engine of Power: Conceptualizing the Communication-Security Relationship,” *Annals of the International Communication Association* 41, no. 2 (2017): 112.

437 Amin, “Lively Infrastructure,” 143.

438 Packer, “Screens in the Sky”, 192.

for police attention in other places, and fusion centers continue to compile data statistics about gunfire to aid prevention. Daughtry writes that sounds are not an all-encompassing oral field, however: “Whether in war or in peace, sonic campaigns always extend beyond the act of sounding. They are filled not just with sounds but with silences.”⁴³⁹ Reeves writes, “In a security society that demands our communicative labor for its very political sustenance, silence is often a radical move.”⁴⁴⁰ Momentarily dropping ShotSpotter’s call, perhaps we can here engage in a silent pause, opening the question of how to provide public safety in times of gunphilia and gunphobia.

Whereas this chapter has explored law enforcement and fusion’s role in predictive data policing through acoustic software, the next chapter turns to predictive policing by the FBI. Fusion centers in El Paso and Houston provided analytic support and probable cause to stop the suspect discussed in the next chapter. Across Texas, fusion accelerates surveillance.

⁴³⁹ Daughtry, *Listening to War*, 182.

⁴⁴⁰ Reeves, *Citizen Spies*, 173.

Figure 5.1. The Infrastructure of ShotSpotter. “ShotSpotter: How it Works,” *ShotSpotter*, accessed November 1, 2017, <http://www.shotspotter.com/technology>

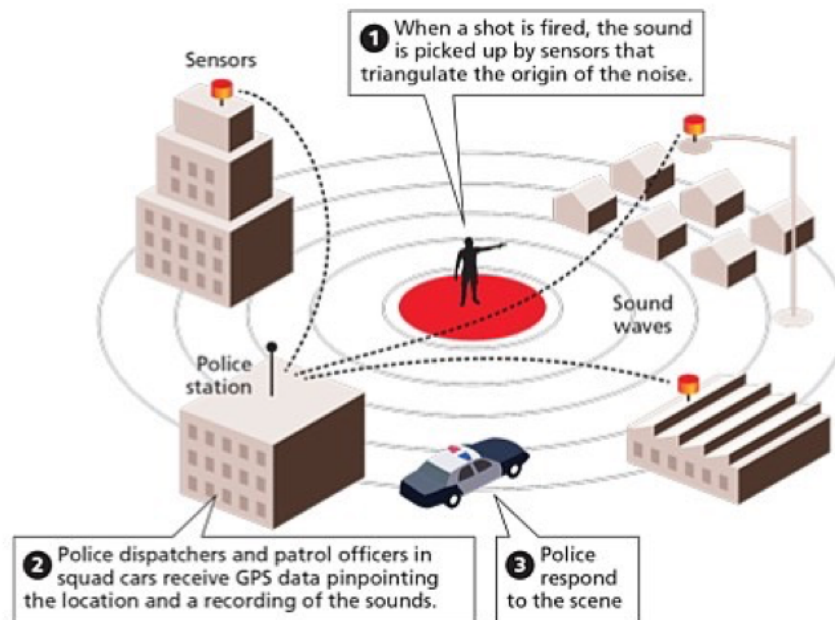


Figure 5.2. ShotSpotter Interface Portal. Chris Weller, “There’s a Secret Technology in 90 US Cities that Listens for Gunfire 24/7,” *Business Insider*, June 27, 2017, <http://www.businessinsider.com/how-shotspotter-works-microphones-detecting-gunshots-2017-6>.

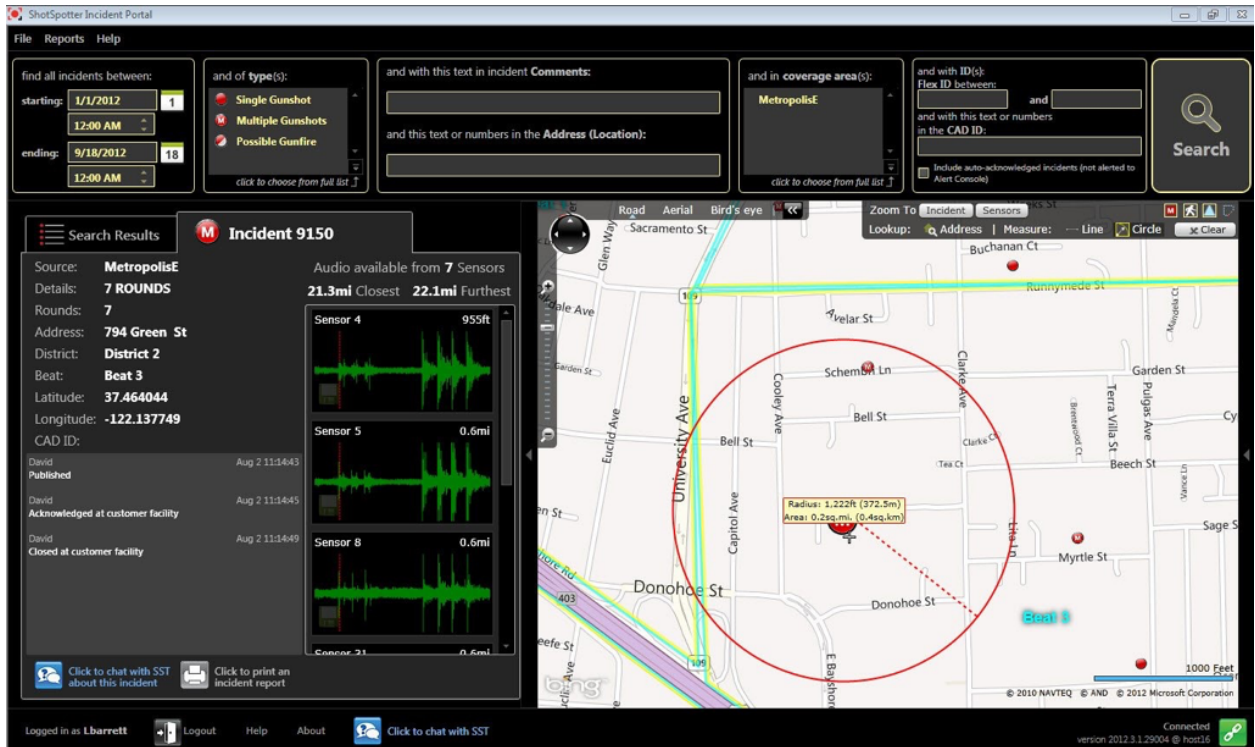


Figure 5.3. A local news anchor points to a homicide location using the city's "Community Crime Map." Jessie Degollado, "East Side Looks to Problem-Oriented Policing," *KSAT ABC 12*, February 15, 2016, <https://www.ksat.com/community/east-side-looks-to-problem-oriented-policing>.



Figure 5.4. Police swarm around San Antonio resident Larry Miller. Vianna Davila, “Promises to Keep: Fighting Crime on the East Side,” *San Antonio Express News*, March 23, 2016, <http://projects.expressnews.com/promises-to-keep-fighting-crime-on-the-east-side>.



Larry Miller, 60, walks away on Sept. 29, 2016, after SAPD officers told him he had to move from his seat, near a convenience store that's a known crime hot spot. Officers were patrolling the area and had worked for months to clean up the corner.

Chapter Six:
Black Muslim Suggestibility: The Case of Barry Walter Bujol, Jr.

“I am guilty. I do not know what of, but I am a wretch.”
- Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

INTRODUCTION

This chapter argues that the FBI uses the curious power of suggestibility, or receptivity, meaning an *unavoidable susceptibility to indirect persuasion*, to entrap black Muslim Americans. Civil rights organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) have documented the manipulative tactics of the FBI’s Behavioral Analysis Unit, a counterintelligence initiative of the 1970s that trains officers and informants to garner rapport with criminal suspects in “less coercive” ways.⁴⁴¹ This chapter opens up avoidable questions about both *who is responsible for terrorism* and *what constitutes terrorist criminality if intentions are murky*. Importantly, the FBI’s history of indirect persuasion also presents a challenge to rhetorical theory: to re-figure persuasion as an act between agents operating from the unconscious influence of affective attachments. This chapter draws out how counterintelligence uses indirect persuasion through transference relationships, whereby a subject projects love-feelings onto an authority figure, between informants and suspects.⁴⁴² In particular, I reflect on the case of Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., a black Muslim US citizen from Houston, Texas, accused of terrorism in 2010. The stickiness of FBI influence is showcased most visibly in 692 pages of court proceedings

441 “Federal Bureau of Investigation, Counterterrorism Division Behavioral Analysis Unit, Guantanamo Bay,” ACLU, November 22, 2003, www.aclu.org/national-security/doj-letter-attaching-fbi-analysis-guantanamo-interrogation-tactics. Also see Trevor Aaronson and Katie Galloway, “Manufacturing Terror,” *The Intercept*, November 19, 2015, <https://theintercept.com/2015/11/19/an-fbi-informant-seduced-eric-mcdavid-into-a-bomb-plot-then-the-government-lied-about-it/>. For more details on the “soft” techniques of the Behavioral Analysis Unit, see Robin K. Dreeke, “FBI Counterintelligence Division’s Behavioral Analysis Program: A Unique Investigative Resource,” *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, July 9, 2013, <https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/fbi-counterintelligence-divisions-behavioral-analysis-program-a-unique-investigative-resource>. Human Rights Watch flagged Bujol’s case: “Illusion of Justice: Human Rights Abuses in US Terrorism Prosecutions,” *Human Rights Watch*, July 21, 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/07/21/illusion-justice/human-rights-abuses-us-terrorism-prosecutions>. Fusion centers, oddly enough, have been found to participate in “mind control” behavioral science. One risks sounding like a conspiracy theorist when bringing this up, but the evidence points toward these practices. A Washington State Fusion Center released “remote mind control” findings: “US Govt Counterterrorism Center Accidentally Releases ‘Remote Mind Control’ Documents – Report,” *RT*, April 20, 2018, <https://www.rt.com/news/424734-us-counterterrorism-center-mind-control/>.

442 See Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*.

from the four-day bench trial in November 2011 in which Bujol defended himself. The court proceedings detail how the FBI manipulated Bujol through behavioral “mirroring,” humiliated Bujol throughout the investigation and trial, and emphasized the threat of his black Muslim consciousness.

The FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force began its sustained monitoring of Bujol in 2008 when Bujol exchanged emails with Anwar al-Awlaki, a Yemeni-American recruiter for al-Qaeda, later killed by a drone strike in September 2011. Bujol and al-Awlaki’s emails explored a number of topics, but their most consistent theme was spirituality. Informed by frustration with US drone strikes and white supremacy, Bujol mused about ways he could financially support mujahideens abroad, and al-Awlaki emailed Bujol a list of “42 Ways to Support Jihad.” The FBI conducted extensive in-person surveillance of Bujol surrounding his Pine Meadows apartment in Hempstead, Texas where he lived with his wife Ernestine Johnson. In November 2009, the FBI introduced a confidential human source (CHS) into Bujol’s life. The FBI informant—who used the pseudonym Moh Adwas—became a mentor to Bujol. The informant providing Bujol with religious guidance and Arabic language lessons, as well as gave money to Bujol’s family while Bujol was detained for driving with an expired license. The CHS asked Bujol to conduct training exercises at home and receive a passport so that Bujol could support Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) abroad. After AQAP was designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the State Department in January 2010, the FBI set up a sting operation for May 2010 initiated by the CHS. The FBI informant provided Bujol with all the materials he would need to undertake jihad: two confidential US Army military manuals, currency, mobile telephone SIM cards, global positioning system receivers, a military issue lensatic compass, and a fake identity card to the Port Authority of Houston with which to travel to

Algeria. The FBI detained Bujol, and he was charged with providing material support to AQAP and aggravated identity theft for the fake Port Authority ID.

For all intents and purposes, this is a closed case. Intelligence agencies in Texas celebrated Bujol's arrest as a success; US attorney Kenneth Magidson said the case came to a "successful resolution"; and Bujol has served six years of his 20-year prison sentence.⁴⁴³ But Bujol's case should give us pause. His incarceration reveals messy questions about the origins of terrorist criminality, the racial politics of homegrown terrorism, and the invasiveness of counterterrorism intelligence. The FBI has an extensive history of surveillance of black nationalists and activists in the 1960s and 70s, some of which were influenced by the Nation of Islam. Black Muslims, the largest American-born Muslim group, have been a rarified population in the US, and their subjection to surveillance intensified after 9/11.⁴⁴⁴ As a few notable examples, black Muslims were named an "ancestry of interest" by the New York Police Department counterterrorism division.⁴⁴⁵ The FBI murdered black imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah in Detroit in 2009 after finding no evidence of terrorism-related activity—leading his son Omar Regan to aptly describe his father's death as "unfinished business from COINTELPRO."⁴⁴⁶ Numerous government surveillance programs, like Screening of Passengers by Observation Techniques (SPOT) and the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Initiative, have targeted black immigrants.⁴⁴⁷ Studies of US counterterrorism after 9/11 tend to conflate Muslim with South Asian and Arab ethnicities, where Muslim is immediately

⁴⁴³ Bujol was also ordered to pay a \$250,000 fine.

⁴⁴⁴ See Kundnani, *The Muslims Are Coming!*

⁴⁴⁵ See Sara Kamali, "Informants, Provocateurs, and Entrapment: Examining the Histories of the FBI's PATCON and the NYPD's Muslim Surveillance Program," *Surveillance & Society* 15, no. 1 (2017): 68-78.

⁴⁴⁶ Murtaza Hassain, "Killing of Detroit Imam in 2009 Described as 'Nothing Less Than a Cover-Up,'" *The Intercept*, August 9, 2015, <https://theintercept.com/2015/08/09/family-detroit-imam-killed-police-files-lawsuit-supreme-court/>.

⁴⁴⁷ We can add to this the fact that Operation Enduring Freedom operates in the Horn and trans-Sahara regions of Africa, in sixteen countries: Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia; Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria.

coded in what Kumarini Silva describes as a racialized “brownness.”⁴⁴⁸ Yet, the War on Terror is, in many ways, a war on blackness, with the impetus and execution of its surveillance techniques indebted to the capture of black life during slavery; branding black bodies through biometric technologies, for instance, is reminiscent of physical branding of slaves’ bodies.⁴⁴⁹ Re-opening Bujol’s case in this context would mean addressing a number of important questions: At what point was Bujol a compromising threat in/to the “homeland”? Who or what exactly suggested Bujol commit criminal acts: Bujol, al-Awlaki, the FBI, and/or someone or something else? If we assume that terrorist sympathy arises, as a condition of possibility, from *elsewhere* who is responsible for so-called “Islamic radicalization”?

This chapter argues the FBI uses the power of indirect persuasion, so that suspects can be made unconsciously susceptible to the FBI’s influence. The FBI channels public anxiety about black Muslim’s *a priori susceptibility* to terrorist ideas into rhetorically crafting a capturable terrorist identity. To tease out the FBI’s power of suggestion, I closely read the struggle over receptivity to terrorism in 692 pages of court proceedings from the four-session bench trial in which Bujol defended himself. Such a close reading takes the form of “sleuthing,” or delicately dwelling on the sticky points in which Bujol’s agency appears contaminated by suggestions from others. As the method section in this chapter shows, dwelling in these murky agentic moments is not the typical purview of rhetorical “close readings” that find and describe meanings; instead, sleuthing opens up space to consider the volatility of indirect persuasion. In this case, sleuthing listens for the murmurings of the FBI’s transferential relationship between Bujol and the FBI informant.

⁴⁴⁸ Silva, *Brown Threat*.

⁴⁴⁹ See Browne, *Dark Matters*, 89-130.

Instead of rendering judgment about Bujol's actions, this close reading opens up the text to the complexity of where terrorism radicalization arrives from.

This close reading prompts two important considerations. First, the factors that influence the agency of a so-called "terrorist" are unfathomably enormous, distributed across civilians, law enforcement organizations, public institutions, critical infrastructure, counterterrorism intelligence centers, the DOJ, Secret Service, and the FBI. What is called "radicalization" is the result of a number of *suggestions*. It is significant that, in the case of Bujol, these suggestions were most loudly murmured by the FBI. Second, because every domestic terrorist is produced from suggestions from a policing force, every terrorism case contains traces of entrapment. Importantly, once the concept of entrapment is opened, counterterrorism and law enforcement become responsible for how they produce their own objects of policing.

To these ends, this chapter begins by describing US counterterrorism's embrace of monitoring terrorism in its "pre-operational planning" phase. I then describe the method of this chapter and the case in question. Based on the close reading of the case, I analyze three sticky points of agency between Bujol and the CHS: behavioral mirroring, humiliating Bujol, and highlighting the threat of black Islamic social consciousness. I then consider how the close reading challenges conventional FBI definitions of entrapment. I end by, first, discussing the need for a wider concept of rhetorical influence that accounts for the volatility of transference and, second, urging tactics of creative escape from the capture of black life.

TARGETING PRE-OPERATIONAL PLANNING

The post-9/11 DHS and Justice Department terrorism-prevention strategy constitutes a new affective infrastructure of anxiety, a subterranean network of suspicions, threat matrixes, and constricted passages of movement that taps into historic racial anxieties. US counter-terrorism's topography of anxieties concerns terrorism-related indicators, opaque signs that something in the "nexus" of terrorism might be taking place. There are sixteen widely accepted indicators used by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS): intrusion, misrepresentation, diversion, vandalism, cyberattack, implied threat, aviation activity, eliciting information, testing security, financing, photography, surveillance, material storage, acquisition of expertise, weapons collection, and sector-specific incidents.⁴⁵⁰ Assessing indicators, counter-terrorism professionals aim to apprehend terrorists in the "pre-operational planning" phase of terrorism, meaning observable behaviors that could support terrorism, like fraud and money laundering.⁴⁵¹ The National Security Information (NSI) Sharing Environment, the national standard procedures for intelligence officials, defines "pre-operational planning" as "activities associated with a known or particular planned criminal operation or with terrorist operations generally."⁴⁵² Because DHS asks its workers and Americans to look out for activities *associated with* a planned terrorism operation, the counterterrorism infrastructure focuses on suspicious activity, which the ISE defines as "[o]bserved behavior reasonably indicative of pre-operational planning associated with terrorism or other criminal activity."⁴⁵³ Homeland security casts a wider net not just to acts of terrorism, but any crime within its proximity.

450 "Suspicious Activity Reporting: Indicators and Examples," *Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative*, February 2015, https://nsi.ncirc.gov/documents/ISE-SAR_functional_standard_indicators_and_examples_0315.pdf.

451 "Nationwide SAR Initiative: Fact Sheet," *Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative*, January 2017, https://nsi.ncirc.gov/documents/NSI_Overview.pdf.

452 "Information Sharing Environment-Suspicious Activity Report," 3.

453 "Information Sharing Environment-Suspicious Activity Report," 4.

If all crime has the potential to escalate into terrorism, then there is no trace of criminal activity that is not *already* apprehended as potential terrorism. We can see this in how the Houston Police Department treats suspicious activity on its website: “the Houston PD is able to take an ‘all crimes’ approach to monitoring suspicious activity and ensure that terrorism-related suspicious activity is properly monitored and forwarded for appropriate follow-up.”⁴⁵⁴ All terrorism-related information is routed to new post-9/11 intelligence centers called fusion centers, which vet collects suspicious fragments of communication like tips. The creation of an information sharing environment for these tips after 9/11 has made for faster collaborations across federal, regional, and local agencies. Bujol’s case involved coordination between numerous institutions, which I list here at length to show the distributed policing at work in terrorism cases: United States Attorney’s Office, the Department of Justice’s Counterterrorism Section, the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force in Bryan, Texas including the Brazos County Sheriff’s Office, the Texas A&M University Police Department, the Bryan Police Department, the United States Secret Service, the Waller County Sheriff’s Office and the College Station Police Department. Other investigating agencies were the Houston FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, the Prairie View A&M University Department of Public Safety, the New Jersey State Police, the Coast Guard Investigative Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement - Homeland Security Investigations, the Houston Police Department, and the Canada Border Services Agency. In addition, the operation involved requesting real-time information from an intelligence center in El Paso, TX (EPIC) in order for police to find a reason to stop Bujol and his wife’s vehicle.⁴⁵⁵

454 “Final Report: Information Sharing Environment (ISE)-Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Evaluation Environment,” Office of the Director of National Intelligence, January 2010,

https://www.dni.gov/files/ISE/documents/DocumentLibrary/BJA_Final_Report_ISE_SAR_EE_0.pdf.

455 “Texas Man Convicted of Attempting to Provide Material Support to Al Qaeda,” *The United States Attorney’s Office, Southern District of Texas*, November 14, 2011,

What becomes interesting is how these various agencies *author* terrorist activity, and nowhere is that authorship more apparent than in FBI sting operations. *The Intercept* found that of the 810 prosecuted cases of terrorism in the US since 9/11, 37% involved sting operations.⁴⁵⁶ Sting operations involve an odd referentiality: the FBI asks suspects to conduct criminal activity so that the federal government can prosecute them. Piotr Szpunar argues that sting operations are based in *(pre)mediation*, the “remediation of future events and affects,” where a suspect’s links to global jihad are rhetorically constructed through informants.⁴⁵⁷ A key example is a well-known terrorism case in Texas: the federal government charged Houston resident Adnan Mirza with illegal possession of firearms on his student visa, yet seven of the eight weapons for which Mirza was held responsible belonged to an FBI informant.

Citizen-spying has long been a public duty and moral obligation in Western culture.⁴⁵⁸ The development of the professional police force in Europe during the 19th century introduced the modern paid informant: an individual who brings information to the police in exchange for compensation, which could be money, release, or reduced sentencing. Because of the mobilization of informants, modern discourse surrounding a resistance to “ratting” others out, or “snitching” to police, developed. Alexandra Natapoff explains the difficulties of the practice of using informants: “It inflicts special harms on vulnerable individuals such as racial minorities, substance abusers, and poor defendants who lack robust legal representation. Because of its secretive and discretionary nature, it evades the traditional checks and balances of judicial and public scrutiny, even as it

<https://www.justice.gov/archive/usao/txs/1News/Releases/2011%20November/111114%20Bujol.htm>. EPIC claims it fuses information to the El Paso fusion center. See Van Puyvelde, “Fusing Drug Enforcement.”

⁴⁵⁶ “Trial and Terror,” *The Intercept*, October 2, 2017, <https://trial-and-terror.theintercept.com/>.

⁴⁵⁷ Piotr Szpunar, “Premediating Predisposition: Informants, Entrapment, and Connectivity in Counterterrorism,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 34, no. 1 (2017): 372.

⁴⁵⁸ See Robert Bloom, *Ratting: The Use and Abuse of Informants in the American Justice System* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002).

determines the outcomes of millions of investigations and cases. And finally, like the criminal system itself, it is rapidly expanding.”⁴⁵⁹ Today, we have witnessed a similar boon in informants to the Hoover era—used to monitor communism—since the FBI recruited up to 15,000 informants six years after 9/11.⁴⁶⁰ Szpunar highlights that the post-9/11 surge in informants disproportionately targets American Muslims. For instance, he notes, the NYPD aimed to have an informant in every mosque in the city.⁴⁶¹

Oftentimes, the FBI recruits *involuntary* informants by threatening their immigration status, pressuring them in private meetings, and offering them a “model minority” position in society. Furthermore, recruiting informants often involves detaining individuals, which happened to the CHS in Bujol’s life. The FBI detained the informant after September 11, 2001 and asked invasive questions that rendered him out of place: “What am I doing here, who do you know—.”⁴⁶² The *intensified* project of recruiting informants shows that US counterintelligence and law enforcement are afraid of even *the potential* for Muslims to sympathize with known terrorists.

While numerous rhetorical scholarship explicates theories of distributed agency in recent years in the vein of new materialism and rhetorical ecologies,⁴⁶³ I consider the distributed agency of terrorist suspects by re-turning to psychoanalytic accounts of indirect rhetorical influence. Considering transference, or a hypnotic transfer of love-feelings between a subject and authority figure, is especially important, because US counterterrorism utilizes the force of transference in order to render suspects malleable.

459 Alexandra Natapoff, *Snitching: Criminal Informants and the Erosion of American Justice* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 3.

460 “Trial and Terror.”

461 Szpunar, “Premediating Predisposition,” 374.

462 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr. United States District Court, Southern District of Texas, Houston Division, H-10-CR-368, November 7-10, 2011, 359.

463 See Scot Barnett and Casey Boyle, *Rhetoric, Through Everyday Things* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2016); Bridie McGreavy, Justine Wells, George F. McHendry, Jr., and Samantha Senda-Cook, *Tracing Rhetoric and Material Life: Ecological Approaches* (Palgrave, 2018); Laurie Gries, *Still Life with Rhetoric: A New Materialist Approach for Visual Rhetorics* (University Press of Colorado, 2015).

While this kind of control does not always work, the modern informant program suggests it is important to leave open the question of the FBI's powerful influence on terrorism suspects.

METHOD: SLEUTHING TRANSFERENCE

The method of this chapter upon revisiting the transcript of *US v. Bujol* is to sleuth. Sleuthing is a form of close reading, at once involuntary and dogged. Avital Ronell describes sleuthing as a performative stance of dogged curiosity that involves snooping through texts to find traces or clues that have been left behind.⁴⁶⁴ Sleuthing as a form of close reading can open a closed case. In her short history of the case study, Lauren Berlant writes that a "closed case, a cold case" becomes restocked "in that imaginary warehouse of unrealized potentials"; an ongoing case "maintain[s] the information for a potentially transformative event."⁴⁶⁵ Bujol's case appears closed, resolved; the judge handed down his guilty verdict, the court considered all the seemingly necessary evidence, and Bujol assumed the punishment.

Sleuthing in this chapter returns to the cold case, holding it open. Sleuthing slows down to register what is marginal to a court room scene and difficult to locate: the suggestibility at the heart of rhetorical agency, or the contamination of a person's agency by the force of *suggestion*, an *indirect* suasive power. Sleuthing in this chapter re-visits the cold case of the *US v. Bujol* considering the pressing question: Who is the author of terrorist radicalization, if it "arrives" "in" particular individuals from elsewhere? While sleuthing might not pinpoint the exact location of where, how, and when a suggestion takes

⁴⁶⁴ Davis, "Breaking Down 'Man,'" 370. See Davis, "Confessions of an Anacoluthon," 253.

⁴⁶⁵ Lauren Berlant, "On the Case," *Critical Inquiry* 33, no. 4 (2007): 670.

hold, Davis lays out the implications for rhetorical scholarship that considers this kind of *indirect* suasive power, a *preoriginary* identificatory force:

[T]he entire logic of identification has to be rethought: it can no longer be understood as an identification of one *with* another, at least not at first, because it would necessarily precede the very distinction between self and other. Identification could not operate among self-enclosed organisms; it would have to belong to the realm of affectable-beings, infinitely open to the other's affection, inspiration, alteration; it would have to belong to the realm of a radically generalized rhetoricity, then, an a priori *affectability* or *persuadability* that is at work prior to and in excess of any shared meaning.⁴⁶⁶

Rhetoric is a suasive force that can make you operate under the influence of an alterity, or encounter with difference, such as a song that taps your foot to the beat without your registering it consciously.⁴⁶⁷ Indirect persuasion presents a problem to traditional theories of rhetoric because *immediate* influence, *uncontrollable* induction challenges the notion of an autonomous agent in control of his or her speech. In the context of psychoanalysis, Freud believed an analyst could mediate the unconscious of an analysand, or patient, by inducing hypnosis. Hypnosis persuades the analysand to “become persuadable, affectable, suggestible vis-a-vis the hypnotist.”⁴⁶⁸ Freud was concerned with “the riddle of suggestive influence,”⁴⁶⁹ which, as Davis notes, continued in patients even when Freud abandoned the practice of hypnosis.

The influence of hypnosis on the agency of the analysand was still readily visible to Freud in the phenomenon of transference, the establishment of a relationship between the analyst and the analysand reminiscent of parental relations, which takes place in the initial stage of psychoanalysis. Bruce Fink indicates that transference is “a case of mistaken identity: the love his patients expressed was not love for him, but rather love for the role

466 David, *Inessential Solidarity*, 133.

467 Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 2.

468 Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 137.

469 Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), 117.

he played, love or what he agreed to represent—the helpful, healing Other who listens to us and seems to know what ails us.”⁴⁷⁰ A patient loves the relation between him or herself and the analyst. Joshua Gunn writes, “A *subject in transference* is highly suggestible, which can be dangerous and actually hinder the work of analysis.”⁴⁷¹ As Gunn makes clear, the volatility of transference can only be imperfectly mediated by rhetoric. Ideally, the analysand would “work through” transference, “until the analysand begins to regard the analyst as an Other literally to *use* for her own analytic work.”⁴⁷² Yet, as Freud himself understood, transference often inexplicably takes place.⁴⁷³ That transference is difficult to control indicates, for Gunn, that rhetorical “agency is radically exterior, an enfolding of the scripts or fantasies that constitute social reality.”⁴⁷⁴ If an analysand is subject to a prior transformative power, s/he is always working on oneself through others.

This notion of external agency has important implications for the formation of black subjectivity, according to Frantz Fanon. He writes that, making contact with the “white world,” the psychic structure of the black man becomes weakened: “The black man stops behaving as an *actional* person. The goal of his behavior will be The Other (in the guise of the white man), for the Other alone can give him worth. That is on the ethical level: self-esteem.”⁴⁷⁵ Radically exterior agency is, Fanon explains, *overdetermined* by phobias: white agency exists by rendering black life as an immediate threat in an “affective prelogic.”⁴⁷⁶ The threat of blackness—the absolute “unassimilable,” for Fanon—exhibits a powerful “potency,” so much so that white individuals form their sense of identity, their

470 Bruce Fink, *Lacan on Love: An Exploration of Lacan's Seminar VIII Transference* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2016), 2.

471 Joshua Gunn, “Refitting Fantasy: Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity, and Talking with the Dead,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 1 (2004): 17.

472 Gunn, “Refitting Fantasy,” 17.

473 Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 138.

474 Gunn, “Refitting Fantasy,” 19.

475 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 119.

476 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 120.

“who-ness,” *from* illusions of the very potential for contact with it.⁴⁷⁷ Put plainly, white and black transferential relationships are cultivated differently to replicate unequal agency, especially to build black dependency on white structures of approval.

Transferential power can be traced through the case of the United States v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., especially between Bujol and the informant. I conduct a close reading of this transferential relationship in 692 pages of transcripts from the four-day bench trial in which Bujol defended himself opposite US government lawyer Mark McIntyre—in part because the transcript is the only publicly available documentation that describes their relationship in great detail. The Honorable David Hittner, a white judge appointed by Ronald Reagan to the District Court for the Southern District of Texas, presided over the trial from November 7-10, 2011.

The trial lasted four days. The first day involved Judge Hittner opening the court proceedings, and the prosecution calling its witness FBI analyst Bryan Cannon to the stand. The second day included a continued cross-examination of Cannon by Bujol. The prosecution then called a number of witnesses: Houston international airport police officer Jeff Dunn, Canadian border agent Amy Tehan, New Jersey state police officer Felix Bermudez, and FBI language analyst and translator Hany Youssef. The day ended with the prosecution questioning FBI informant Moh Adwas (Mohammad Aldwsari in the trial transcript). The third day involved direct and cross-examination questioning of Aldwsari, as well as numerous other parties: JTTF officers Bowman Eric Prince and Oscar X. Pena, operations manager of the Transportation Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) program for the Virginia Transportation Security Administration Thomas Walter Hathaway, JTTF task force officer Sean D. McCarroll, and international terrorism consultant Evan F. Kohlmann. The final day opened to Bujol’s defense. Bujol did not call any witnesses. The

⁴⁷⁷ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 124, 122.

judge indicated that Bujol cannot “testify,” but the government and Bujol can “sum up” the testimony in 20 minutes each.⁴⁷⁸ With his time, Bujol asked that the judge listen to segments of video and audio clip recordings of the initial meetings between Bujol and the CHS, without any commentary from Bujol—presumably to showcase how he was hooked into the FBI’s influence. A verdict was handed down the following Monday. The trial itself was formulaic, but also involved messy descriptions of what happened and why, as well as many procedural digressions.

The bench trial best showcases complicated attributions of agency based on transference, because each day of the trial opens the question of who is responsible for terrorism radicalization. Judge Hittner sustained numerous objections against Bujol when Bujol was trying to advocate for his innocence. Hittner reiterated that it is up to him, as the judge and jury, to render final judgment—making it all the more important for us to re-open the case. Because of the effusive nature of transference, my reading is not meant to render final judgment about who is responsible for terrorism, but to re-open the closed case to suggest that the FBI contributed a toxic influence through the complicated mentorship relationships between Bujol and the anonymous confidential source.⁴⁷⁹

INDIRECT PERSUASION IN US V. BUJOL

To draw out the FBI’s influence, I analyze three parts of a transferential process between Bujol and the FBI, as revealed by the transcript: mirroring indirect points of identification between the informant and Bujol during the investigation; humiliating Bujol

478 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 646.

479 I should note that other mentor relationships factored into complexity of the case and its outcome—those between Bujol and Anwar al-Awlaki, and Bujol and Judge David Hittner. For instance, at one point during the first session of the trial, Hittner states to the courtroom, “Come on. We’re all among family here, so to speak. Anybody want to take a break, rather than go two hours straight?” Hittner’s oddly intimate tone throughout the trial carries over into his mentorship of Bujol, because Hittner taught Bujol how to engage in his courtroom defense as it was taking place. United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 179.

during the investigation, arrest, and trial; and highlighting the threat of black Islamic consciousness during the trial. Ultimately, analyzing the mirroring, humiliation, and threats surrounding Bujol's case leads us to ask: Who is the proper "author" of radicalism? I propose that the vast infrastructure of US counterterrorism, at least in part, generates the terrorism that it captures and the public anxiety that it claims to resolve.

Mirroring

The indirect form of persuasion the FBI calls "mirroring" influenced the relationship between Bujol and the informant.⁴⁸⁰ Behavioral mirroring is a way of cultivating transferential cathexis. For instance, during an interview in jail, Bujol describes his relationship to the FBI informant in terms of an infant looking up to a giant:

I looked up to him. I had a tremendous amount of deference and respect for him. Especially when he told me he was from the holy lands and was a scholar. I felt like an infant in religion next to a giant. At the time I was trying to learn Islam and learn Arabic on my own, and I had been trying to emigrate with my family to a place we could live where religion was practiced and where life could be simpler. Given what I was seeing in the news, I also wanted to get to the bottom of the jihad question, for myself, once and for all.⁴⁸¹

Bryan Cannon, an FBI analyst on Bujol's case, claimed in the trial that the FBI "gave the CHS instructions every meeting that he was not to assume the role as a spiritual leader and was never to assume the role with the defendant that he was an employer looking to hire the defendant."⁴⁸² However, these relations became fuzzy as the FBI crafted the character of the informant: A well-traveled spiritual guide who financially supports Bujol and his family.

480 The FBI also uses nonverbal mirroring when recruiting informants to gain their trust and build rapport.

481 Murtaza Hussain, "Texas Man Talks About Going from HP to an al-Qaeda Sting: Prison Dispatches from the War on Terror," *The Intercept*, October 13, 2015, <https://theintercept.com/2015/10/13/barry-bujols-story/>.

482 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 131.

The mirroring was perhaps the most invasive during the introduction of the CHS and Bujol. In order to introduce the informant into Bujol's life, the FBI orchestrated Bujol's arrest for his failure to show up twice to court on a minor violation. Within the holding cell in Waller County, the CHS posed as a prisoner going through the booking process before Bujol. The FBI orchestrated for Bujol to watch the CHS transform into a jumpsuit as a point of affiliation between the two, as one of the FBI analysts explained: "the defendant was placed into a temporary holding cell in that area so that he could observe the CHS being booked."⁴⁸³ Cannon continues, "The CHS was then suited out, I call it, and put in an orange county jail jumpsuit and – and then the CHS was –after he was finished being booked, was placed in the same temporary booking cell that the defendant was in."⁴⁸⁴ The mirroring of the physical process of becoming-a-prisoner was a point of trust and connection, for the CHS "would be treated as if he were a prisoner, dressed the same, have to go through the same procedures as any other prisoner."⁴⁸⁵ The emotional tether to one another was based on mutual incarceration. What is more, the FBI instructed the CHS to pray with Bujol in the holding cell, and later capitalized on the fact that the CHS found the praying location suspicious. The exchange between the US attorney and the informant shows how the praying, instigated by the informant, becomes marked with suspicion because it was done by a dirty bathroom:⁴⁸⁶

A: Did they say anything to you or did this mean anything to you, his decision to pray at this location?

A: I mean, I appreciated, like, he's either going – he's going to have to show off. Because the place is really filthy. And he didn't really want to wait, and he didn't really want to sanitize the place. It was extremely – I mean, I'm leaning on the floor really, I mean, next to a bathroom, literally.

Q: Is this something you consider to be a very devout thing to do?

483 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 118.

484 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 119.

485 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 118.

486 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 119.

A: You can say so, yeah.⁴⁸⁷

The praying in the holding cell, according to the informant, made Bujol “pleased” and “happy.”⁴⁸⁸ The physically mirroring at the level of bodily appearance and movements (in unison with prayer) secured their relation.

Mirroring furthered through the carefully planned CHS “character” created by the FBI: “hints were dropped that the CHS had connections and just did stuff and he would never say exactly what it was.”⁴⁸⁹ The affiliations continued subtly in nearly all choices about the CHS character during the investigation. For instance, the FBI handlers instructed the CHS to create a Yahoo! Email account to reflect Bujol’s: “He used Yahoo!; so, we used Yahoo!”⁴⁹⁰ At one point, the CHS suggested that Bujol create another email account where they could chat—a move that counterterrorism experts in Texas later called suspicious. The case managers on the case would write emails to Bujol and “adjust it so it had some misspellings or maybe had a few Arabic characters in it or whatever, so that it looked like it came from the CHS.”⁴⁹¹ The CHS character was not confined to email similarities, but the FBI wanted the CHS to seem well-traveled. The FBI analyst recounts:

And, then, we would always place props within the vehicle to bolster what we thought the – the character the CHS was portraying: Someone who travels, someone who traveled frequently; so, we would place hotel pens from foreign hotels, foreign newspapers, prayer beads, foreign currency, things of that nature, throughout the car. Because the defendant was very keen on looking around inside the car; so, we wanted him to think that the CHS traveled frequently.⁴⁹²

The FBI reflected Bujol’s own desires to travel and study abroad back at him indirectly.

The emotional suggestibility surrounding religion shown through most in the staging ground at a Hampton Inn to make it appear as if the CHS were a member of al-

487 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 370.

488 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 370.

489 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 132.

490 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 128.

491 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 130.

492 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 130.

Qaeda without explicitly saying so. The FBI staged the hotel room “to make it appear that he had just met with some brothers—or the brothers,” members of al-Qaeda.⁴⁹³ To do so, Cannon recounts, “we had multiple chairs around the table. We had a traditional Arab or Arabic or Middle Eastern tea set. There were pistachios; there were dates; there was a prayer rug visible in the room; there were some religious items visible in the room.”⁴⁹⁴ The informant emphasizes that the props were Middle Eastern: “It was staged like if there was – if there was a previous meetings [sic]. It had a little bit of Middle Eastern props in it. It has a little bit of Middle Eastern snacks. Looked like I just finished meetings. It has a prayer rugs on it [sic].”⁴⁹⁵ The staging took place before the CHS declared his affiliation with al-Qaeda out loud verbally; instead, the informant indirectly suggested he might have met with some members.

In order to mirror Bujol, the FBI used Anwar al-Awlaki’s “42 Ways to Support Jihad,” which al-Awlaki had emailed to Bujol. The “42 Ways” became a guide to *fashion* a terrorist identity, according to Cannon: “We used the ‘42 Ways’ as a kind of blueprint. We would say some of the same things that were said there or we would say some of the things—same things that he said in his own e-mails to people.”⁴⁹⁶ Because Bujol looked up to al-Awlaki, the informant mentioned al-Awlaki in an email. In one February 17, 2010 email, the informant forwarded an email to Bujol with a number of questions that correlated with the “42 Ways,” such as physical fitness, access to technology, and traveling abroad. The FBI made it seem like the email came from a third potential terrorist, as if a terrorist organization needed someone to fulfill a job, or a role.

493 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 136.

494 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 137.

495 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 400.

496 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr. 128.

What is more, the informant paid money to Bujol's family and offered numerous favors, including bailing Bujol out of jail. The connections between the informant and Bujol were based on Bujol feeling indebted to the informant. For instance, when Bujol met the informant in jail, the informant offered to bail Bujol out of prison for the week and a half he had to serve. Bujol instead decided to sit in jail, because for each day in jail, the jail would remove \$100 from his fine. When Bujol refused the favor, the FBI made it seem like the informant bailed him out anyway, so that they could take Bujol immediately to a meeting with the informant: "So, instead of him being released at an odd hour on the 5th [December 2009], we decided to set it up where the CHS went to the jail on the 4th, with physical surveillance and everything, and make it appear as if the CHS was bailing out the defendant."⁴⁹⁷ The act of bailing Bujol out demonstrates the curious referentiality of using informants: the FBI liberated Bujol from a prison in which they put him—for the express purpose of releasing him back, now under more of the FBI's influence. In addition to the bail, the FBI instructed the informant to provide money to Bujol's wife: "It's traditional in the culture and religion that if someone is in jail or the male of the family is in trouble that the community, the Muslim community, assist the family. So, we sent to the CHS over to give Ernestine \$50."⁴⁹⁸ The cultivation of transference in this case became a matter of debt—where the informant built a line of credit with Bujol so that he would trust him.

Mirroring involved orchestrated similarities in terms of criminality, religion, and al-Awlaki, as well as financial investments, in order to build trust. The informant relation is one of clear power differential; the informant knew of the FBI operations, had his expenses paid for by the FBI, and treated Bujol like a young apprentice. The Justice Department write-up of the case admits that the relation between the CHS and Bujol was

⁴⁹⁷ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 126.

⁴⁹⁸ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 124.

one of devotion: “*to prove his worth* to the CHS and AQAP, Bujol performed numerous purported ‘training exercises’ often involving surveillance detection and covert means of communication.”⁴⁹⁹ The informant suggested Bujol would earn pride by undertaking jihad, so that Bujol went through with the sting operation: “In a conversation that took place just before Bujol is alleged to have tried to sneak onto the ship in Houston, al-Desari told Bujol, ‘*Make me proud*, you are going to join the best of the best: al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula.’ ‘God willing,’ Bujol responded.”⁵⁰⁰ The FBI activated Bujol’s devotion to jihad by rendering Bujol devoted to the informant.

In essence, mirroring in this case creates a malleable black Muslim body: a body that can be directed and can more easily submit. This body’s criminality is judged based on the *absence* of active resistance to FBI influence. The questions between the US attorney and informant show that Bujol’s guilt results from *not stopping* rather than *committing criminal acts*:

Q: Okay. At that point in time when you told the defendant you were a member of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, does he get scared?

A: No.

Q: Does he ask to get out of the car?

A: No.

Q: Does he say, ‘Hey, wait a minute. I don’t want a part of this’?

A: No.⁵⁰¹

The structure of guilt based in inaction shows up again in the context of describing how the informant and Bujol picked up the fake TWIC cards in Memorial Park in Houston:

Q: Did he ever say, “Let’s not do this”?

A: No, sir.

499 “Texas Man Convicted,” my emphasis.

500 “FBI Informant’s Identify [sic] Protected During Testimony at Texas Terrorism Trial,” *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, November 9, 2011, <http://lubbockonline.com/filed-online/2011-11-09/fbi-informants-identify-protected-during-testimony-texas-terrorism-trial>. My emphasis.

501 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 431.

Q: Did he ever say, I don't want to have anything to do with the fake identification?"

A: No, sir.

Q: When you showed him the fake card, did he try to get out of the car and walk away?

A: No, sir.⁵⁰²

According to the prosecutor, visible anxiety at crucial junctures would prove Bujol's innocence. Judge Hittner clarifies that Bujol seemed excited to join al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula based on his non-dissent: "You know, and no dissent?"⁵⁰³ Bujol's criminality was based in what the prosecution describes as his "demeanor," but the informant also instructed Bujol not to be nervous.⁵⁰⁴

While Bujol's body became more malleable, at the same time, the unpredictability of his actions meant the FBI felt it had to detain Bujol. Said differently, the FBI inflamed Bujol's radical commitments to the point where the handlers were "disturbed," in the words of the US lawyer and the informant.⁵⁰⁵ Because Bujol believed the informant was connected to foreigner terrorists abroad, Bujol emailed an article to the informant about how al-Qaeda wanted to recruit Americans to fight in Yemen. This email alarmed the handlers and informant. According to the informant, "We thought that it's taking too long and he's not going to wait and he's going to do something without us. I mean, he's just going to go and – he's going to think this is a direct message to him, and he might just run away or commit anything just crazy."⁵⁰⁶ Transference can be too strong; it can embolden an agent to commit a suggested act, even when the suggestor does not advise it at a particular time. In short, transference is volatile, and behavioral mirroring subjects a suspect to its erratic influence.

⁵⁰² United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 455.

⁵⁰³ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 444.

⁵⁰⁴ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 455, 468.

⁵⁰⁵ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 435.

⁵⁰⁶ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 435.

Humiliating

Humiliation arises when one becomes consciously aware that he/she had acted under the influence of others, especially when those others are aware of the influence. The FBI used its behavioral mirroring to create humiliating covert operations. The most notable involves a covert mission to pick up a note said by the CHS to be behind ‘Flamin’ Hot Funyuns’ in Randall’s: “we created this e-mail, had the CHS in the same method I already described send it. And it directed the defendant, at a certain place—at a certain time on that day to go to a Randall’s Grocery Store, go to a particular aisle that had a brand of chips called ‘Flamin’ Hot Funyuns’ and reach in that area to look for instructions for the rest of the evening.”⁵⁰⁷ The CHS forgot to place the note so in-person surveillance officers observed Bujol go “almost waist deep into the aisle”—a needlessly specific description of Bujol within the trial that paints him as oafish.⁵⁰⁸ The CHS further instructed Bujol to go to numerous places throughout Texas: an HEB, Randall’s, Wal-Mart, McDonald’s, Starbucks, and Chinese restaurant in Cypress; a gas station and mall in Navasota; a pharmacy and IHOP in College Station; a volunteer fire department in Prairie View; and Memorial Park in Houston.

When pressed by Judge David Hittner about why the covert communications had such “complexity,”⁵⁰⁹ FBI analyst Bryan Cannon insisted that tests needed to have a clandestine quality to mirror “actual” jihad. The *ludicrousness* of each new trial tested Bujol’s “willingness to go through what’s – what’s considered by many not normal behavior, running around in the middle of the night, sneaking under many different items—

⁵⁰⁷ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 143.

⁵⁰⁸ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 143.

⁵⁰⁹ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 144.

.”⁵¹⁰ The correlation between the humiliating quality of the task and Bujol’s devotedness indicates the FBI measures criminality in terms of suspects’ foolishness and gullibility.

That the FBI wanted to humiliate Bujol becomes clear when considering how insignificant the tasks were. For instance, one of the first suggestions that the CHS was involved with terrorism-related activities involved the transfer of an envelope between the CHS and another individual—an envelope that “didn’t contain anything.”⁵¹¹ The CHS gave Bujol instructions “to go to a particular place in Cypress, Texas, hand that [the empty envelope] to an FBI employee who looked Middle Eastern—or was Middle Eastern but not talk about it, see if the defendant brought it up.”⁵¹² The CHS describes the event from his perspective: “And I’m just going to stop by somewhere, and I am going to meet some Middle Eastern descent [sic]. I’m going to give him that envelope, and I’m just going to drive.”⁵¹³ This awkward encounter took place only a week after Bujol had emailed the informant, for a second time, to follow up after they drank hot chocolate together at a McDonald’s in Cyprus. One particular slippage from the informant shows that these terrorism “tests,” while legal and inane, were regarded by the informant as criminal:

A: I’m going to do some kind of an illegal activity and if he’s going to walk away from it or not and –

Q: All right. Let’s talk about that for a minute. You’re going to do some kind of illegal activity. This activity you’re doing isn’t a crime, is it?

A: It’s not crime, but it’s not normal to do it either.

Q: Okay. Suspicious activity, is that fair to say?

A: Yes.⁵¹⁴

510 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 145.

511 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 131.

512 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 131.

513 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 383.

514 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 383.

The slipperiness of the concept of “suspicious activity” could keep the informant on Bujol’s tail, because the informant needed some indication of abnormal behavior to continue his pursuit.

The FBI mirroring process made it seem as if the informant were the “good Muslim” and Bujol the “bad Muslim.” In other words, although they are mirror images in terms of religion—a as Szpunar puts it, the informant is a “wolf in wolf’s clothing,” who *plays* a criminal to hide in the suspect’s life—only one is innocent from the corrupting influence of radicalism.⁵¹⁵ The informant explains during his questioning by the prosecution, “there is [sic] bad Muslims, not because they’re Muslims; it’s just because they’re bad.”⁵¹⁶ The prosecutor asked the informant whether it was morally viable to investigate Muslims, in order to assuage the guilt of the judge, who might wonder about entrapment:

Q: Okay. And do you have any moral or ethical issues about investigating other Muslims or people of the Islamic religion?

A: No.

Q: And why is that?

A: Any religion and any race have good people and bad people.⁵¹⁷

Bujol was further painted as a bad Muslim because the original tip of his activity in the “nexus” of terrorism came from a member of the Prairie View University mosque. The FBI incentivizes the informants to be “good Muslims,” to get difficult information out of “bad Muslims”:

Q: Okay. So you’re getting paid on information that you give the FBI; and that’s a monetary system that’s dependent on how hard it was to get the information?

A: Yes, sir.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁵ Szpunar, “Premediating Predisposition,” 374.

⁵¹⁶ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 355.

⁵¹⁷ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 364.

⁵¹⁸ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 363.

In other words, the deeper “in” a “good Muslim” is in the field, the higher financial reward. The mirroring between the two (the CHS and Bujol) mean the FBI and Hittner can more easily discern a dichotomy: a perverted, refracted image of Muslimhood v. a straight-laced, model Muslimhood reflected back at them.

A key part of counterterrorism’s politics of degradation is using past criminality to further incriminate suspects. Not only did the informant hide in Bujol’s life through their meeting in prison, but the FBI used Bujol’s past crimes to capture or delay him and his wife repeatedly. The collusion between the police, FBI, and intelligence centers thus comes into focus. The police ticketed Ernestine Johnson when unloading her child—momentarily double-parking—so they could get her identificatory information. Johnson’s charge for housing subsidies fraud was used in the trial as an indication, according to the JTTF worker who wrote the affidavit, that the family had a history of false identification and false official statements.⁵¹⁹ The police arrested Bujol for outstanding traffic warrants in Katy, TX on a day he was carrying his backpack so they could look through it.⁵²⁰ Because Bujol had not been able to find stable work, they believed his listing his profession as an owner of a window-washing company was false. Szpunar puts it plainly: “The pre- or overdetermination of predisposition is further compounded... by the way in which the racial formations of the War on Terror intersect with those of mass incarceration.”⁵²¹

Because of the transferential dynamic, Bujol becomes subject to humiliation, an internalized, smarting embarrassment for his past, as retribution for his crime. During the interview in jail, Bujol looks back on himself as a fool: “I truly believe now that it was a

519 Dane Schiller, “Hempstead Man Charged with Trying to Aid al-Qaeda,” *Houston Chronicle*, June 4, 2010, <http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/Hempstead-man-charged-with-trying-to-aid-1597634.php>. Sean McCaroll, “United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr. Ernestine Johnson: Criminal Complaint,” United States District Courts, Southern District of Texas, May 24, 2010.

520 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 91.

521 Szpunar, “Premediating Predisposition,” 375.

blessing for me to have been incarcerated, because only God knows where or how things could have wound up. I'm just glad I was saved from what I was, a fool looking for answers with no clue about the reality of life and the reality of people in a faraway place.”⁵²² The uneven distribution of humiliation—that the FBI and informant show no remorse for their involvement—shows that counterterrorism helps maintain state institutions’ unflinching monopoly on violence. As Michel Foucault notes, humiliation has long been an aim of Western systems of discipline and punishment. The spectacular optics of punishment in seventeenth century Europe meant that the harm caused by a criminal had to be publicly applied “to the body of the guilty person in the form of humiliation and pain.”⁵²³ Evolving disciplinary punishment in eighteenth and nineteenth century in Europe was based in making “the slightest departures from correct behaviour subject to punishment,” so that humiliation would be felt in any change from accepted behavior.⁵²⁴

The War on Terror has mobilized degradation as retribution for myriad *connections* to terrorism rather than just as punishment for terrorist *acts*. Public humiliation of terrorists reached fever pitch in the Bush era, most memorably when the Army displayed an enlarged image of the face of dead Iraqi al-Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 2006 during a press conference in Baghdad. In 2014, Obama described the US’s counterterrorism strategy: “degrade and destroy.” Bujol’s case demonstrates that making even a *suspected* terrorist look stupid in public, and internalize an image of him or herself as foolish and childish, is an integral part of the US’s system of punishment in the War on Terror.

522 Hussain, “Texas Man Talks About Going from HP to an al-Qaeda Sting.”

523 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 56.

524 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 178.

Highlighting

The mirroring and humiliation of Bujol targets black social consciousness, for part and parcel of what the FBI calls Bujol's "radicalization" contains a powerful critique of US imperialism, born from Bujol's discomfort with both white supremacy and militarism. Bujol later recounts in his interview with the *Intercept*:

When I started seeing the carnage of things like drones, I felt like I was somehow to blame. Like my simply being here and paying taxes contributed to the deaths of innocent men, women and children. What really hurt was seeing pictures of the charred bodies of little girls. I have two small daughters. I can't speak for how other people felt, but I suppose if they saw what I saw they'd feel how I felt.⁵²⁵

The FBI informant told Bujol that the informant was sent to the US to attack military bases, so Bujol emailed him information about a Predator drone missile system located in San Angelo, Texas.⁵²⁶ Bujol and the informant used the term "elephants" to describe the drone operators and "zoo" to refer to the drone base. Bujol tried to contextualize his relationship with al-Awlaki as a mentorship that was not based in radicalization but spiritual teaching.⁵²⁷

Bujol's case cannot be dissociated from the figure of the black Muslim terrorist who becomes dangerous by teaching himself. In a notable example, Showtime's series *Sleeper Cell* is about a black Muslim informant who infiltrates a terrorist cell in Los Angeles and foils a plot to blow up Dodger Stadium. The series shows viewers that radicalization in prison takes place when prisoners pick up and study the writings from the Nation of Islam.⁵²⁸ Evoking the figure of the learned black Muslim radical, the prosecution mentioned that Bujol included an image of Malcolm X in his goodbye video, which he created before the sting operation and addressed to his wife. The *potential* for learning

⁵²⁵ Hussain, "Texas Man Talks About Going from HP to an al-Qaeda Sting."

⁵²⁶ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr. third transcript, 449-450.

⁵²⁷ United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr. 227-228, second transcript

⁵²⁸ See Sasha Torres, "Black (Counter)terrorism," *American Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2013): 171-176.

becomes threatening. Bujol describes how he wanted to gather information for himself, beyond official sanction:

I also wanted to look and see what these people were about firsthand, then draw my own conclusions. I wanted to learn, but I was never committed to any group or to any plot. Looking back on it, I think from the moment [the government] introduced him to me in jail, while I was there for a few days due to the traffic warrant, their approach was all about, “How can we lock this guy up?” Instead of, “What does this guy really want?”⁵²⁹

This exploration was all the more important to him because he was confronted with cultural and racial barriers within the Muslim communities in which he participated. He found that they were not “able to answer the questions I began to have.”⁵³⁰

In recent years, the FBI has emphasized that the internet is a corrupting, dangerous medium for terrorism recruitment, especially as concerned Anwar al-Awlaki. Al-Awlaki demonstrated that al-Qaeda can disseminate its knowledge and influence in more undetectable ways—seemingly activating any “lone wolf” attacker who sits alone in his or her home. According to Michael McCaul, Chairman of the House Committee on National Security, this susceptibility to influence through online learning in “our” communities, contaminates the knowledge of “our” young Muslim people. In an op-ed about Bujol, McCaul defends a Congressional hearing he called about the threat of extremism in the Muslim community: “It is unfortunate that some have attempted to mischaracterize this hearing as an attack on American Muslims. To the contrary, it is al Qaeda that is attacking our Muslim youth. Al Qaeda had made it clear they are targeting Muslim-Americans.” Because Bujol’s case shows the link between terrorism and Islam, McCaul writes, “This week our committee will end the era of political correctness and begin respectfully asking

529 Hussain, “Texas Man Talks About Going from HP to an al-Qaeda Sting.”

530 Hussain, “Texas Man Talks About Going from HP to an al-Qaeda Sting.”

the necessary questions that may ultimately protect every American.”⁵³¹ In other words, so McCaul’s logic goes, because al-Qaeda is responsible for perverting peaceful Muslims, surveillance of Muslims is common sense. The threat is not just the double of a good, moderate Muslim (the bad Muslim), but that anti-American sentiment will spread like an online virus throughout the Muslim population. In other words, threat diffusion is itself the threat.

The rhetoric of predisposition to terrorism justifies premeditative FBI intervention. As government prosecutor McIntyre urged in his closing statement, “The fact is this defendant was predisposed to go fight al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. And the confidential source in this case simply offered him a vehicle to get overseas and do what he always wanted to do, which is commit jihad.”⁵³² McCaul and FBI analyst Cannon’s rhetoric similarly locate the threat of terrorism in the very suggestibility of black Muslims to the savvy rhetorical influence of people like al-Awlaki. The *potential* for openness to anti-American knowledge thus becomes cause for racial profiling. We arrive at a perverse justification for preemptive racial capture: *because* Muslims identify with other Muslims, they should be monitored.

TRACES OF ENTRAPMENT

Piotr Szipunar summarizes the circular logic of many of the FBI’s terrorism cases: “In short, only terrorists would conspire to commit terrorism, a tautology that precludes the possibility of entrapment.”⁵³³ The legal definition of entrapment does not encapsulate the ways in which each terrorism case contains *traces* of entrapment: the *reproduction* of

531 Michael McCaul, “Rep. McCaul Op-Ed in the Hill: Why We Need to Investigate Radicalization,” *Homeland Security Committee*, March 9, 2011, <https://homeland.house.gov/press/rep-mccaul-op-ed-hill-why-we-need-investigate-radicalization/>.

532 United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr., 676-677.

533 Szipunar, “Premediating Predisposition,” 375.

an always already suggestible black Muslim who complies with law enforcement and counterterrorism. This chapter demonstrates that entrapment is the larger phenomenon of capturing of black Muslim bodies, regarded as *a priori* criminal. In this sense, the ways state institutions monitor black people is, from the start, an historic project predicated on capture. Szpunar argues that an informant goes beyond letting things happen passively, but he/she actively “makes things happen.”⁵³⁴ Jeremy Packer reiterates that state institutions algorithmically *produce* terrorist subjects.⁵³⁵

However, this chapter shows there would be no active state production if all those involved were not first and foremost *suggestible*, or inescapably vulnerable to influence. That is, the informant system operates on the ground of an unshakeable passivity to unconscious manipulation. Terrorist subjects are produced through an *inducing* of action via what Davis calls a “bastard form” of rhetoric: suggestion.⁵³⁶ She writes, “Unlike political persuasion, suggestion is an improper rhetoric, a bastard form that induces action (or attitude) without properly persuading, a directly suasive ‘discourse’ that defies the presumed distance between self and other, evading cognitive discretion and so all possibility for deliberation.”⁵³⁷ Suggestibility “involves a nonrepresentable and each time originary identification that takes place behind the back and beyond the reach of critical faculties.”⁵³⁸ This would mean that prosecutions of terrorists suspects can only retroactively testify to criminal intentions. Prosecutions locate motivating factors in the mind and body of a suspect rather than in the *ambiguous, relational dynamic* between suggestible not-quite-subjects like the informant and suspect’s tenuous friendship.

534 Szpunar, “Premediating Predisposition,” 375.

535 Jeremy Packer, “Homeland Subjectivity: The Algorithmic Identity of Security,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 4, no. 2 (2007): 211-215.

536 Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 33.

537 Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 33.

538 Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 32.

Suggestibility, the openness to the toxic influence of transference, demonstrates the untenability of the FBI's distinction between intrusive and un-intrusive influence on others. FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit counterintelligence officers explain the difference between "influence" and "manipulation" when it comes to recruiting informants:

The BAP (Behavioral Analysis Program) team regards influence as inducing someone to want to do something they may not otherwise have desired to do. These persons also will continue to have positive feelings about both what they did and the individual for whom they did it. Manipulation is similar in that you induce people to do something they may not otherwise have done, but it differs in that they later will regret having done it and will have negative feelings toward you for inducing them to do it. The team believes in crafting positive engagements with individuals so that even if the person we seek cooperation from declines, they still will walk away from the engagement feeling better for having met the agent.⁵³⁹

Here, influence is distinguished from manipulation based on retroactive *feelings*. If a commissioned person begins to feel negatively about what they were asked to do, then the FBI *manipulated* that individual. If the informant feels positively about their encounters and actions, the FBI *influenced* him or her. What gets written out of the neat distinction between influence and manipulation is the possibility that the influencing of informants is, by default, an attempt to produce positive affects (and thus to manipulate affiliations and identifications). For instance, the CHS in Bujol's case testified that he was pleased capturing "bad" Muslims, but the pleasure derives from his own experiences becoming-captured-and-commissioned by the FBI. Perhaps the standard for ethical behavior for the FBI, then, should be removing its toxicity of influence (the *tainting* of actions with seemingly "less coercive" touches), irreducible to any one suspect or informant's personal feelings.⁵⁴⁰

539 Dreeke, "FBI Counterintelligence Division's Behavioral Analysis Program."

540 "Federal Bureau of Investigation, Counterterrorism Division Behavioral Analysis Unit, Guantanamo Bay."

If every criminal case contains traces of law enforcement entrapment, one might debate practical matters: What should the police and FBI do when they catch wind of a planned activity that could harm people? For instance, had the FBI learned of the North Carolina white airport bomber Michael Estes' plans from his purchases from an REI store, how should they have responded? It is no question that white nationalist terrorism should be disrupted, yet these kinds of terrorism plans are not subject to the same level of public scrutiny. One might then be tempted to applaud how the police used a gentler, less intrusive scrutiny—calling to mind programs like violent jihad therapy—to convince Bujol to abandon any commitments to Anwar al-Awlaki. After arresting Bujol in New Jersey, two police officers showed Bujol the *9/11 Commission Report* to try to convince him that al-Awlaki is not a good person. Yet, to detain Bujol and assume his guilty intentions is to collapse his future into the “pressure cooker” of threat and force a decision from the FBI.⁵⁴¹ Even the call to speculate on Bujol's guilt or innocence means one can only at first apprehend him in the frame of criminality, which ignores all the systems that reproduce crime, including the criminal justice system itself.⁵⁴² I have therefore tried to coax out rather than resolve the complex sources of agency at work in the case.

CONCLUSION: REFLECTIONS ON THE CASE OF BARRY WALTER BUJOL, JR.

The analysis of transference in this chapter evokes a number of reflections, or ruminations. Reflecting on the curious transferential power in *US v. Bujol* plucks open the case's contents and welcomes their messy provocations. The case also reflects more fundamental questions of “who-ness,” of recognizing one-self under conditions of (behavioral) mirroring: Who is a terrorist? How are they produced? Who are those in need

⁵⁴¹ Massumi, *Ontopower*, 97.

⁵⁴² See McCann, *The Mark of Criminality*.

of protection from terrorism? Finally, this case reflects back on rhetorical scholarship. Who are “we” and what might we study differently considering suggestive influence through transference? How might our concepts of rhetorical agency be re-thought? I conclude by considering two overall consequences for rhetorical theory that seem apparent from this chapter’s sleuthing.

First, the case of Bujol presents us again with the “riddle” of indirect influence, as Freud put it. Davis articulates a task that rhetorical theory might take up: “It seems to me that Freud presents rhetorical studies with another, equally important task: to think the limits of reason by tracking the implications—for society, for politics, for ethics—of a radically generalized rhetoricity that precedes and exceeds symbolic intervention.”⁵⁴³ A key implication for society, politics, and ethics is that suasion is the result of public feeling, irreducible to one’s own personal feelings. Anxious love-attachments entice like gravitational pulls, and the powerful force of transference in rhetorical relations should be further probed. As Davis writes, “What suggestibility suggests, in other words, is that identification is not simply rhetoric’s most fundamental aim; it’s also and therefore rhetorical theory’s most fundamental *problem*.”⁵⁴⁴ The problem of transference returns rhetorical theorists to the task of apprehending and articulating *indirect* persuasion, or the subtle emotional ties that bind. Such a task, if it were taken up, must answer the challenge issued by Frantz Fanon: because blackness is “phobogenic,” a “stimulus to anxiety,” scholarship must submit psychoanalytic interpretation to the particularities of black psychic life.⁵⁴⁵ This chapter contributes to scholarship at the intersection of indirect influence and blackness by analyzing the transferential toxicity between black Muslims and the FBI—a deeply unsettling emotional structure of tethering decades in the making.

⁵⁴³ Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 36.

⁵⁴⁴ Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 34.

⁵⁴⁵ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 117.

Second, the reading presents us with the question of how to decathect from hypnosis' suasive force. Bujol was not just a passive spectator, *fully* susceptible to FBI influence without any agentive capacities or resistances. Thinking about resistance to hypnosis in the context of racial surveillance, one cannot help but think about Jordan Peele's 2017 hit horror film *Get Out*. In the film, a white hypnotherapist Missy Armitage (Catherine Keener) hypnotizes Chris Washington (Daniel Kaluuya), the boyfriend of Missy's daughter Rose (Alison Williams), with a silver teaspoon and tea cup. The hypnosis puts Chris in the "sunken place," an imprisoned subconscious state in which black victims are submerged and controlled. In the sunken place, trapped men and women are silenced—a form of incarceration that mimics oppression. The ringing sound of Missy's spoon hitting the side of the teacup makes her victims re-submit. When Chris becomes physically captured and tethered to a chair in the basement of the parents' home, where Missy and her husband Dean (Bradley Whitford) plan to transfer a white individual into Chris' body, Chris escapes by stuffing his ears with filling from the seat and pretending to be under the hypnotist's influence. Chris becomes impervious to suggestions, no longer subject to the racist, murderous family's orders.

Chris's tactic is a moment of what Simone Browne names "dark sousveillance," a material, intellectual resourcefulness used to foster black escape from surveillant capture.⁵⁴⁶ Dark sousveillance "charts possibilities and coordinates modes of responding to, challenging, and confronting a surveillance that was almost all-encompassing."⁵⁴⁷ Its charting of potential responses operates "undersight" from normalized institutional visibility.⁵⁴⁸ In *Get Out*, Chris smashes the teacup coolly and murders the hypnotherapist,

⁵⁴⁶ Browne, *Dark Matters*, 21.

⁵⁴⁷ Browne, *Dark Matters*, 21.

⁵⁴⁸ Browne, *Dark Matters*, 21.

much to the delight of theater audiences. Yet, real-life revolts against the premediated influence of white supremacy are met with less public joy.

Rhetorical theory is confronted, again and again, with the question of how to resist the ways white supremacy digs its transferential hooks into black people to remote control them. Improvising tactics of dark sousveillance is especially important given the ways US counterterrorism's anxious infrastructure criminalizes black social consciousness. A leaked FBI counterterrorism unit report from August 2017 names "black identity extremists" as a violent threat: "The FBI assesses it is very likely Black Identity Extremist (BIE) perceptions of police brutality against African Americans spurred an increase in premeditated, retaliatory lethal violence against law enforcement and will very likely serve as justification for such violence."⁵⁴⁹ To fashion "dark sousveillance" means contextualizing what is called "radicalization." Questions of *what or who authors* radicalization have important implications for the ethics of counterterrorism. Past criminalizations of black intellectualism and activism reverberate in present-day FBI practices and make black Americans more susceptible to encountering untrustworthy doubles, paid to rat one another out to the police.⁵⁵⁰ As Bujol notes in his concluding comments to the court, it was an "error" to have "trusted" the informant.⁵⁵¹ His position of humiliation—the "bad" Muslim to the informant's "good" Muslim—produces a lingering consciousness of injustice and, ultimately, agency over his choice to trust the informant. Opening up the question of suggestive influence means we can more urgently ask who bears the affective weight of the signifier "terrorist."

549 "Leaked FBI Report Cites 'Black Identity Extremists' as Terror Threat," *DemocracyNow!*, October 9, 2017, https://www.democracynow.org/2017/10/9/headlines/leaked_fbi_report_cites_black_identity_extremists_as_terror_threat.

550 On one such egregious case, see Arun Kundnani, Emily Keppler, and Muki Najaer, "How One Man Refused to Spy on Fellow Muslims for the FBI—and Then Lost Everything," *The Nation*, October 14, 2014, <https://www.thenation.com/article/how-one-man-refused-spy-fellow-muslims-fbi-and-then-lost-everything/>.

551 *United States of America v. Barry Walter Bujol, Jr.*, 684.

Chapter Seven:

Security Stupidity

“Is there not a suspicion, an anxiety, that you, a fugitive from stupidity, are on the verge of being caught (finally) by some smart bomb heading for your house?”

- Avital Ronell, *Stupidity*

INTRODUCTION⁵⁵²

This chapter zooms out further to consider counterterrorism on a meta-level. I argue that the discourse of US counterterrorism operates on the ground of “security stupidity.” I conceptualize this condition *not* as a pejorative epithet (as it is commonly used), but instead the *transcendental* limits of knowledge that underwrite securitization, or discursive figurations of life in terms of security threats. Positing limits to knowledge as a precondition for thinking and communicating in US counterterrorism may seem a banal admission. Indeed, uncertainty is considered a given in related intelligence operations. Nonetheless, to explore these limits as “stupidity” opens up implications for security studies, critical discourse studies, and poststructuralist accounts of war. Most critically, staging an encounter between security, intelligence, and stupidity generates a pressing question concerning security discourses: What if a threat were not a gap in information that could be filled by a knowing subject, but instead formed an encounter with difference arising from a person, community, or nation that threatens that subject with awareness of its own stupidity? Exploring this question establishes the war on terror as a discursively configured *war against stupidity*—a violent struggle over how American counterterrorism intelligence, public officials, law enforcement, and citizens can appear more intelligent in the face of inevitable limitations to their knowledge. Securitization thus comes into focus as a series of discursive tactics performed by security actors in order to preserve their epistemological authority. This chapter subsequently explores how the discourses of US

⁵⁵² Portions of this chapter were published in the *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*: Marnie Ritchie, “Security Stupidity,” *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 12, no. 4 (2017): 349-365.

counterterrorism attempt to close the appearance of the nation's gaps in what is known against a terrorist figure depicted as increasingly moronic.

Counterterrorism operations produce discursive struggles over innumerable scenes of stupidity. According to Avital Ronell's *Stupidity*, the European Enlightenment historically reduced stupidity to the figure of *error in thinking*, a deficit in knowledge repaired by acquisition of more information. Rather than reduce stupidity in this way, or baldly assert that "*this* [example] is stupidity," Ronell writes that stupidity names a *non*-relation, a disjuncture, or a *limit* in/of existence.⁵⁵³ In other words, stupidity refers to an experience of finitude in knowing, arising from a manifestation of alterity or difference. Conceived in this way, stupidity would not name the *opposite* of intelligence, as it has in traditional formulations. Instead, stupidity *conditions* intelligence, underwriting its pursuit by interrupting premature assertion of certitudes. This conception is important, Ronell argues, because "the relatedness of stupidity to intelligence and, of possibly greater consequence, the status of modulations, usages, crimes, and valuations of stupidity itself remain to a large degree absent from the concerns of contemporary inquiry."⁵⁵⁴

The trope of stupidity has been a mainstay of national security discourse in the post-WWII era, and is readily visible in the post-9/11 era. For example, the 9/11 Commission's Report contains several related images, including: the failure of U.S. security officials to anticipate the attack; the inability of intelligence analysts to reduce human bias; the incongruity of an untrained American public tasked with sensing threats; the general ignorance among Americans of foreign policy concerns, and the dubious status of the war on terror. To this list, we might add President Barack Obama's unofficial foreign policy of "Don't do stupid shit," mainstream discussion of "low-tech" terrorists who do not need

⁵⁵³ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 73.

⁵⁵⁴ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 37.

much tactical knowledge or material support to be dangerous, and ISIS members trading insults online with President Donald Trump about who is dumber. Considering the extent to which attributions of stupidity—and defenses against those attributions—figure into national security discourse, especially after intelligence failures, we may conclude that not enough critical attention has been directed to this feature.

This chapter thus re-visits two discursive scenes of stupidity that have troubled US national security in the past 20 years, surrounding its inability to “connect the dots” before 9/11. The first scene involves the enhanced authorization of US decision-makers, intelligence analysts, and citizen-subjects to avoid overlooking threats by closing information gaps, eliminating human bias, and activating “gut” knowledge. The second involves the figure of the stupid terrorist, who is too low-tech, immature, and erratic to credibly challenge US authority. The purpose of this re-visitation is to illuminate the double movement in which public discourse reestablishes the US counterterrorism actor as the “subject supposed to know,” a subject position that subsequently claims the sovereign authority of delimiting what is knowable and unknowable.⁵⁵⁵ In related controversy, this subjectivity performs as if its knowledge-power cannot be usurped by others. This performance is consequential because, with the presumed authority to distinguish what is knowable and unknowable comes the authority to mark off who is welcome and unwelcome within a community, or to attain perceived freedom from foreign influence.⁵⁵⁶

To glean the ongoing constitution of the unfoolish subject of security, this chapter reads “bodies of nonknowledge,” defined here as discourses that announce the limits of knowledge, and that teeter on the edge of revealing an individual and community’s

⁵⁵⁵ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 137.

⁵⁵⁶ See Jacques Derrida, “The Transcendental ‘Stupidity’ (‘Bêtise’) of Man and the Becoming-Animal According to Deleuze,” in *Derrida, Deleuze, Psychoanalysis*, ed. Erin Ferris and Gabriele Schwab, 35-60 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

stupidity.⁵⁵⁷ This chapter reads the presumption of renewed authority to know security threat against stupid others in a wide array of public discourse events, each of which forms a crucial node of nonknowledge in the post-9/11 security environment. These events include assessments of information gaps developed in the 9/11 Commission Report, and the fateful August 6, 2001 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Daily Presidential Brief memo “Bin Ladin [sic] Determined to Strike in US.”⁵⁵⁸ These events enfold other, related topics, including human bias in predictive technologies like datamining, and the inactive “gut” of the American public, whose snap judgments must (allegedly) become more decisive. The discourse of the dumber terrorist further props up a one-sided construction of intelligence authority. Intelligence failures arising from interaction with a “dumb” enemy create the need for compensatory public discourse which ritually defends and reasserts the primacy of a Western security epistemology. This chapter thus analyzes those texts that grapple most with the inevitability of knowing subjects *missing something* in their assessment of security threats.

Two related implications spring from this chapter’s grounding in stupidity, both of which concern *ethics*. First, stupidity emerges as an unshakeable critique arising from *within* Western security discourses, which exclusively privilege the preservation of Western forms of life and value systems [e.g., in framing of the war on terror as a clash of civilizations].⁵⁵⁹ The emerging implication here is the importance of *de-centering* one-sided Western security discourse through hearing what Ronell describes as an ethic of stupidity “before the other.” This ethic recognizes one’s moral implications in forms of stupidity while acknowledging that one’s knowledge is inevitably subject, *a priori*, to

⁵⁵⁷ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 21.

⁵⁵⁸ “Bin Ladin Determined to Strike in US,” Central Intelligence Agency, April 10, 2014, <https://fas.org/irp/cia/product/pdb080601.pdf>.

⁵⁵⁹ See Steven Ratuva, “Subalternization of the Global South: Critique of Mainstream ‘Western’ Security Discourses,” *Cultural Dynamics* 28, no. 2 (2016): 211–228.

nonknowledge.⁵⁶⁰ As a critical device, then, stupidity demonstrates the limitations of the US security apparatus to actualize its paradigms, because stupidity constantly frustrates its “striving to realize its imaginary potential.”⁵⁶¹ In this striving, threats are depicted in US public discourse as imagined lapses in information, patterns that can be predicted in advance, and objects of gut-feeling suspicion. Such framings permit security actors to avoid full confrontation with the embarrassing indeterminacy of their threat-related knowledge.

Second, studying stupidity underscores the extent to which communication scholars should reevaluate Western academic models for how they perpetuate the figure of “the subject supposed to know.” As Ronell argues, to write reflectively about stupidity—and even more to *admit upfront* that one does not know—is unconventional and threatens our academic credentials. Similarly, stupidity is deployed by cultural speakers as a gendered, racialized, and ableist term, and by Western powers to condescend to the rest of the world.⁵⁶² If stupidity were instead figured as a *precondition for* thinking, rather than an indictment of select identities, the term might push back against those who rely on its degrading power. Westerncentric knowledge-production can thus be challenged by foregrounding “the subject not supposed to know and who doesn’t suppose it knows.”⁵⁶³

In what follows I first review literature related to stupidity, national security epistemology, and discourse. The review seeks to highlight the new ways in which national security comes to know threats. I then analyze how the US intelligence apparatus discursively appears smarter in the areas of gaps, biases, and gut-knowledge. I contrast that movement with discourse that treats terrorists as the dumb other. Though stupidity

⁵⁶⁰ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 60.

⁵⁶¹ Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 10.

⁵⁶² Ronell, *Stupidity*, 39.

⁵⁶³ Diane Davis, “Responsible Stupidity,” *Postmodern Culture* 14, no. 1 (2003).

<http://pmc.iath.virginia.edu/issue.903/14.1davis.html>.

underwrites national security discourse, it also implicates scholarship about national security discourse. I explore, then, how the mimicking of a knowing stance between security discourse and public scholarship answers the call of stupidity. I end by suggesting that poststructuralist theories can be put in productive dialogue with critical discourse studies.

NATIONAL SECURITY STUPIDITY

Here, I consider how stupidity has been historically maligned by a dominant Western rationality figured as the source for judgment. I then explain how stupidity underwrites securitization and propose that security stupidity courses through national security discourses.

Stupidity

Ronell writes that since the Enlightenment, reason has tried to “detach” from stupidity, to mark itself off from thoughts or feelings that threaten clarity, certainty, and logic.⁵⁶⁴ One of the most pernicious effects of this tradition is that stupidity becomes reduced to “the figure of error,” a hiccup on the way to clear thinking.⁵⁶⁵ Stupidity cannot be reduced to a correctable glitch, however, because stupidity is – as Ronell wryly notes – not that stupid. Nothing is stupidity *as such* for Ronell, because stupidity is not a substance with an essence. Rather, “[s]tupidity has to do with our nature as finite beings; it is the limit of the limit—the limited—a mark of our temporal condition in and as lapse.”⁵⁶⁶ Stated differently, Ronell traces a *transcendental* stupidity, an unshakeable, shared social

⁵⁶⁴ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 23.

⁵⁶⁵ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 20.

⁵⁶⁶ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 73.

exposure to the finitude of a being's existence. Stupidity subsequently operates as a *condition* of communication, knowledge, and intelligence. To claim that stupidity underwrites all efforts to know invites re-thinking *how thinking happens*: in the “absence of a relation to knowing.”⁵⁶⁷ Subjective encounters with stupidity can take many aesthetic forms. These forms include bewilderment, nonunderstanding, bluntness, assertiveness, arrogance, lack of judgment, missed encounters, idiotism, immaturity, dumbness, speechlessness, stupor, surprise, and ineptitude. Importantly, to say that stupidity is the ground on which knowledge arises is not the same as saying nothing can be known. Instead, knowledge arises only from stupidity's temporal *lapse*—that is, from the *incapacity* to ever *fully* understand, assimilate, render judgment, or explain oneself. This incapacity means that language can only describe stupidity imperfectly.⁵⁶⁸

Rendering stupidity as an error in thinking thus props up the fiction of the “subject supposed to know” (*sujet supposé savoir*), one who poses as the source and recipient of absolute knowledge, and who is thus declared immune from stupidity.⁵⁶⁹ This term derives from psychoanalytic theory, and denotes a subject position dependent on performing that *it alone* knows what can be known. Inherent in this posture is a sovereign right to designate what is knowable and unknowable. The position is not altogether avoidable or dubious, because individuals and groups usefully assume the role of authority figures in order to advance ideas and enact desires, like teachers in classrooms. Yet, there is danger in how the subject supposed to know can congeal into a hardened, transcendent, as-if natural state.⁵⁷⁰ There can develop a violent impulse in this subject's presumption that it can purge stupidity by figuring it as a correctable error, or that what it knows cannot, for right or

⁵⁶⁷ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 5.

⁵⁶⁸ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 29.

⁵⁶⁹ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 137.

⁵⁷⁰ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 248.

wrong, become undone by others.

Ronell traces how an ethic of stupidity can undercut the primary figure of knowledge, the subject of Western logos. Stupidity “calls for an ethics,”⁵⁷¹ or more precisely an ethical relation that would announce upfront, “I am stupid before the other.”⁵⁷² It is not that the ethic of “I am stupid before the other” acts *opposite* “of whatever it opposes, say, provisionally, intelligence.”⁵⁷³ Stupidity and intelligence are not a dialectical pair. Rather, stupidity *both* threatens *and* provides the unstable grounds on which the “subject supposed to know” stands. Stupidity writes below *and* with intelligence, all the while halting and propelling judgment.

While national security discourses perform intelligence about threats, stupidity has been unexplored in related studies of security discourse. I next delimit how securitization, the discursive framing of social life that privileges the order and stability of both individuals and communities, relies on the unstable ground of a non-relation to knowledge.

Security Stupidity

I argue that “stupidity” forms a transcendental limit that underwrites securitization, defined here as the global tendency to enfold of all facets of life into the terms of security threats.⁵⁷⁴ As Joel Rasmussen writes, securitization “is the process in which security measures are established in place of previous policies and routines,” such as migration, poverty, health, and the environment.⁵⁷⁵ The intersection of security, intelligence, and

⁵⁷¹ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 40.

⁵⁷² Ronell, quoted in Davis, “Confessions of an Anacoluthon,” 268.

⁵⁷³ Ronell, quoted in Davis, “Confessions of an Anacoluthon,” 268.

⁵⁷⁴ Hamilton Bean, *No More Secrets: Open Source Information and the Reshaping of US Intelligence* (Denver, CO: Praeger, 2011), 121.

⁵⁷⁵ Joel Rasmussen, ““Should Each of us Take over the Role as Watcher?”: Attitudes on Twitter Towards the 2014 Norwegian Terror Alert,” *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 10, no. 2 (2015): 199.

stupidity leads us to ask: *What if a threat that breaches security were not a void, a blank spot in information that could merely be colored in?* This question is relevant because invoking uncertainty while *reaffirming the authority* of security actors to know a threat has become a driving force behind what Barbara Biesecker describes as the 21st century “cryptology of terror.”⁵⁷⁶ For example, former U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s infamous rendition of “knowns” and “unknowns” in counterterrorist policymaking exemplified the signature gesture of the war on terror: “a stylization of war through which the specular was rendered spectral, uncertain, and indeterminate.”⁵⁷⁷ By rendering threats opaque to an untrained eye, state officials could assert a superior – and proprietary -- system for deciphering signs.

A threat may thus be better thought of as a *discursive construct* marking that which threatens to upset an individual’s and community’s sovereignty and create the ultimate reveal: this self and community are *stupid*. A threat is an unavoidable confrontation with alterity, with any external force of difference from a self. This figuration of threat does not mean that threats are not real; to the contrary, the idea that threats are confrontations with alterity captures that threats are all-too-real. Threats surprise and confound; the sudden appearance of an unexpected guest is traumatic. Part of the trauma of 9/11 is that the perpetrators could train for an attack on the sovereign soil of the US, “under the nose of the CIA and the FBI.”⁵⁷⁸ Terrorism upsets the security purchased by sovereignty, the authority to mark who is allowed in a home and attain independence from foreign influence. Derrida elaborates:

It is enough to admit that there is no finite living being, human or nonhuman, that wouldn’t be structured by this differential of forces... [s]tupidity is always

⁵⁷⁶ Biesecker, “No Time for Mourning.”

⁵⁷⁷ Biesecker, “No Time for Mourning,” 157.

⁵⁷⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 40.

necessarily on both sides, on the side of the who—man, ego—and the side of the what—the side of what happens to the one who poses himself as sovereign, free, etc., or on the side of what the free ego or sovereign denounces or attacks as the stupidity of the other.⁵⁷⁹

The sovereign authority to mark who is welcome depends on keeping up the performance of the “subject supposed to know.”⁵⁸⁰ Securitization demands subduing the appearance of stupidity, which makes each re-securitization perpetually open to ridicule.

The history of U.S. national security shows internal struggles to connect the dots, navigate institutional barriers and egos, and make educated guesses about threats. Contemporary US counterterrorism is arguably an iteration of the 1945 security state and remains mired in Cold War communication models emphasizing rational strategy and the imperatives of encoding and decoding information.⁵⁸¹ Indeed, the U.S. domestic homeland security apparatus affiliates with a network-centric paradigm, which relies on a “collect it all” method of data collection and analysis, and on the use of countermeasures that respond in real time to actionable knowledge.

It is important here to emphasize that many intelligence scholars deny that intelligence analysts working in counterterrorism cultivate omniscience and clairvoyance about the future. Indeed, threat assessment *performs* as if it has a great deal of humility. Brian Massumi writes that the push to make information decisive *even with its lapses* is precisely the point of the contemporary threat epistemology:

The stubborn epistemological fact of asymmetrical warfare is that there will be gaps in intelligence, essentially and necessarily. It is not about making space in war for reflection. It is about remaking the space of war, in absence of complete information and the leisure to reflect on it, in the pressure cooker of the time of threat.⁵⁸²

579 Derrida, “The Transcendental ‘Stupidity,’” 59.

580 Derrida, *Rogues*, 43.

581 See Hamilton Bean, “Strategic Communication and US National Security Affairs: Critical-Cultural and Rhetorical Perspectives,” in *Strategic Communication: New Agendas in Communication*, eds. A. Dudo and L. Kahlor, 112-132 (New York: Routledge, 2017); Masco, *The Theater of Operations*.

582 Massumi, *Ontopower*, 97.

In this formulation, military officials apparently believe that “[u]ncertainty can *be kept within bounds*, but not eliminated.”⁵⁸³ Threat assessment reinserts intelligence and information into the “pressure cooker” of the time of threat.⁵⁸⁴ Massumi writes, “It is not about information. It is about taking information to the edge. It is about making it ‘pointy’: a direct weapon of war.”⁵⁸⁵ Because of this movement to *close down* a space for reflection, intelligence agencies become responsible for current threat monitoring, which focuses on the virtual possibility for threat (e.g., depicted as perpetual *risk*). As Massumi writes, knowledge becomes “cognitive content, ready and waiting for conscious realization.”⁵⁸⁶

Because the virtual potential for terrorism is inextinguishable, security actors inevitably encounter limitations in multiplying knowledge-power. The epistemology of indeterminate threat translates into an institutional arrangement that makes it difficult to discern who is at fault for national security failures. For example, Dana Priest and William Arkin estimated in 2010 that there were at least 1,271 governmental organizations and 1,931 private companies that conducted work “related to counter-terrorism, homeland, security, and intelligence” across the US.⁵⁸⁷ Claims to authoritative knowledge from this apparatus are beset by various communication failures: false positives and negatives; law enforcement over-reaction; data-mines that catch the names of lawful US citizens; unclear civil liberties guidelines; faulty surveillance technologies; uninformed publics; outdated communication models; cognitive biases among analysts; insider leaks to the public; and information overload.

These difficulties of threat assessment have created a surfeit of security discourse about what is knowable and unknowable, who is smart and stupid, and what constitutes

⁵⁸³ Massumi, *Ontopower*, 101. My emphasis.

⁵⁸⁴ Massumi, *Ontopower*, 97.

⁵⁸⁵ Massumi, *Ontopower*, 99.

⁵⁸⁶ Massumi, *Ontopower*, 116.

⁵⁸⁷ Priest and Arkin, “A Hidden World.”

sufficient awareness to act. The rewriting of society as a security society happens through public discourses which utilize the tactic of calling the other stupid. More specifically, national security discourses craft a representation of alterity, or difference, with otherizing language (e.g., us-them dualities) to re-secure Western power and dominance. Critics of war communication have shown that the war on terror perpetuates itself by vilifying an ambiguous category of terrorists, while crafting a vulnerable US subject.⁵⁸⁸ Importantly, Ronell points out that war criminalizes perceived dumb decisions on a massive scale, i.e. the War on Drugs.⁵⁸⁹

In short, the discursive construct of the rogue terrorist provides legitimacy for practices of American exceptionalism. Western security discourses center Western interests by constructing asymmetrical discursive relations.⁵⁹⁰ For example, intelligence profiles flag foreign bodies through discursive choices emphasizing traits such as lack of intelligence, backwardness, and uncivilized tactics. Similarly, Hamilton Bean argues that Western discursive constructions of threat are based on a “communication-as-dominance” model, which *could* give way to a dialogic, critical perspective that recognizes the contingency of discourses.⁵⁹¹ Security stupidity thus creates an “excess of discourse” to offer diagnostics about how security fails.⁵⁹² This chapter now traces the excess of discourse surrounding two interrelated “bodies of nonknowledge” when “connecting the dots” after 9/11.

588 See Robert L. Ivie, “Hegemony, Instabilities, and Interventions: A Special Issue on Discourses of War and Peace,” *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 11, no. 2 (2016): 125–134.

589 Ronell, *Stupidity*, 3.

590 Ratuva, “Subalternization of the Global South.”

591 Bean, “Strategic Communication and US National Security Affairs,” 124.

592 Ronell, *Stupidity*, 186.

THE APPEARING-SMARTER OF US COUNTERTERRORISM

In what follows, I analyze national security discourses accounting for the tactical, intelligence, and policy failure to preempt 9/11. Ronell writes, “Neither a pathology nor an index as such of moral default, stupidity is nonetheless linked to the most dangerous failures of human endeavor.”⁵⁹³ According to a post-9/11 cryptology of terror, a fatal failure is the nation’s collective intelligence oversight. The hegemonic claim that intelligence communities, decision-makers, and private citizens did not “connect the dots” assumes that the information about al-Qaeda’s plan existed yet institutions lacked the proper channels to share that information. Security professionals and media outlets urged intelligence analysts, technologies, and citizens to become *smarter*, i.e. more informed about threats.

In response, I focus here on three dominant discourses of “appearing intelligent” that testify to this failure of preventing 9/11: *information gaps*, *human bias*, and *inactive guts*. The key texts displaying this discourse, respectively, include: texts that expose institutional hiccups like the 9/11 Commission Report and the bin Laden memo; predictive data-mining technology, particularly aviation software that catalogues passengers; and the imitative instincts of the American public reflected in Bush’s public persona and DHS pedagogical programs. Together, these texts show an extensive apparatus of threat indication across national security imagination, technology, and public pedagogy—three core facets of the post-9/11 intelligence infrastructure. Each discourse reestablishes a tight handle on US counterterrorism as a source of knowledge-power, while *reproducing* stupidity.

Rather than call the discourses and communities involved in this study stupid, my method is to read how the structure of stupidity potentially *unsettles and propels* a knowing

⁵⁹³ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 3.

subject, whose lapses in knowledge are figured *as threats themselves*. Rather than somehow master stupidity through the analysis, boasting each time to have found it, this method attempts to *open* texts to show how an exposure to stupidity haunts national security discourse and scholarship about it. Opening texts means ruminating on textual traces where security actors cannot quite re-suture intellectual authority after failures. For instance, it is unclear in the texts in question who is responsible for 9/11, how to prevent attacks through prediction's aggregation of information, and whether citizen gut-feeling can reliably determine threats. Collectively, this analysis attests to US national security and counterterrorism's "stupephobia, a terrific struggle against the stirrings of attunement, against an extimacy that would out you, too, as stupid."⁵⁹⁴ The reading method shows most fundamentally that counterterrorism stupephobia ensures there is inadequate space or time for *thinking*, defined here as the *interruption* of immediate programmatic reactions that the current threat epistemology tries to install.

Information Gaps

The failure to prevent 9/11 has bred a war on stupidity, complete with measures to snuff out any institutional misgivings that prevented governmental response before that day. Loch K. Johnson writes, "we [the US] were caught flatfooted."⁵⁹⁵ The US needed, according to Johnson, to "move quickly to strengthen our intelligence capabilities—the nation's 'first line of defense.'"⁵⁹⁶ The 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act created the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), locating the budget of several intelligence agencies under the DNI and the National Counterterrorism Center

⁵⁹⁴ Davis, "Responsible Stupidity."

⁵⁹⁵ Loch K. Johnson, "Preface," in *Bombs, Bugs, Drugs, and Thugs: Intelligence and America's Quest for Security* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), xi.

⁵⁹⁶ Johnson, "Preface," xi.

(NCTC). The intelligence community tries to increase the quality and quantity of information, as well as improve the flow of information between intelligence agencies, the FBI, law enforcement, local businesses, and communities. Inherent in these changes is the push for intelligence communities to appear more intelligent.

Though intelligence restructuring is not reducible to recommendations made by the 9/11 Commission Report,⁵⁹⁷ the Report remains perhaps the most well-known vocalization of 9/11 as a failure of imagination. The Report's well-known failure of imagination slogan, Falkenrath argues, is "almost indecipherable muddle,"⁵⁹⁸ because that particular section does not prescribe what the Clinton or Bush administrations could have imagined differently. In terms of cultivating the imagination necessary to protect the homeland, the Report singles out the briefing "Islamic Extremist Learns to Fly" as a failure: "Because the system was not tuned to comprehend the potential significance of this information, the news had no effect on warning."⁵⁹⁹ Here, we see how the report grapples with missing a crucial piece of information, because the estimate does not flag the information as politically significant.

Similarly, the infamous August 6, 2001 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Daily Presidential Brief memo "Bin Ladin [sic] Determined to Strike in US" speaks to stupidity as an *over*looking crucial information, whether due to neglect, busy-ness, buffoonery, or arrogance. The 9/11 Commission pushed to declassify the memo, believing it was an important warning ignored by the administration. The 9/11 Commission Report lists Richard Clarke's memo to Condoleezza Rice on January 25, 2001, where Clarke asks, "Are we serious about dealing with the al Qida threat?" A June 22 daily brief stated that an attack

597 Richard A. Falkenrath, "2004-2005. The 9/11 Commission Report: A Review Essay," *International Security* 29, no. 3 (2005): 170-190.

598 Falkenrath, "The 9/11 Commission Report," 178

599 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2004), 347.

could be imminent. The bin Laden memo states that bin Laden, since 1997, “has wanted to conduct terrorist attacks in the US.”⁶⁰⁰ Overlooking multiple warnings threatens to reveal the “near complete disconnect” between intelligence reporting and decision-making.⁶⁰¹ The Commission Report represents a regressive plumbing of who knew al-Qaeda’s plans, because these sources of disconnect haunt a security apparatus premised on controlling uncertainty.

All the same, administrative arrogance, which make it easier to connect the dots *after* a crisis, is often built into decision-making procedures. Cofer Black, then chief of the CIA’s counterterrorism center, explained the stupidity of patterns of thought about who the “enemy” is: “I think they were mentally stuck back eight years [before]. They were used to terrorists being Euro-lefties—they drink champagne by night, blow things up during the day, how bad can this be?”⁶⁰² Even if the intelligence confirms a threat, self-assured assertiveness can mute “just about everything that would seek to disturb its impervious hierarchies.”⁶⁰³ And yet, the embarrassment of underestimating a threat can demand an even stronger stupephobic reaction. While the Commission Report was not the “mouthpiece” of the Bush White House, Falkenrath claims that its recommendations for fighting terrorism *mimed* those already underway by the administration.⁶⁰⁴ In fact, implementations based on the Report accelerated an already-reactive Western security paradigm. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Progress Report on implementing the Commission’s recommendations details a number of programs to “strengthen the homeland.” Filling information gaps through reorganization reestablished the “self-assured

600 “Bin Ladin Determined to Strike in US.”

601 Falkenrath, “2004-2005,” 177.

602 Quoted in Chris Whipple, “The Attacks will be Spectacular,” *POLITICO*, November 12, 2015, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/11/cia-directors-documentary-911-bush-213353>.

603 Ronell, *Stupidity*, 3.

604 Falkenrath, “2004-2005,” 190.

assertiveness” of stupidity.⁶⁰⁵ While threats are now taken more seriously than Black’s comment about “Euro-lefties” terrorists, the seriousness with which intelligence agencies “train thought to detach from stupidity” invites investigation of its phobic hang-up’s.⁶⁰⁶

What the Report and memo showcase is perhaps stupephobia’s most haunting consequence: stupephobia invites the effects of stupidity that it tries to escape. For instance, the call by decision-makers to make intelligence products more decisive post-9/11 ironically precipitated a second significant intelligence failure. Complaints by intelligence consumers that the threats are not flagged with urgency can lead to the “sharpening” of intelligence reports that remove linguistic contingency.⁶⁰⁷ In the demand for more current intelligence after 9/11, acting chairman of the National Intelligence Council wanted the NIE “to avoid using mealy-mouthed qualifiers such as the words *maybe* or *probably* in the key judgments to keep the estimate from seeming to be useless ‘pabulum.’”⁶⁰⁸ As Betts notes, the sharper language indicated a decisive conclusion about WMD’s in Iraq in the October 2002 estimate. In other words, a subject’s posturing of authoritative certitude can expose that subject to a public unraveling of that knowledge.

The comforting *appearance* of intelligence closure promises to bring whatever is missing “out of its state of absence into unconcealedness.”⁶⁰⁹ The DHS Progress Report indicates security “progress” will happen renewed public and analytical understanding and awareness. Yet, non-understanding is not a “vanquishable object.”⁶¹⁰ Conceiving non-understanding as such, the institutional responses to the multiple acts of missing an alterity has rendered *in-determinancy* a threat to the nation-state. An exposure to stupidity plays

605 Ronell, *Stupidity*, 3.

606 Ronell, *Stupidity*, 23.

607 Richard K. Betts, *Enemies of Intelligence: Knowledge and Power in American National Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 157.

608 Betts, *Enemies of Intelligence*, 158.

609 Ronell, *Stupidity*, 101.

610 Ronell, *Stupidity*, 3.

out in security discourses beyond intelligence memos, in the areas of technology and security pedagogy.

Human Bias

Taking stock of the intelligence community after 9/11 brought renewed attention to the “human factor” in all intelligence analysis. The need to retroactively ease the embarrassment of missing the attack cultivates a drive for predictive technologies. A greater emphasis on numeric probabilities that estimate the certainty of intelligence conclusions, promises to, according to Alan Barnes, “make intelligence analysis *more intelligent*.”⁶¹¹ Betts elaborates: “The intelligence community in the past few years has undertaken a breathtaking array of training programs, conferences, and experiments aimed at making analysts confront unconscious biases and unscientific habits of mind.”⁶¹² Prediction itself is not problematic; as Derrida writes, animals can sense earthquakes before humans.⁶¹³ Yet, the elevation of prediction as a source of authoritative knowledge has produced a security apparatus that underestimates the bias inherent in prediction-based programs.

The highest profile case of predictive technology which becomes a reliable indication of knowledge is datamining. Keith Guzik critiques datamining for its extension of future-oriented preemptive power in the war on terror. Datamining finds patterns of behavior from previously neglected sources of data used in marketing: clickstreams, shopping carts, search terms on websites, and product registrations.⁶¹⁴ Guzik points to

611 Alan Barnes, “Making Intelligence Analysis more Intelligent: Using Numeric Probabilities,” *Intelligence and National Security* 31, no. 3 (2016), 327–244. My emphasis.

612 Betts, *Enemies of Intelligence*, 134.

613 Derrida, “The Transcendental ‘Stupidity,’” 56.

614 Keith Guzik, “Discrimination by Design: Predictive data mining as security practice in the United States’ ‘War on Terrorism,’” *Surveillance & Society* 7, no. 1 (2009): 9.

aviation software programs (CAPPS, CAPPS II, and Secure Flight) as just some of the programs using predictive analytics that ensure Middle Eastern and North African passengers can “not avoid being stopped.”⁶¹⁵

Because “false positives” are inherent in programs, the crushing burden of the intensified suspicion can more easily be regarded by critics as an error rather than the structure of nonknowledge of intelligence itself: the capturing of “unknowables” on suspicions. Within the discourse of threat-prediction in datamining, intelligence analysts can appear more intelligent by removing the appearance of bias and rhetorical mediation. Massumi argues that threat prediction ensures that the “ensuing action will have been cognitive *in effect*.”⁶¹⁶ Tracing the replication of stupidity reveals that bias, the missing-of knowledge based on personal feeling, is *still encoded* in the collecting and connecting more dots.

Inactive Gut

One of the most entrenched shifts in a counterterrorism assault on stupidity is locating intelligence in the commander in chief and American public’s suspicions. It was difficult in the post-9/11 patriotic surge and public shock to blame the Bush administration, or to “cry stupidity,” in part because Bush operated off an unassailable knowledge located in his gut. Bush’s gut was a plenitude of conviction. Jodi Dean argues, “Precisely because Bush doesn’t think so much as feel and pray and rely on his gut, he can know and be certain.”⁶¹⁷ Ronell writes that stupidity rushes to judgment, convinced it has all the

615 Guzik, “Discrimination by Design,” 12.

616 Massumi, *Ontopower*, 130.

617 Jodi Dean, “Evil’s Political Habitats,” *Theory and Event* 8, no. 2 (2005).

knowledge. Fundamentally, Bush's method of arriving at decisions became gradually assimilated by the intelligence infrastructure pedagogical programs.

That one does not have all the necessary information can paradoxically demand a rush to judgment from the gut, like the Bush administration's decision to go to war and the public's overwhelming immediate support. Over time, of course, the war would become rebranded by Obama's unofficial foreign policy of "Don't do stupid shit." The image of the ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as quagmires surfaces in their figuration as "cluster fucks," chaotic entanglements caused by converging stupidities. The wars became seen as a pet project of the administration, who operated off bad intelligence about WMD's in Iraq (intelligence that then Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet called a "slam dunk!") and failed to request intelligence assessments on what a post-Saddam Iraq would look like.⁶¹⁸ The image of Bush as an "idiot boy" would sediment over Bush's administration and become a metonymic sign for his foreign policy.

While national security institutions tout efficient and predictive tactics, the idea of intelligence-by-gut has been taken up and elaborated in various counterterrorism intelligence infrastructures, like the DHS's private sector outreach, public education programs like "If You See Something, Say Something," and infrastructure preparedness. In other words, American citizens cultivate informed gut-reactions that resemble the plenitude of Bush's deliberation. An *affective* form of knowledge has become a determinative factor in whether community members reported suspicious activity to law enforcement. Part of the epistemology of contemporary national security is that if something *feels* suspicious, it *is* suspicious. A host of pedagogical trainings posit the need for an informed citizen who can assimilate DHS's terrorism indicators and report them. The DHS Report that details the smarter intelligence apparatus after the Commission

⁶¹⁸ Betts, *Enemies of Intelligence*, 115-116.

Report states: “Protecting the nation is a shared responsibility and everyone can contribute by staying informed and aware of the threats the country faces.”⁶¹⁹ According to the Report’s narrative, inactive citizens are responsible for missing the terrorist plot.

Appearing more intelligent in the context of citizen-intelligence pedagogy means buying into the gut-level authenticity of threat prediction. Citizen-subjects can be subjects supposed to know by assuming the knowledge disseminated by DHS.

Appearing-Smarter

I explore how the subject supposed to know reappears in discourses related to gaps, biases, and guts. The internal war on stupidity premised on “connecting the dots” reduces stupidity to correctable *errors*. I have argued that stupidity should more productively be thought of as entrenched, unshakeable *exposures to limitations*. The model of intelligence error urges reorganization as a response to failure, which renders it difficult to hold anyone responsible for failing.⁶²⁰ Instead, stupidity calls for a renewed integration of theory. For example, Bean writes that putting critical-cultural perspectives and rhetorical theory into dialogue with security-based communication could generate accountability for ethical failings.⁶²¹ Most fundamentally, Bean argues that it is critical to “continually reconsider how the category of ‘terrorist’ is rhetorically constructed, maintained, or transformed.”⁶²² Inserting the discourse of stupidity into security studies highlights the arbitrariness of US counterterrorism threat-knowledge. Stupidity can operate as an internal critique of Western

619 “Implementing 9/11 Commission Recommendations: Progress Report,” *Department of Homeland Security*, 2011, 6, <https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/implementing-9-11-commission-report-progress-2011.pdf>.

620 See Paul Pillar, *Intelligence and US Foreign Policy: Iraq, 9/11, and Misguided Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

621 Bean, “Strategic Communication and US National Security Affairs,” 118.

622 Bean, “Strategic Communication and US National Security Affairs,” 123.

epistemology; it threatens at each turn to expose a knowledge system as fraudulent, meaning *created* on the basis of a reversible, rhetorical authority.

The ironic effect of appearing more intelligent is to legitimize rushes to judgment, what Ronell indicates as the hallmark of stupidity. The reintroduction of the subject supposed to know *re-produces* the ground of stupidity: the *immediate* adoption of an available war epistemology, which closes in on itself as true. By showing how stupidity haunts national security discourses, counterterrorism threat analysis can become legible as a structure of stupephobia. The stupephobia in question mobilizes an unflinching embrace of contemporary epistemology of terror and its knowing subjects. The unwitting reproduction of stupidity can be responsible for historical “regressions” like ends-less war.⁶²³ As a case in point, Albert Camus writes in *The Plague*, “[T]hough a war may well be ‘too stupid,’ that doesn’t prevent its lasting. Stupidity has a knack of getting its way; as we should see if we were not always so wrapped up in ourselves.”⁶²⁴ War perpetuates itself by operating *as* a self-reflexive set of intelligent forces that can mark off stupid others.

As the next section explores, nowhere is the marking of smart and stupid as stark in national threat cryptology than in the degraded position of the ISIS terrorist.

THE APPEARING-DUMBER OF TERRORISTS

In addition to an internal war on stupidity, the US’s war on terror is a war against an enemy who in public discourse becomes progressively dumber and thus more dangerous. I track this change from Bush administration rhetoric and media speculation after the attacks to recent US federal government comments, as the threat moves from a foreign enemy with al-Qaeda to an internal enemy who can be manipulated by ISIS from

⁶²³ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 44.

⁶²⁴ Quoted in Bayoumi, *This Muslim American Life*, 78.

afar. The incapacity of US policymakers, the US intelligence community, and American citizens to visualize and prevent attacks rubs up against the American stereotype that Islamic terrorists are irrational actors. The discourse of an evil, barbaric enemy from uncivilized parts of the globe was pushed by Bush's addresses in the days following 9/11. Because the perpetrators were figured as irrational, a considerable blank space of nonknowledge for many American citizens manifested after 9/11: What do terrorists want (from "us")? The discursive entrenchment of terrorism as irrational evil cannot assimilate that a constellation of causes, including US foreign policy, might have contributed to the attack. Most violently, the condescension of terrorists as irrational, low-tech, and childlike is a foil for guarding against the US's own spectacular intelligence failings.

The low-tech terrorist figure raises the specter of American stupidity, because the figure showcases that the vast infrastructure to protect the US can be rendered vulnerable. As information about the 9/11 plane hijackers began trickling in, there was media chatter that the hijackers used box-cutters to incapacitate pilots on American flights 11 and 77, and United flights 175 and 93. Other accounts claim that one hijacker Mohammed Atta used pepper spray. Notably, Timothy Noah, senior writer of *Slate*, develops the theory that terrorists succeed out of chance: "[W]hen you review how close the terrorists came to being exposed by U.S. intelligence, 9/11... looks like a stupid plan that succeeded through sheer dumb luck."⁶²⁵ Michael Kenney writes that terrorists are often "sloppy" and susceptible to "poor tradecraft and careless mistakes," like the 1993 World Trade Center bomber Mohammad Salameh who returned to a car rental agency.⁶²⁶ The discourse surrounding

⁶²⁵ Timothy Noah. "The Terrorists-Are-Dumb Theory," *Slate*, February 25, 2009, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/chatterbox/2009/02/the_terroristsaredumb_theory.html.

⁶²⁶ Michael Kenney, "'Dumb' Yet Deadly: Local Knowledge and Poor Tradecraft among Islamic Militants in Britain and Spain," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33, no. 10 (2010): 912, 915.

levels of terrorist intelligence figures *others'* nonknowledge as a threat to the Western world.

In other words, President Trump's more contemporary rhetoric describing terrorists as "evil losers" has a long discursive history, but one that has intensified as government discourse shifts to focus on "lone wolf" attackers who may be motivated by ISIS. Former FBI Director Jim Comey asserts that counterterrorism is a balancing act between smart and stupid criminals: "You have to worry about all the marginal, stupid people that ISIL may motivate here... But there are still smart people waking up every day over there trying to kill us... Balancing those threats is a challenge today."⁶²⁷ Smartness in Comey's language means calculation and premeditation. Another particularly indicative example comes from John Miller, the deputy commissioner for intelligence and counterterrorism for the New York Police Department:

Any moron could make the pressure-cooker bomb those idiots used in Boston. The San Bernardino couple were idiots. If they had been directed by anyone, they'd have picked something a lot more crowded than the place where the guy worked. But ISIL latches on to people like that, telling them, "It's okay to lash out at people you hate—in our name. It's okay that you're a loser. You can still have an impact. You can be a hero." It's elixir for someone sitting in the glow of their laptop in their parents' basement.⁶²⁸

Whereas al-Qaeda was an elite organization that recruited talent, according to Miller, ISIL does mass marketing to the lowest of the low, figured as kids who live in their parents' basements. Miller explains, "This is not your father's terrorism."⁶²⁹ As the internet seemingly democratizes terrorism, law enforcement worries that anyone could become radicalized. The comments above indicate that immature youth threaten the paternal

⁶²⁷ Quoted in Steven Brill, "Is America any Safer?" *The Atlantic*, September 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/09/are-we-any-safer/492761/>.

⁶²⁸ Quoted in Brill, "Is America Any Safer?"

⁶²⁹ Quoted in Brill, "Is America Any Safer?"

authority of US law enforcement and the presidency. The “subject supposed to know” can thus intervene in order to assert its authority.

The one-sided discursive construction that terrorists are stupid has been met with insults from ISIS members that President Donald Trump is a “stupid idiot.”⁶³⁰ The trading of barbs throw into question the one-sided dumb enemy construction analyzed here. Because there are similar presumptions in between national security discourse and scholarship, in the next section I discuss how an ethic of stupidity can carry over into an internal critique from within Western theory.

STUPIDITY BEFORE THE OTHER

Framing Western bias as a question of ignorance would get scholars off the hook simply for not knowing. Ignorance can quickly become a “right” encoded in one’s opinion.⁶³¹ According to Ivie, “What the scholar chooses to feature, describe, analyze, and explain is *itself a discursive construction*, a strategic decision with implicit, if not explicit, critical entailments.”⁶³² Scholarly choices surrounding citations, theoretical histories and frameworks, problematics, and authorial posturings are *discursive* choices. Westerncentrism is a series of habitual essentialisms reflected in scholarship: European-derived beliefs and norms, Enlightenment principles of rational conscious subjects, and Judeo-Christian morality.⁶³³ Molefi Kete Asante argues that scholars should neutralize cultural myths found within Westerncentric scholarship.⁶³⁴ One of the most pernicious

630 Adam K. Raymond, “ISIS calls Trump a ‘Stupid Idiot,’” *New York Magazine*, April 5, 2017, <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/04/isis-calls-trump-a-stupid-idiot.html>.

631 Ronell, *Stupidity*, 57.

632 Ivie, “Hegemony, Instabilities, and Interventions,” 130. My emphasis.

633 Molefi Kete Asante, “De-Westernizing Communication: Strategies for Neutralizing Cultural Myths,” in *De-Westernizing Communication Research: Altering Questions and Changing Frameworks*, ed. G. Wang. New York: Routledge, 2011), 21.

634 Asante, “De-Westernizing Communication.”

myths is the idea that scholars are, like intelligence agents, “subjects supposed to know.” Ronell writes, bluntly, that if there is an ethics that emerges from the flight of “the subject supposed to know” from scholarship, it is, “I am stupid before the other.”⁶³⁵

While the critique of the “subject supposed to know” issues from a postfoundational Western thinker, Avital Ronell, the idea that scholars should question their role as besters of nonknowledge has a longer precedent in non-Western culture. Notably, Indian Buddhist conceptualizations of language detail how a word’s meaning derives from its “counter-correlatives,” everything the word is *not*. All knowledge of what a word *is*, then, derives only from a certain *non*knowledge, an “unspeakable” series of negations that work prior to cognition.⁶³⁶ Non-Western cultures’ engagements with all sorts of non-conscious forms of knowledge shows that Western theory *is* a *source of nonknowledge*—of fundamental *misunderstandings* and *misrecognitions*. Ronald D. Gordon argues that Western communication theory fails both as an unsuccessful attempt at predicting and controlling human behavior and as an enterprise that ignores Asian, African, Central and South American knowledge.⁶³⁷ Western communication theory calls on readers to replicate its failures.

Affirming a scholar’s *grounding* in transcendental stupidity can open up space for an ethical attunement: “Granting the reader the chance (or the permission) to affirm his/her own ‘grounding’ in stupidity without freaking and without violently projecting, Ronell offers the *sujet ne supposé pas savoir* (the subject not supposed to know and who doesn’t suppose it knows) as a figure of ethical attunement.”⁶³⁸ Performing as the subject not

635 Ronell, *Stupidity*, 60.

636 Wimal Dissanayake, “The Desire to Excavate Asian Theories of Communication: One Strand of the History,” *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 4, no. 1 (2009): 9-10.

637 Ronald D. Gordon, “Beyond the Failures of Western Communication Theory,” *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 2, no. 2 (2007): 89.

638 Davis, “Responsible Stupidity.”

supposed to know and who doesn't suppose would be an unstable place, but it is the only place from which to theorize: "we are never not given over to it [stupidity]—even our moments of path-breaking brilliance are grounded in it."⁶³⁹ To show how the Enlightenment drive "to explore, to know, to conquer, to subdue" is built only on the ground of stupidity can humble the presumption of mastery.⁶⁴⁰ For Ronell, the will to terminate a matter once and for all "appears to be bound up with the compulsion of Western logos."⁶⁴¹ A far more difficult task is to stay open to the fact that a scholar will not be *done* with a line of thinking. Instead, the affectivity of stupidity will linger. An academic drive derives only from a *constant summons* that is *inexhaustible*. The call to re-think is issued over and over. Common certitudes, like the need for intelligence over-drive and the Western scholar who knows, can be opened up in an ongoing, unending academic investigation.

CONCLUSION

"Security stupidity" is the transcendental stupidity that grounds all efforts to securitize. The framing of 9/11 as a deficit in knowledge-spreading cultivates the drive for more intelligence to defeat an enemy by being the smarter side. All the same, ineffectual communication besets all military, government, and intelligence strategic communication efforts. For instance, the military often does not know if its programs reach the necessary audiences and have the intended effects.⁶⁴² The introduction of stupidity into the vocabulary of security communication means the US would have to face, again and again,

⁶³⁹ Davis, "Responsible Stupidity."

⁶⁴⁰ Tu Weiming, "Beyond the Enlightenment Mentality," in *Comparative Political Culture in the Age of Globalization*, ed. Hwa Yol Jung (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2002), 252.

⁶⁴¹ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 70.

⁶⁴² Bean, "Strategic Communication and US National Security Affairs," 113.

the ethical call of stupidity: the mutual imbrication of “its” stupidity and the dangerousness it projects onto others.

The post-9/11 project of cultivating situational awareness in the homeland raises whether counterterrorism intelligence gives space for thought. Ronell urges us to consider how “stupidity is accomplice to the narcissism of systems that close in upon themselves as true.”⁶⁴³ Betts isolates the common phenomenon in which people “overestimate they knew all along and to undervalue what they learn from intelligence products.”⁶⁴⁴ This chapter seeks to question one overestimation: the sovereign authority of US counterterrorism to “define the scope of the uncertainty, specifying what is known and unknown.”⁶⁴⁵ Considering the state *creates* an epistemology of unknown threat, we can say that state actors are perpetrators of sensory lapses rather than faculties that can zone off stupidity.

Avital Ronell’s account of stupidity demonstrates that poststructuralist thought can influence discourse analysis and security studies in important ways. Shi-xu writes, “[D]ialogue and exchange with especially contemporary critical currents, such as postmodernism, postcolonialism, feminism, can be highly fruitful for the advancement of CDS.”⁶⁴⁶ The shared *inessentialisms* of critical discourse studies and Ronell’s theory upset arrogances within Western scholarship. Davis muses, “Contra the exhausting argument that postfoundational thought ditches responsibility, Ronell demonstrates that responsibility grows unfathomably e-n-o-r-m-o-u-s when it exceeds the tiny bounds of the subject’s intentions.”⁶⁴⁷ The fact that stupidity is inherent to all reasoning is *not* a reason to dismiss the violence of stupidity. Opening to the concept of stupidity in scholarship means that

643 Ronell, *Stupidity*, 43.

644 Betts, *Enemies of Intelligence*, 192.

645 Pillar, *Intelligence and US Foreign Policy*, 331.

646 Shi-Xu, “Cultural Discourse Studies through the *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*: 10 Years On,” *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 11, no. 1 (2016): 1–8.

647 Davis, “Responsible Stupidity.”

responsibility to others extends well beyond a subject's intentions to subdue stupidities. Rather, stupidity's call for ethics puts interlocutors in an unshakeable relationality.⁶⁴⁸

Finally, this chapter acknowledges that knowledge is *discursive*. Ivie enjoins studies of security, communication, and discourse to consider the mutable function of discourse: "What we know at any given point in time as a function of discursive practices, including how we conceive of national security, is subject to re-articulation and reinterpretation."⁶⁴⁹ Re-appropriating national security discourses in the context of stupidity means forfeiting the compulsion that intelligence needs to be *more intelligent*, including about stupidity itself. This chapter wagers that the discursive reinterpretation most insurrectional in US national security would be an adaptation from Derrida, who cites Gustave Flaubert: one cannot say, in good conscience, "*la bêtise n'est pas mon fort*" ("I am not strong on stupidity").⁶⁵⁰

648 See Gunn, "For the Love of Rhetoric."

649 Ivie, "Hegemony, Instabilities, and Interventions," 128.

650 Derrida, "The Transcendental 'Stupidity,'" 59.

Conclusion: Con-Fusion

US counterterrorism is an infrastructure of anxiety, with specific pressure points, threat figurations, and overinvested objects/subjects. Calum Matheson writes, “The affective network of anxiety... creates the conditions for the mistrust, confusion, and uncertainty felt by anxious subjects, but it is not reducible to any one of them.”⁶⁵¹ In Massumi’s words, national security is a “networked jumpiness.”⁶⁵² To miss this network is to miss why public anxiety about terrorism happens; anxiety is an effect and a response. Even though anxiety is a gap, an interval, an interruption, the intermittent hiccup of anxiety is infrastructural. Gaps are built into environments to shake us out of habits or habituate us to interruption. Our anxieties—the “unexpected” retreat of signifiers—are rhetorically engineered, not spontaneous. Or, more precisely, the spontaneity of anxiety itself has become an object of control in US counterterrorism.

To attend to anxiety, this project has developed a reading method that follows affect. Sleuthing, I first zoomed us in to read anxiety in one fusion center in Texas and a national fusion conference and then zoomed us out to read anxiety in other surveillance infrastructures in Texas and national security discourses. Taking a scopic approach raises questions of scale. How big or small are the anxious infrastructures of US counterterrorism? Where does one anxious infrastructure begin and the other end? How do anxious infrastructures plug into one another, or other kinds of infrastructures? Infrastructures are substructures that support other structures. Running ahead of US security discourse is a series of anxiety-networks, which premeditate threat rhetoric. These anxiety-networks are discernible in but irreducible to language. Like fiber optic cables that

⁶⁵¹ Matheson, ““What Does Obama Want of Me?”” 141.

⁶⁵² Massumi, *Ontopower*, 172.

run throughout the everyday landscape of a city, anxiety-networks of US counterterrorism, both local and national, course through spaces.

Part of the impetus for tracking anxious infrastructures is to redistribute insecurity in times of bloated national security—to make fusion workers less sure about their affective truths and scholars more aware of fusion’s surveillance. The motivation comes from my time at the national conference over-hearing a group of fusion center workers call the basement of their department of public safety by the name “Con-Fusion.” Apparently, the basement was not secure because an older, aloof, female security guard rarely guarded it the way this group of men believed it should be guarded. They shook their heads about how her carelessness allowed a homeless man was able to wander right into the building and take shelter there—in other words, use the Department of Public Safety for public safety. I have come to believe that “con-fusion” is a rich metaphorical counter-point to their fusion center. Their workplace sits many floors above the subterranean haven for this aloof woman and homeless man, and the unevenness marks a disjuncture in the distribution of public safety. Fusion as an intelligence practice, like the building that houses it, remains exposed. Fusion is haunted by its past failures and its responsibility for perpetuating terror.

In homage to the insecure infrastructural base of the department of public safety, I occupy a space of confusion by dwelling on some questions raised by this dissertation. In a space of confusion, parsing findings might assume some of the frustrated forms from psychoanalytic readings of anxiety from Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Eugenie Brinkema, and Joan Copjec, respectively: circling back, tightrope walking, treading water, and running in place.⁶⁵³ Psychoanalytic inquiry into anxiety confronts anxiety’s frustrating movements. Copjec writes, “*Don’t read my words! Read my desire!...* That is, don’t take

⁶⁵³ Freud, “Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety”; Lacan, *Anxiety*, 9; Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 208; Copjec, *Read My Desire*, 131.

me literally (universally)... [R]elations of desire preserve particularity, difference, by supposing... a private beyond, a being that does not surrender itself in speech.”⁶⁵⁴ If readers were to try to read their own desires, in the spirit of Copjec, they might ask what more they want from rhetorical analyses than questions born of confusions—the beginning stupefactions that frustrate our ability to “fuse” understanding.

Here I conclude by presenting three confusions, which seem like oxymorons (can such things exist?): intelligent policing, anxiety’s specificity, and the responsible rhetorician.

INTELLIGENT POLICING

The first confusion is that intelligence is not all that intelligent if we limit our definition of intelligence to the cerebral. To consider US intelligence is to consider how bureaucracy diffuses anxiety—an operation belied by bureaucracy’s flat, orderly affects. Studies of surveillance overwhelmingly focus on state bureaucracy because bureaucracy is one fundamental way that populations are catalogued and tracked. The mundane paperwork, the communication networks, the rules and procedures are mechanisms of discipline. Bureaucracy takes a heterogeneous population and individualizes it by making sure individuals are consistently who they say they are and operating within the bounds of the law. As the Foucault epigraph that started this project states, our bureaucrats and our police will see that our papers are in order.⁶⁵⁵ Bureaucracy does more than discipline; it regulates at a general, statistical level. Bureaucracy is a system, in Massumi’s elaboration, that “feeds back on itself in order to settle things for itself: in order to settle a territory.”⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵⁴ Copjec, *Read My Desire*, 189.

⁶⁵⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Routledge, 2002), 19.

⁶⁵⁶ Massumi, *Ontopower*, 25.

Traditional sites of discipline like prison become converted into a “correctional reuptake mechanism for emergent normative variation.”⁶⁵⁷ The emergent normative variation considered by this project is the diffusion and fusion of public anxiety through and within a vast national security bureaucracy. I think back to the “Illegal Alien” stuffed toy on a JTTF liaison’s desk. It was unassuming. Alarming in its banality, the toy suggested so many untold, perhaps yet-to-be-formed connections between the everyday fusion space and others infrastructure that capture undocumented immigrants.

DHS bureaucracy is diffuse and secretive, even while embedded in plain sight. At the same time current Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen said that the government did not have a policy separating migrant children from their parents at our borders, journalists went to detention facilities all around Texas to reveal the DHS infrastructures (tents, former Walmarts, military bases) that house the children. Fusion centers are similarly embedded. In Texas, six of the seven centers are within existing police departments and departments of public safety.⁶⁵⁸ The counterterrorism intelligence infrastructure documented by Dana Priest and William Arkin for the *Washington Post* in 2010 has advanced.⁶⁵⁹ It has adapted. Bureaucracy retools its cubicles and offices, camp sites, technologies, threat prediction documents, and database hosts. Texas’s counterterrorism infrastructure, from the US-Mexico border to the coast, is physical, technical, and affective.

While Trump has emboldened the infrastructure of DHS to detain immigrants, both documented and undocumented, there is a tension between the president and the intelligence community. Trump is uninterested in his daily intelligence briefings, the

⁶⁵⁷ Massumi, *Ontopower*, 25.

⁶⁵⁸ The Houston Regional Intelligence Center is located in the Houston Emergency Center. The center in McKinney, Texas is housed separately, because it is owned and operated by Collin County. See Wilder, “Dr. Bob’s Terror Shop.”

⁶⁵⁹ Priest and Arkin, “A Hidden World.”

President's Daily Brief, because he is a "smart person."⁶⁶⁰ Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told the press that lengthy intelligence briefings with detailed analysis were reduced to bullet points and "killer graphics."⁶⁶¹ Trump relies on other avenues of awareness, like *Fox News*. Agencies try to tailor their briefings around Trump's sensitivities, especially potential national security threats from Russia, because he is the "first customer."⁶⁶² Trump accuses the FBI and CIA of conspiring against him by leaking "fake news." What kind of intelligence is this? What pattern of sensemaking does Trump ask others to habituate? What is the structure of counterterrorism information sharing under this executive epistemology? Trump reflects that US counterterrorism intelligence is knowledgeable to the extent that it follows his certainty, free from the influence of others' input. Trump's intelligence is "a missile without a guidance system."⁶⁶³ Knowledge for Trump is intelligent when it springs from a flagrant lack of humility, denial of the basic fact that one might not know something or could have more to learn.

The intelligence community can be susceptible to the same mistake, especially because its intelligence fits the needs of police. Police are one of fusion's most important ends-users, or clients. Police participate in surveys by the National Fusion Center Association about whether fusion products are helpful to closing cases.⁶⁶⁴ Fusion is an outgrowth of the idea that police should have their own intelligence hubs. Criminal justice

660 Elizabeth Dias, "Mike Pompeo Has What Rex Tillerson Didn't: 'Killer Graphics' and Trump's Trust," *TIME*, March 13, 2018, <http://time.com/5197808/mike-pompeo-donald-trump-rex-tillerson/>.

661 Carol D. Leonnig, Shane Harris, and Greg Jaffe, "Breaking with Tradition, Trump Skips President's Written Intelligence Report and Relies on Oral Briefings," *Washington Post*, February 9, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/breaking-with-tradition-trump-skips-presidents-written-intelligence-report-for-oral-briefings/2018/02/09/b7ba569e-0c52-11e8-95a5-c396801049ef_story.html.

662 See David Priess, "CIA Tailors its Briefings so it doesn't Anger Trump. That's Good," *Washington Post*, December 14, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2017/12/14/the-cia-tailors-its-briefings-so-it-doesnt-anger-trump-thats-good/>.

663 Mark P. Lagon and Ross Harrison, "As Disrupter in Chief, Trump is No Nixon," *Foreign Policy Magazine*, January 18, 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/18/as-disrupter-in-chief-trump-is-no-nixon/>.

664 See "2016 National Network of Fusion Centers: Final Report," *Department of Homeland Security*, July 2017, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2016_National_Network_of_Fusion_Centers_Final_Report.pdf.

scholar Jerry H. Ratcliffe and data analyst Kyle Walden trace the origins of fusion to the 1971 National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, an advisory board appointed by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. The Advisory Commission argued that police agencies of 75 or more officers should have an intelligence capacity.⁶⁶⁵ Fusion organizes information that may be useful for police and anticipates police needs. Fusion extends police's special access to information and analytics, as well as how these can be tools to control population affect.

Perhaps the most lasting consequence of fusion in its current form will be how it bolsters the penal system. As Attorney General Jeff Sessions reiterated at the fusion conference, "Law enforcement cooperation is what fusion centers are all about."⁶⁶⁶ Fusion centers propagate "community policing," the participatory model of policing in which residents report back to the state. The fusing of military and nonmilitary intelligence, especially law enforcement intelligence, invites incarceration and detainment as solutions for social and environmental problems. Homeland security solutions to police violence include calls for more police oversight—which may have worse effects on those slated for police protection⁶⁶⁷—rather than community *control* over policing or penal abolition. Stephanie Whitehead writes, "If police departments and scholars are indeed serious about addressing the role of race in policing, then paying attention to, understanding, and acknowledging racial nuance in even the most seemingly trivial aspects of police practice and talk must be a priority."⁶⁶⁸ Even the most minor language, extracted from observations

665 Ratcliffe and Walden, "State Police and the Intelligence Center," 3.

666 "Attorney General Sessions Delivers Remarks to the National Fusion Center Association."

667 For instance, studies of domestic violence show that involving the police often leads to the abusee's arrest or unhelpful scapegoating of minority culture. See Andrea Smith, "Not-Seeing," in *Feminist Surveillance Studies*, edited by Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoana Amielle Magnet (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), 32-33; Natalie J. Sokoloff, *Domestic Violence at the Margins: Readings on Race, Class, Gender, and Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

668 Stephanie N. Whitehead, "The Specter of Racism: Exploring White Racial Anxieties in the Context of Policing," *Contemporary Justice Review* 18, no. 2 (2015): 136.

and interviews, is important. Language speaks to and engrains anxieties in the everyday lives of security actors in surveillant infrastructures.

Brian Massumi diagnoses US intelligence as an operation of affective intelligence.⁶⁶⁹ Fusion is an intelligence practice that converts bodily suspicions into actionable knowledge. Fusion attempts to cultivate knowledge power for its users, an increased capacity to impact security outcomes through awareness.⁶⁷⁰ This awareness is bodily. Bush's color-coded Homeland Security Advisory System touched populations *en masse* through various shades of terror. While Obama moved to a more textual Advisory System, foregoing the color scheme, it is important to remember the textuality of threat is affective. The installation of fusion, with its terror threat systems and threat matrixes pertaining to national terrorism and local threats, is a power to condition "life's nextness."⁶⁷¹ Counterterrorism intelligence procedures is an affective enterprise:

Addressing bodies from the dispositional angle of their affectivity, instead of addressing subjects from the positional angle of their ideations, shunts government function away from the mediation of adherence or belief and toward direct *activation*. What else is a state of alert?⁶⁷²

Hence, the many interview comments within the Texas fusion center about the dosage of anxiety that the public should feel in order for fusion to receive actionable knowledge. For fusion to work, anxiety must become its own reality: "Threat strikes the nervous system with a directness forbidding any separation between the responsiveness of the body and its environment. The nervous system is wired directly to the onset of the threat. *The reality of the situation is that activation.*"⁶⁷³ Deleuze and Guattari recognized the power of affect for war mobilization. Deleuze and Guattari argue that war affects are "sudden catatonic fits,

⁶⁶⁹ Massumi, *Ontopower*.

⁶⁷⁰ See Massumi, *Ontopower*, 99.

⁶⁷¹ Massumi, *Ontopower*, 71.

⁶⁷² Massumi, *Ontopower*, 174.

⁶⁷³ Massumi, *Ontopower*, 177. Original emphasis.

swoons, suspenses,” and so they act as projectiles, as weapons.⁶⁷⁴ Fusion frames anxiety as much: How can anxiety increase knowledge power? When should city populations be activated or deactivated? How does a fusion center or any DHS institution, for that matter, know activations have worked?

Racializing surveillance is a crucial concern when *a priori* criminality (the affective fact of racial threat) is a grounding assumption of some national security bureaucracies. If intelligence is information that actors can act on—that is *actionable*—then the information received by fusion is already in a context that could ask for alternative actions and clients. Instead of becoming the knowledge-power factories for police departments and private businesses, they could restructure their affective allegiances. The challenge is that affects like anxiety activate actions of their own accord. One solution may then have to be deactivating fusion centers, or de-fusing their tense rhetoric. The first confusion is how to conceive of US intelligence as affective rather than cerebral, especially when fusion markets itself as a function of analytic minds, and how the affectivity of national security changes our responses to it.

ANXIETY’S SPECIFICITY

The second confusion is that anxiety can be elusive even, or if not especially, when it is acutely felt. Hélène Cixous diagnoses the constrictions of the most intensified shape of anxiety (*angst*): “You want to talk about the anguish that leaves you speechless. The door opens. And everything stops. What’s missing? A little air. A little time. A breathing space.”⁶⁷⁵ Rather than forfeit the tough work of reading anxiety, given how it often provokes a suspended state of speechlessness, rhetorical criticism can follow traces of

674 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (New York: Continuum, 2004), 441.

675 Hélène Cixous, *Angst* (New York: Riverrun, 1985), 25.

anxiety. Anxiety is discernible in intermittent interruptions in sense-making, sore subjects, anguished language, the approach of desired objects, and failure and struggle. These comprise an infrastructure of anxious openings and stoppages. Anxiety coalesces and disperses. Just when one believes one has nailed it down, explained it, found it, anxiety has likely taken off in a new direction. This errancy is one of anxiety's specific aesthetic movements; criticism can therefore read it.

One complication of anxiety's elusiveness is that those who so often *perform* anxiety are not the ones who *live* it. Based on my interviews, fusion center workers do not stay up at night, tossing and turning about their public safety. One analyst admit that he feels paranoid on the internet and goes to great lengths to disguise his search history and social media presence from data collection. But, as we saw from fusion's white victimage rhetoric, upheavals of anguish can diminish social anxieties experienced by insecure subjects and communities. In its worst form, feigned anguish can preserve the power dynamics that make it difficult for subjugated populations to breathe, the "crushing asphyxia" within the floating prison, the *USS Brooks*.⁶⁷⁶

The uneven distribution of anxiety is part of Trump's counterterrorism strategy. Trump's intensifications of the US War on Terror include banning travel to the US from (at first seven and now five) majority Muslim countries (Iran, Libya, Syria, Somalia, and Yemen), broadening the category of American enemies to all "Islamic extremist" groups, and granting expanded authority for ground forces and drone strikes to use lethal force on the basis of suspected ties to terrorism.⁶⁷⁷ He has promised to build a wall along the US-

⁶⁷⁶ Browne, *Dark Matters*, 48.

⁶⁷⁷ See Joshua A. Geltzer and Stephen Tankel, "What Ever Happened to Trump's Counterterrorism Strategy?" *The Atlantic*, March 1, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/03/trump-terrorism-iraq-syria-al-qaeda-isis/554333/>; Karoun Demirjian, "US Will Expand Counterterrorism Focus in Africa, Mattis tells Senators," *Washington Post*, October 20, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/amphtml/powerpost/defense-secretary-mattis-to-meet-with-sen-mccain-after-subpoena-threat-over-niger-attack/2017/10/20/7a4a12de-b5bf-11e7-9e58-e6288544af98_story.html; Jonathan Landay and Warren Strobel, "Trump Counterterrorism Strategy Urges Allies to Do More," *Washington Post*, May 5, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-extremism/exclusive-trump-counterterrorism-strategy-urges-allies-to-do-more-idUSKBN1812AN>.

Mexico border, form new alliances with Russia to counter the Islamic State, convince allied nations to do more so that the US can protect its “blood and treasure,” install “extreme vetting” measures like an “ideological test” for visitors to the US, bring back torture “a hell of a lot worse” than waterboarding, expand the incarcerated population at Guantanamo Bay, and counteract Obama’s troop-withdrawals.⁶⁷⁸ Trump’s projective venom correlates to a similarly projective citizen-desire, reflected by his immigration speech in August 2016: “we’ve got to have a country, folks.”⁶⁷⁹ In Trump’s words, to open the US to Muslim and Central American and South American immigrants is to remove the US’s status as a country. Anxiety springs forth. No country (But where will we live? What will become of us?).

But, Lacan reminds us, anxiety is not about loss—not really—even while anxiety scrambles object-relations. A body might feel anxiety most during the *approach* of a desired love object, everything that indicates to that body that it will be “taken back onto the lap.”⁶⁸⁰ Citizen-anxiety about terrorism under Trump is a product of perceived closeness, an unbearable proximity, to *impending freedom*, promised by hardened country borders, torture, and killing. This object of anxiety (to have the country and its freedoms back) is an old object of the War on Terror, dangled by Bush’s subjunctive rhetoric (our freedoms will have returned only after the US wages unilateral war).⁶⁸¹ Under Trump, the unbearable openness of the future is suddenly occupied by something closer than US citizens imagined it could be: the freedom to be a winner rather than a loser. Trump before the UN General Assembly blustered, “The United States and our allies are working together throughout the Middle East to crush the loser terrorists and stop the re-emergence

678 Landay and Strobel, “Trump Counterterrorism Strategy Urges Allies to Do More.”

679 See Tara Golshan, “Donald Trump’s Speech Showed ‘Zero Tolerance’ for Undocumented Immigrants,” *Vox*, August 31, 2016, <https://www.vox.com/2016/8/31/12743880/donald-trump-immigration-policy-speech-transcript>.

680 Lacan, *Anxiety*, 53.

681 See Biesecker, “No Time for Mourning.”

of safe havens they use to launch attacks on all of our people.”⁶⁸² A few of the fusion center workers I interviewed openly mocked Trump. They view him as *excessive*, unnecessarily loud, vile, and unpredictable, when the work of counterterrorism could be done calmly, with indoor voices. However, as this project has shown, they share some of Trump’s anxieties and insecurities. If anxiety is an object of national security control, we can read its intensifications and differences in both national and local rhetoric.

While Teresa Brennan names anxiety as a contagious, transmittable affect,⁶⁸³ Ahmed proposes that we do not always pick up each other’s anxieties.⁶⁸⁴ Anxiety, she writes, is sticky; it *gets* to us and is difficult to shake. Yet, one body’s anxiety is not always transmitted to another body. What, then, is the exact manner of anxiety’s expression? How can we trace anxiety’s effects? I have tried to answer that anxiety has aesthetic specificity because of how it is premeditated in, meaning takes shape through, affective infrastructures. Affect scholar Greg Seigworth writes that affect does not make sense out of context.⁶⁸⁵ Critical affect studies propose that affect operates prior to any consciousness and signification that follows after it. But, affect is not a transcendental signified that exists before the entire world, before *any* being, *any* language, *any* meaning. Massumi states that before affect is “everything,” a number of participations in the world that already express affect and create the conditions for future expressions.⁶⁸⁶

If we are after specificity about anxiety in the context of the War on Terror, it is curious that so many accounts of anxiety and national security mention racial anxiety but do not theorize its centrality to how national security operates. If our rhetorical analyses

682 “Remarks by President Trump to the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly,” *White House*, September 19, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-72nd-session-united-nations-general-assembly/>.

683 Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

684 See Ahmed, “Affective Economies.”

685 Gregory J. Seigworth, “Capaciousness,” *Capacious: Journal for Emerging Affect Inquiry* 1, no. 1 (2017): iii.

686 Quoted in Gregory J. Seigworth, “Writing Space: Interviews,” *WTF Affect*, 2015, <http://wtf.affect.com/brian-massumi/>.

are to do justice to anxiety's effects, it becomes necessary to give accounts of racializing surveillance. Foregrounding analysis of racial anxiety is one step to make racial power dynamics legible. By combining ethnographic, critical/cultural, and rhetorical theories, we can read racial anxiety on the ground, through power, and in language. The second confusion involves how to speak directly to the effects of anxiety when anxiety seems almost intent on making it difficult to put language to affect.

THE RHETORICIAN-AS-SLEUTH

The third confusion is how rhetoricians can perform responsible close readings of affect, an "object" so often said to be ineffable. This project has offered a number of figures of the rhetorician-after-anxiety, or the rhetorician-sleuth, who pursues traces of anxiety in her reading: the complainer, the switchboard operator, the resistive analysand, and the subject who does not know and who doesn't suppose she knows. Each figure finds inspiration from the corpus of Avital Ronell, who makes a point that reading—really close reading—is difficult. She writes that reading involves *resistance*,⁶⁸⁷ the resistance of any text to readers who, in Nietzsche's words, want to "touch, lick, and finger everything."⁶⁸⁸ Shireen R. K. Patell recounts the lesson of Ronell's close reading: "Reading, far from taking us to any unified understanding, wanders, errs perpetually; reading unravels—is always accompanied by an unreading, a *délire*, its own undoing, in the sense of a perpetual dismantling... *Délire* is not just an unreading, but a madness."⁶⁸⁹ A case's unsolvability is enough to drive a critic mad. Numerous questions prompted opening a Fusion Investigation

687 See, for instance, the piano lesson in Ronell, *Finitude's Score*, 1-18.

688 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 213.

689 Shireen R. K. Patell, "Learning Impossibility: Pedagogy, Aporia, Ethics," in *Reading Ronell*, ed. Diane Davis (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 153.

(which remains unsolved): What is fusion? How does the rhetoric of fusion reconfigure US counterterrorism intelligence? How does fusion spread public anxiety? To what extent is this anxiety racialized and racializing? How can we read anxiety? Unease presses a rhetorician, herself produced by reading, to acknowledge remainders, including how she has exposed her audience to anxiety by leaving the questions answered but open.

Each figure of the sleuth embraces anxiety as a force for ethics; the sleuth raises the question of how to respond to an inassimilable other, each time. Anxiety does not let you off the hook. It rather urgently urges that you have not taken enough care. Perhaps this is why Ronell, invoking Martin Heidegger, once stated that anxiety is “the mood *par excellence* of ethicity.”⁶⁹⁰ There is something to be said for embracing the repetitive experience of encountering one’s own “nullity” at every turn and attempting to refashion these encounters, but *how* is not immediately clear: “[H]ow does the experience of fascination and originary disappropriation turn itself into an experience of appropriation and individuation? Heidegger gives no answers to these questions. Click.”⁶⁹¹ Can anxiety be “accompanied” with understanding, as Heidegger thought?⁶⁹² I have attempted to answer that the “gathering” movement of new understanding overstates anxiety’s productivity at the cost of giving an account of its destructiveness. Anxiety is ruthless in its scrambling understanding, but its ruinous quality is precisely why anxiety keeps understanding *open*: “If we are not anxious, if we’re OK with things, then we’re not trying to explore or figure anything out.”⁶⁹³ Anxiety “makes us want to understand.”⁶⁹⁴ So, while anxiety does not immediately provide understanding, it clears a path to understanding.

690 Quoted in Taylor, *Examined Life*, 49.

691 Ronell, *The Telephone Book*, 57.

692 Ronell, *The Telephone Book*, 58.

693 Quoted in Taylor, *Examined Life*, 49.

694 Quoted in Taylor, *Examined Life*, 49.

Anxiety's relation to the unbearable openness can be a force for ethics, because it can vacate rote understanding.

Thinking back to the opening Uber ride documented by this project, we could ask after anxiety: Did anxiety foreclose or open more ethical relations between the research subjects, Mohammad, myself, and all the various unnamed others affected by the scene? Could ethicality result from non-understanding? In other words, did we need to "understand" one another to treat one another differently? When I went back to closely read my notes about the Uber ride, I felt baffled. All at once, I felt I could understand and not understand why they would attack Mohammad. I felt that I could both give an explanation and not provide any sufficient explanation. I understand that they engaged in racist behaviors. I understand that their racism has roots in "Mohammedism," documented at length by Said. I understand that they likely performed this deep-rooted racism out of masculine and white-victim insecurities. This is a provisional diagnostic. I do not understand how best to respond in the moment. I do not understand whether Mohammad consciously registered the racism and how it has affected him. I do not understand the extent to which racism is mutable or immutable within my research subjects. The list of open questions could continue. Again, the madness of reading: We are left only with traces, with guesses. What is a responsible rhetorician-reader to do?

A rhetorician keeps openness to unreadability in their visage, because this non-understanding propels further inquiry. Sleuthing is a method of keeping non-understanding in play. As a rhetorical reading method, it relies on Freud's distinction between detective work and police work, a distinction that revolves around openness and foreclosure. A detective believes that traces of evidence cannot speak for themselves. Deducing claims

from traces supposes a gap, a distance, “something that is *not* visible in the evidence.”⁶⁹⁵

Copjec recounts the difference between detective work and police work in further detail:

To say that the detective manifests his *desire* in interpreting the clues is not to say that in the absence of complete knowledge a historical or personal bias directs the interpretation... [D]esire does not impose a bias but supposes a gap: the *residue that is irreducible to the evidence while being, at the same time, completely demonstrated in it*... The desiring detective, then, concludes by taking the culprit’s desire literally, seeing the way it manifests itself in the clues. In this way does the detective make buffoons of the police, who busy themselves with the senseless task of ignoring desire and taking the *evidence* literally, conflating signifiers and signifieds.⁶⁹⁶

Detective work sees how desire manifests in clues, including the desire of the detective. Police work sees how clues act as evidence to confirm a foregone conclusion. If anxiety is produced when the signifier “throws in the towel,”⁶⁹⁷ when the signifier retreats, anxiety gropes around in this gap of meaning described by Copjec. Anxiety tries desperately to make sense of things that never add up. Ahmed writes that anxiety grabs for the nearest life-boat of meaning: “Anxiety is like Velcro: it picks up objects that are proximate to it.”⁶⁹⁸ Because of its pressurizing force, anxiety can be a force for ethics in detective work (do not move along so quickly; there is more to know) and a force for violent foreclosure in police work (move along; there is nothing more to see here).

I attempted in the final chapter to “turn in the badge,”⁶⁹⁹ meaning forfeit the position of a master rhetorical police-reader that takes language’s meaning literally, plays “gotcha” with texts, and ignores the extra-linguistic. In my case, I forfeited a literal badge: a metal token given to me by a police officer as part of a game that police officers play. The game is to keep the token on your person at all times, so that if an officer asks about it, you can

⁶⁹⁵ Copjec, *Read My Desire*, 177.

⁶⁹⁶ Copjec, *Read My Desire*, 178-179. Original emphasis.

⁶⁹⁷ Soler, *Lacanian Affects*, 5.

⁶⁹⁸ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 89.

⁶⁹⁹ Ronell, quoted in Davis, “Confessions of an Anacoluthon,” 253.

show you have it. If you do not have it on you, you are subject to public shaming. I accepted this token. I played the game, though I never got asked if I had it on me. It was a badge, an assumption of a police identification. A responsible rhetorician-sleuth might not have accepted police tokens of affectation in the first place. Who can earn this badge of trust? Who can afford to throw it away in the garbage? Who can walk away from the game? According to Ronell, the (it should be noted, queer) detective has to “go her own way.” She has to turn in the badge. That way, she can continue to be “on the prowl, looking for some kind of disclosure or going after traces and clues—which is, after all, the position one necessarily finds oneself in when one is engaged in reading.”⁷⁰⁰ A responsible rhetorician prowls within infrastructures of US counterterrorism, suspicious and anxious, a part and apart from them. The third confusion is how a rhetorician can hold onto the fact that following affect tasks us with an impossible responsibility.⁷⁰¹

DIFFUSE THREATS

The three confusions (intelligent policing, anxiety’s specificity, and the responsible rhetorician) presented here task us with considering how fusion has changed the rhetorical operations of counterterrorism. Counterterrorism fusion is a rhetorical enterprise. Its function is to marshal information and affect in order to match threat diffusion. The later years of Obama’s presidency frames terrorism as increasingly diffuse. In 2014, he urged, “We have to develop a strategy that matches this diffuse threat.”⁷⁰² The State Department in 2015 recounts that the terror threat “continued to evolve rapidly in 2015, becoming

700 Quoted in Davis, “Confessions of an Anacoluthon,” 253.

701 For more on what she calls “response-ability,” see Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*.

702 Mark Lander, “Obama Warns US Faces Diffuse Terrorism Threats,” *New York Times*, May 28, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/29/us/politics/obama-foreign-policy-west-point-speech.html>.

increasingly decentralized and diffuse.”⁷⁰³ Trump’s rhetoric marks terrorism as similarly diffuse, but because of its diffusion, painfully obvious what should be done. Trump’s terrorism threat is transparent, uncomplicated, unnuanced. Trump claims to name the enemy who we already know. The enemy for him is “Islamic extremism.” This terminology is perhaps the most diffuse threat configuration of all; terrorism accretes and spreads everywhere there is or could be Islam. Based on his rhetoric that encourages profiling, our knowledge and actions have *already been fused*. We know all we need to know. We just need to perform the action we know must be performed.

It is not just that threats, power, and our rhetorical objects are diffuse. I have tried to demonstrate that diffusability names *a general condition of rhetoric*, rhetoric’s openness to spreading. Rhetoric is exposed to diffusability: to flow, accretion, uptake, broadcast, distribution, and issuance in new contexts. Derrida discusses rhetoric’s openness to iterability, the power and force of repetition, in terms of dissemination.⁷⁰⁴ Dissemination is the scattering of signs like seeds. For Derrida, dissemination is the condition for polysemy, the quality of having distinct meanings in distinct contexts. Diffusion has a different etymology, history, and register, and because counterterrorism discourse increasingly uses the language of diffusion, we should try to account for its specificities. Fusion and diffusion are important forms of US counterterrorism’s expression in our current “fusion-intelligence matrix.”⁷⁰⁵ Diffusion pertains to the creeping of liquids and spread of information. Its materiality is viscous and sticky, gaseous and expansive. Significations and affects scatter. They also flow. They accrete. They spread. Rhetoric’s

703 “US State Department: Global Terror Attacks Down 13% in 2015,” *BBC World News*, June 3, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-36441606>.

704 Derrida, *Dissemination*, 17.

705 Newkirk, “The Rise of the Fusion-Intelligence Complex.”

diffusability presents us with the problematic of tracking affect, staying on its heels, as its own national security infrastructure.

As we reflect on the rhetoric of US counterterrorism during historical regressions under Trump and intensifications of the War on Terror, we should continue to look to the register of individual and mass discomfiture in our analyses. Rhetorical readings can act performatively upon anxiety. They can open up the fused products of counterterrorism: the racialized affective truths, the threat matrixes, and the bundles of feigned anguish. We can diffuse these gathering gestures through close readings, if only partly. To diffuse and fuse anew means that a critic remains agitated: excitable by the interoperations of national security and sensitive to its affects and cultural effects. Rhetoric is jumpy; it activates and deactivates subjects. The rhetorician-sleuth is on the case, concerned, suspended, uneasy. National security counterterrorism rhetoric works through the manipulation of anxiety. If there is any remaining confusion about how to respond to these manipulations, let it be the confusion of how to keep critical inquiry into national security rhetoric open, sustained, ready to jump.

Appendix: IRB Materials

Appendix 0.1 IRB Approval Letter.



OFFICE OF RESEARCH SUPPORT

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

P.O. Box 7426, Austin, Texas 78713 · Mail Code A3200
(512) 471-8871 · FAX (512) 471-8873

FWA # 00002030

Date: 05/12/17

PI: Marnie Margaret Ritchie

Dept: Communication Studies

Title: US Counterterrorism and the Problem of Anxiety

Re: IRB Expedited Approval for Protocol Number 2017-02-0032

Dear Marnie Margaret Ritchie:

In accordance with the Federal Regulations the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the above referenced research study and found it met the requirements for approval under the Expedited category noted below for the following period of time: 05/12/2017 to 05/11/2018. *Expires 12 a.m. [midnight] of this date.* If the research will be conducted at more than one site, you may initiate research at any site from which you have a letter granting you permission to conduct the research. You should retain a copy of the letter in your files.

Expedited category of approval:

- ☐ 1) Clinical studies of drugs and medical devices only when condition (a) or (b) is met. (a) Research on drugs for which an investigational new drug application (21 CFR Part 312) is not required. (Note: Research on marketed drugs that significantly increases the risks or decreases the acceptability of the risks associated with the use of the product is not eligible for expedited review). (b) Research on medical devices for which (i) an investigational device exemption application (21 CFR Part 812) is not required; or (ii) the medical device is cleared/approved for marketing and the medical device is being used in accordance with its cleared/approved labeling.
- ☐ 2) Collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture as follows: (a) from healthy, non-pregnant adults who weigh at least 110 pounds. For these subjects, the amounts drawn may not exceed 550 ml in an 8 week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week; or (b) from other adults and children², considering the age, weight, and health of the subjects, the collection procedure, the amount of blood to be collected, and the frequency with which it will be collected. For these subjects, the amount drawn may not exceed the lesser of 50 ml or 3 ml per kg in an 8 week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week.
- ☐ 3) Prospective collection of biological specimens for research purposes by non-invasive means. Examples:
 - (a) Hair and nail clippings in a non-disfiguring manner.
 - (b) Deciduous teeth at time of exfoliation or if routine patient care indicates a need for extraction;
 - (c) Permanent teeth if routine patient care indicates a need for extraction.

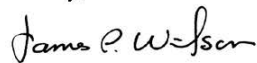
- (d) Excreta and external secretions (including sweat).
 - (e) Uncannulated saliva collected either in an un-stimulated fashion or stimulated by chewing gumbase or wax or by applying a dilute citric solution to the tongue.
 - (f) Placenta removed at delivery.
 - (g) Amniotic fluid obtained at the time of rupture of the membrane prior to or during labor.
 - (h) Supra- and subgingival dental plaque and calculus, provided the collection procedure is not more invasive than routine prophylactic scaling of the teeth and the process is accomplished in accordance with accepted prophylactic techniques.
 - (i) Mucosal and skin cells collected by buccal scraping or swab, skin swab, or mouth washings.
 - (j) Sputum collected after saline mist nebulization.
- ☐ 4) Collection of data through non-invasive procedures (not involving general anesthesia or sedation) routinely employed in clinical practice, excluding procedures involving x-rays or microwaves. Where medical devices are employed, they must be cleared/approved for marketing. (Studies intended to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of the medical device are not generally eligible for expedited review, including studies of cleared medical devices for new indications).
- Examples:
- (a) Physical sensors that are applied either to the surface of the body or at a distance and do not involve input of significant amounts of energy into the subject or an invasion of the subject's privacy.
 - (b) Weighing or testing sensory acuity.
 - (c) Magnetic resonance imaging.
 - (d) Electrocardiography, electroencephalography, thermography, detection of naturally occurring radioactivity, electroretinography, ultrasound, diagnostic infrared imaging, doppler blood flow, and echocardiography.
 - (e) Moderate exercise, muscular strength testing, body composition assessment, and flexibility testing where appropriate given the age, weight, and health of the individual.
- ☐ 5) Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for non-research purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis).
Note: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(4). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.
- ☒ 6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
- ☒ 7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.
Note: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.
- ☒ Use the attached approved informed consent document(s).
- ☐ You have been granted a Waiver of Documentation of Consent according to 45 CFR 46.117 and/or 21 CFR 56.109(c)(1).
- ☐ You have been granted a Waiver of Informed Consent according to 45 CFR 46.116(d).

Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator:

1. Report immediately to the IRB any unanticipated problems.
2. Submit for review and approval by the IRB all modifications to the protocol or consent form(s). Ensure the proposed changes in the approved research are not applied without prior IRB review and approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subject. Changes in approved research implemented without IRB review and approval initiated to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subject must be promptly reported to the IRB, and will be reviewed under the unanticipated problems policy to determine whether the change was consistent with ensuring the subjects continued welfare.
3. Report any significant findings that become known in the course of the research that might affect the willingness of subjects to continue to participate.
4. Ensure that only persons formally approved by the IRB enroll subjects.
5. Use only a currently approved consent form, if applicable.
Note: Approval periods are for 12 months or less.
6. Protect the confidentiality of all persons and personally identifiable data, and train your staff and collaborators on policies and procedures for ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of subjects and their information.
7. Submit a Continuing Review Application for continuing review by the IRB. Federal regulations require IRB review of on-going projects no less than once a year a reminder letter will be sent to you two months before your expiration date. If a reminder is not received from Office of Research Support (ORS) about your upcoming continuing review, it is still the primary responsibility of the Principal Investigator not to conduct research activities on or after the expiration date. The Continuing Review Application must be submitted, reviewed and approved, before the expiration date.
8. Upon completion of the research study, a Closure Report must be submitted to the ORS.
9. Include the IRB study number on all future correspondence relating to this protocol.

If you have any questions contact the ORS by phone at (512) 471-8871 or via e-mail at orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

Sincerely,



James Wilson, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair

Appendix 0.2 Consent for Participation Form.

IRB USE ONLY

Study Number: 2017-02-0032

Approval Date: 05/12/2017

Expires: 05/11/2018

Consent for Participation in Research

Title: "Fusing Safer Futures: U.S. Counterterrorism and the Problem of Anxiety"

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. The person performing the research will answer any of your questions. Read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your consent.

Purpose of the Study

You have been asked to participate in a research study about fusion center communication related to the anxiety that surrounds emerging complex threats like terrorism. The purpose of this study is to see how fusion centers communicate about the nature of threats.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview. This study will take approximately one hour and will include 40 study participants.

Your participation will be audio recorded and labeled with a date and time. Pseudonyms will be used for all transcriptions.

If you wish to opt out of audio recording, your participation will be transcribed by hand.

What are the risks involved in this study?

The potential risk to the participants is no greater than everyday life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, this study will help to make fusion centers more effective at providing services.

Do you have to participate?

No, your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate at all or, if you start the study, you may withdraw at any time. Withdrawal or refusing to participate will not affect your relationship with The University of Texas at Austin (University) in any way.

If you would like to participate, I will read this form out loud to you. You will receive a copy of this form.

Will there be any compensation?

There will be no compensation for participating in the study.

Participation

If you agree to participate, this form will be read to you, and you may keep a copy of the form.

How will your privacy and confidentiality be protected if you participate in this research study?

Your privacy and the confidentiality of your data will be protected by not including identifiable information in anything written about the study, including name or location of center. Files will be password protected.

If it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review the study records, information that can be linked to you will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate it with you, or with your participation in any study.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be audio recorded. Any audio recordings will be stored securely and only the research team will have access to the recordings. Recordings will be kept for two years and then erased.

Whom to contact with questions about the study?

Prior, during or after your participation you can contact the researcher Marnie Ritchie at +15125341167 or send an email to mmritchie@utexas.edu for any questions or if you feel that you have been harmed.

This study has been reviewed and approved by The University Institutional Review Board and the study number is **2017-02-0032**.

Whom to contact with questions concerning your rights as a research participant?

For questions about your rights or any dissatisfaction with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board by phone at +1 (512) 471-8871 or email at orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

Signature

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, procedures, benefits, and the risks involved in this research study.

Print Name of Person obtaining consent

Signature of Person obtaining consent

The University of Texas at Austin
Institutional Review Board

Date

Page 2 of 2

Appendix 0.3 Recruitment Flyer.

Request for Interview
Marnie Ritchie, “Fusing Futures” Dissertation
University of Texas at Austin

Date: June 2017

Overview

In the spirit of partnership between Fusion Centers and UT research, this UT Austin research study seeks anonymous interviews with current and former Fusion Center staff to enhance security communication. The interviews contribute toward the completion of the interviewer’s dissertation.

Research Questions

The study attempts to answer:

1. What is information “fusion”? How does it work?
2. How do intelligence centers manage public anxiety about threats?
3. What kind of new, emerging threats are important to monitor?
4. How do intelligence centers monitor and respond to threats?
5. What are current challenges for counter-terrorism analysts?
6. How do centers learn from past intelligence failures?

Interview Details

The interviews are:

- **Anonymous**
 - o No transcribed or published names, titles, photographs, or locations
- 60-minutes long
- Voice-recorded only for transcription by the interviewer

If requested, questions can be sent in advance, with interviewer permission to ask follow-up questions.

The interviews are approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Texas at Austin. The IRB certifies studies that pose no threat to human subjects. For more information about the process, see: <https://research.utexas.edu/ors/human-subjects/>.

About the Researcher

Marnie Ritchie is a PhD-seeking Graduate Fellow in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. She can be reached at mmritchie@utexas.edu or 512-534-1167.

Appendix 0.4 Interview Guide: Watch Center.

Study Title: “Fusing Safer Futures: U.S. Counterterrorism and the Problem of Anxiety”

Principal Investigator: Marnie Ritchie

INTERVIEW GUIDE 1 – WATCH CENTER

This research project, as described in the protocol, involves semi-structured, respondent interviews. In semi-structured interviews, researchers develop a list of particular themes that will be discussed and open-ended questions that will be posed, but do not follow a set of pre-determined questions since many questions arise over the course of the interview. Thus, the researcher operates under the assumption that questions will emerge in the interview, and is sensitive to the emergent data. Presented in this interview guide, then, are some main themes that the participants will address, as well as open-ended questions to catalyze their thought.

Themes and Potential Questions:

The participant’s background and experience

- What is your role in a fusion center?
- How long have you been involved with fusion centers? How did you hear about them?
- What kind of work do you do? How long have you done this work?
- Where did you work prior to the fusion center?
- How do you perceive your role is viewed by the public?
- What are the greatest challenges you face in this role?

The participant’s view of intelligence gathering

- What technologies do you use to gather intelligence from the public?
- What is the most common call you hear from the Watch Center?
- How do you decide what data is relevant to the fusion center?
- Why is it important to have “real-time” awareness of threats?
- What are the barriers to “real-time” threat updating?
- How do you manage info-glut?
- What kind of technologies do fusion centers need to gather intelligence that they might not have?

The participant’s view of the Watch Center

- What do you see as the purpose of the Watch Center?
- In your opinion, is the Watch Center working toward its intended goal? Why or why not?
- How can the Watch Center better adapt to emerging threats?
- What is working well? What is working poorly? Why?
- Do you think the Watch Center is necessary for the city and the state? Why or why not?
- How does the Watch Center relate to the rest of the fusion center?

The participant’s view of terrorism generally

- How do you define terrorism?
- What do you see as its greatest harm?
- What person, nation, or group does terrorism affect? Why?
- What kind of person, nation, or group undertakes terrorism? Why?
- What kind of counterterrorism intelligence gathering is working well in fusion centers? Other centers? Why?

- What kind of counterterrorism intelligence gathering is not working well in fusion centers? Other centers? Why?
- How would you implement counterterrorism intelligence gathering measures in the U.S.?

Appendix 0.5 Interview Guide: Intelligence Analysts.

Study Title: “Fusing Safer Futures: U.S. Counterterrorism and the Problem of Anxiety”

Principal Investigator: Marnie Ritchie

INTERVIEW GUIDE 2 – INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS

This research project, as described in the protocol, involves semi-structured, respondent interviews. In semi-structured interviews, researchers develop a list of particular themes that will be discussed and open-ended questions that will be posed, but do not follow a set of pre-determined questions since many questions arise over the course of the interview. Thus, the researcher operates under the assumption that questions will emerge in the interview, and is sensitive to the emergent data. Presented in this interview guide, then, are some main themes that the participants will address, as well as open-ended questions to catalyze their thought.

Themes and Potential Questions:

The participant’s background and experience

- What is your role in a fusion center?
- How long have you been involved with fusion centers? How did you hear about them?
- Where did you work prior to the fusion center?
- What kind of work do you do? How long have you done this work?
- How do you perceive your role is viewed by the public?
- What are the greatest challenges you face in this role?

The participant’s view of intelligence analysis

- What is the best way to undertake intelligence analysis?
- What do you think is the most pressing emerging threat in the US?
- How can the intelligence community best adapt to emerging threats?
- How do you predict behaviors? With what technology?
- Do you work in analysis teams? If so, how are they organized? What are the advantages and disadvantages of working in analysis teams?
- How do you manage privacy concerns?
- How do you manage info-glut?
- How does counterterrorism intelligence differ from other crimes intelligence?
- How does all crimes intelligence help or hinder counterterrorism intelligence?
- What are fusion analysis products?
- Who are the customers of fusion centers who receive and request products? How do fusion centers decide the stakeholders involved?
- Do you think the intelligence community has had past intelligence failures? If so, how has it adapted to these?
- Do you think fusion centers have had past intelligence failures? If so, how has it adapted to these?
- Is there a risk of missing “crucial” intelligence in fusion centers? Why or why not?
- How do analysts help “connect the dots”?

The participant’s view of the fusion center organization

- What do you see as the purpose of fusion centers?
- What kinds of branches does the organization have?
- What is your relation to the organization?
- Are you satisfied with the structure of the organization? Why or why not?

- How well is the fusion center achieving its mission in Texas?
- What is working well? What is working poorly? Why?
- Do you think the organization is necessary for the city and state? Why or why not?
- If you could give any advice to change the organization, what would it be?
- What kind of conflict(s) do you find yourself involved in in relation to the organization? What could help to alleviate the problem(s)?
- What kind of support do fusion centers need? Texas more generally? Why?
- What is one of the most positive experiences you've had with the organization? Why?
- What is one of the most negative experiences you've had with the organization? Why?

The participant's view of terrorism generally

- How do you and your analysis define terrorism?
- What do you see as its greatest harm?
- What person, nation, or group does terrorism affect? Why?
- What kind of person, nation, or group undertakes terrorism? Why?
- What kind of counterterrorism intelligence analysis is working well in fusion centers? Other centers? Why?
- What kind of counterterrorism intelligence analysis is not working well in fusion centers? Other centers? Why?
- If you were able to, how would you implement counterterrorism measures in the U.S.?

Appendix 0.6 Interview Guide: Human Intelligence.

Study Title: “Fusing Safer Futures: U.S. Counterterrorism and the Problem of Anxiety”

Principal Investigator: Marnie Ritchie

INTERVIEW GUIDE 3 – HUMAN INTELLIGENCE STAFF

This research project, as described in the protocol, involves semi-structured, respondent interviews. In semi-structured interviews, researchers develop a list of particular themes that will be discussed and open-ended questions that will be posed, but do not follow a set of pre-determined questions since many questions arise over the course of the interview. Thus, the researcher operates under the assumption that questions will emerge in the interview, and is sensitive to the emergent data. Presented in this interview guide, then, are some main themes that the participants will address, as well as open-ended questions to catalyze their thought.

Themes and Potential Questions:

The participant’s background and experience

- What is your role in a fusion center?
- How long have you been involved with fusion centers? How did you hear about them?
- Where did you work prior to the fusion center?
- What kind of work do you do? How long have you done this work?
- How do you perceive your role is viewed by the public?
- What are the greatest challenges you face in this role?

The participant’s view of intelligence gathering

- What technologies do you use to gather intelligence?
- What is “human intelligence”?
- Why is human intelligence an important component of intelligence gathering?
- How do you decide what data is relevant to the fusion center?
- Why is it important to have “real-time” awareness of threats?
- What are the barriers to “real-time” threat updating?
- How do you manage info-glut?
- What kind of technologies do fusion centers need to gather intelligence that they might not have?
- What difficulties do you face gathering human intelligence?
- Who do you gather intelligence from?

The participant’s view of the fusion center organization

- What do you see as the purpose of fusion centers?
- What is your relation to the organization?
- Are you satisfied with the structure of the organization? Why or why not?
- How well is the fusion center achieving its mission in Texas?
- What is working well? What is working poorly? Why?
- Do you think the organization is necessary for the city and the state? Why or why not?
- If you could give any advice to change the organization, what would it be?
- What kind of conflict(s) do you find yourself involved in in relation to the organization? What could help to alleviate the problem(s)?
- What kind of support do fusion centers need? Texas more generally? Why?
- What is one of the most positive experiences you’ve had with the organization? Why?
- What is one of the most negative experiences you’ve had with the organization? Why?

The participant's view of terrorism generally

- How do you define terrorism?
- What do you see as its greatest harm?
- What person, nation, or group does terrorism affect? Why?
- What kind of person, nation, or group undertakes terrorism? Why?
- What kind of counterterrorism intelligence gathering is working well in fusion centers? Other centers? Why?
- What kind of counterterrorism intelligence gathering is not working well in fusion centers? Other centers? Why?
- How would you implement counterterrorism intelligence gathering measures in the U.S.?

Appendix 0.7 Interview Guide: Homeland Security.

Study Title: “Fusing Safer Futures: U.S. Counterterrorism and the Problem of Anxiety”

Principal Investigator: Marnie Ritchie

INTERVIEW GUIDE 4 – HOMELAND SECURITY

This research project, as described in the protocol, involves semi-structured, respondent interviews. In semi-structured interviews, researchers develop a list of particular themes that will be discussed and open-ended questions that will be posed, but do not follow a set of pre-determined questions since many questions arise over the course of the interview. Thus, the researcher operates under the assumption that questions will emerge in the interview, and is sensitive to the emergent data. Presented in this interview guide, then, are some main themes that the participants will address, as well as open-ended questions to catalyze their thought.

Themes and Potential Questions:

The participant’s background and experience

- What is your role in a fusion center?
- How long have you been involved with fusion centers? How did you hear about them?
- What kind of work do you do? How long have you done this work?
- Where did you work prior to the fusion center?
- How do you perceive your role is viewed by the public?
- What are the greatest challenges you face in this role?

The participant’s view of homeland security

- What is homeland security? How is it different from other forms of security?
- What is the most pressing threat to homeland security today?
- What role does the city play in homeland security? What role does the state play in homeland security?
- How do you decide to prioritize threats and respond to them?
- Do you believe Americans in the homeland are safe? Why or why/not?

The participant’s view of the fusion center organization

- What do you see as the purpose of fusion centers?
- What is your relation to the organization?
- Are you satisfied with the structure of the organization? Why or why not?
- How well is the fusion center achieving its mission in Texas?
- What is working well? What is working poorly? Why?
- Do you think the organization is necessary for the city and the state? Why or why not?
- If you could give any advice to change the organization, what would it be?
- What kind of conflict(s) do you find yourself involved in in relation to the organization? What could help to alleviate the problem(s)?
- What kind of support do fusion centers need? Texas more generally? Why?
- What is one of the most positive experiences you’ve had with the organization? Why?
- What is one of the most negative experiences you’ve had with the organization? Why?

The participant’s view of terrorism generally

- How do you define terrorism?
- What do you see as its greatest harm?

- What person, nation, or group does terrorism affect? Why?
- What kind of person, nation, or group undertakes terrorism? Why?
- What kind of counterterrorism intelligence gathering is working well in fusion centers? Other centers? Why?
- What kind of counterterrorism intelligence gathering is not working well in fusion centers? Other centers? Why?
- How would you implement counterterrorism intelligence gathering measures in the U.S.?

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Vita

Marnie Ritchie found Communication Studies through collegiate debate at the University of Vermont. There, she majored in Philosophy with a minor in Political Science. She then went on to earn a Master's in Communication and Rhetorical Studies from Syracuse University. While earning her Doctorate in Communication Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, she worked in both the Communication Studies and Rhetoric and Writing Departments. In Communication Studies, she taught a range of speech courses. In Rhetoric and Writing, she was full-time staff in the Digital Writing and Research Lab. Beginning in Fall 2018, she will be a Visiting Assistant Professor of Rhetoric in the Department of Communication at Pacific Lutheran University.

Her scholarship and teaching question how US (non)citizens become governable during war. One important factor to consider is how negative affects create the conditions for acquiescence. Her work has been published in *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* and the *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*. She has forthcoming work in *Visual Communication Quarterly* and *Capacious: A Journal of Emerging Affect Inquiry*. She incorporates the critique of war affects into her scholarship and teaching. Her pedagogy builds "surveillance literacy," an everyday attunement to how students become governable through war-time monitoring practices. Her research and teaching uphold that negative affects can inform the crucial, creative responses to war's senselessness.

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