

WTE Column of February 14, 2014. Editor's Headline: "Fraud and Terrorism Linked?"

When a film crew unloaded equipment in the driveway of the woman I address as "Sister Susie," I knew it wasn't related to her practices as a Buddhist nun. No, History Channel wanted to film her (behind a screen) for her earlier life. It was January 23, a balmy day in California. The interview, which is set to air sometime soon, was for the Channel's "America's Secrets" series.

Sister Susie lives across the street from my son Andy and family. During visits there, we take time to practice meditation, both sitting and walking. Her spacious gardens are marvels of natural beauty, perfect for strolling. Sister Susie wears Buddhist robes and keeps her head shaved, which doesn't detract in the least from her lively blue eyes. She spent years in a Buddhist monastery; eventually, health considerations impelled her to move closer to her son's place of work. Her home, dedicated to Buddhist practices, is replete with meditation cushions, candles, statues, gongs, and a library of pertinent books.

In her former life in Colorado, Sister Susie was married to a Muslim originally from Iraq, who became the father of her only child, Omar, now a gifted scientist. Though the couple eventually divorced, her marriage to Omar's father gave her insight into the peaceful aspects of Islam. When Susie remarried, she became Susan Fenger. Sadly, that later union left her widowed after eight blissful years.

In Denver, having completed a degree in law enforcement, she entered the fledgling fraud division of Colorado's Department of Labor and Employment. Soon she was in charge of the entire division, as certain criminal elements gained a foothold in Colorado.

As forensics expert and chief investigator, this kindly neighbor exposed a number of fraudulent schemes perpetrated by a radical Islamic group. Her investigation brought to justice several perpetrators, which provoked the ire of their leader. Sheikh Mubarick Ali Jilani, once Pakistan's chief intelligence officer, now a rabid ideologue, aims to "purify Islam through violence." Though residing in Pakistan, Sheikh Jilani put a bounty on Susan Fenger's head of \$50,000, referring to her as "that FBI woman," though Fenger never worked for the FBI.

By the time she developed her case, Colorado's Jamaat Al Fuqra had skimmed \$355,000 off state funds, only to send most of it to Jilani in Pakistan. And that's the loot from but one of his groups, many of which exist to this day. In the U.S., Al Fuqra membership consists primarily of U.S. citizens—impoverished, desperate citizens.

Susan is in the process of changing the Fenger surname. A book published in 2012, she fears, will bring her into harm's way once again. "Twilight in America" shines the spotlight on her work of two decades earlier, when she traced Al Fuqra worker's compensation fraud. As a result of her investigation, five Al Fuqra members were convicted (a sixth fled and was never apprehended). They had raised money through what's commonly described as "white-collar crimes," though the Colorado jamaat (commune) engaged in more sinister activities as well: assassinations and fire-bombings. One time the attack was on a Hare Krishna temple in Denver, another time on a mosque in Arizona, whose imam was murdered for his interpretation of Islam, which differed markedly from Jilani's.

Back in 1990, FBI agents contacted Fenger regarding suspicious worker's comp claims. Her expertise in handwriting analysis established that certain claims were executed under different names by the same individual. Inexplicably, soon the FBI agents told her they had orders to pull out. "They wanted to nail these guys for the big stuff, murders and bombings," she says. "Trouble is, they lacked the evidence to ensure convictions." Persecuting for workers' comp fraud seems to have been too mundane for the agents.

Martin Mawyer documents the murders and bombings. "Twilight" is replete with references to militant training, filmed in Al Fuqra camps. The author also explains Susan Fenger's groundbreaking work in detail, which began a couple of years prior to the first attack on the World Trade Center. "Twilight" sometimes indulges in doomsday predictions of jihadists taking over America; still, Mawyer's data appear to be solid. He includes a U.S. map showing 35 Al Fuqra camps, yet the map, he writes, is far from complete. "I gave him most of this information," says Sister Susie.

Al Fuqra actively recruits among impoverished African Americans, promising a life of self-sufficiency and serenity that, alas, never happens. Life with Al Fuqra means existing on deprivation and fear. Children as well as adults are indoctrinated that Jilani is a god-like presence for whose sake it's ok to scam Americans. "Homeschooling" leaves youngsters barely literate, yet some members hatch sophisticated schemes of identity theft, welfare fraud, fraudulent worker's compensation claims, illegal arms sales, even drug running and money laundering.

After 9/11 the FBI and CIA returned to Fenger's work. "Federal agents interviewed me who wanted to make my case the 'gold standard of terrorist investigation' in training manuals," she says.

The History Channel folks emailed her several government-published manuals, among them a 2005 document of more than 70 pages, "Identifying the Links between White-Collar Crime and Terrorism," that presents Fenger's Colorado efforts in a detailed "Fuqra Case Study."

Sister Susie tells me, when Martin Mawyer's book first came out, Sheikh Jilani sued the author for \$15 million on grounds of defamation. No word of what has come of the lawsuit.