

The Dancing Israelis on 9/11

<http://killtown.blogspot.com/2005/11/dancing-israelis-on-911.html>

Killtown



Questioning the 9/11 attacks...

[Killtown](#)

<http://killtown.blogspot.com/>

[Killtown channel](#)



After reviewing the evidence, there can only be [one logical reason](#) as to why a group (perhaps multiple groups) of **young Israeli men**, in which some were found out to be Mossad agents, **were filming the Twin Towers on 9/11 *before* the attack and then were celebrating** and taking pictures of themselves with the burning

WTC in the background; **they were in on it.**



(Photo taken from [video clip.](#))

One of the Israelis says about filming the burning WTC:

"Our purpose was to document the event."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IT8Gthq-e4>

Five men detained as suspected conspirators

Wednesday, September 12, 2001

By PAULO LIMA

Staff Writer

"About eight hours after terrorists struck Manhattan's tallest skyscrapers, **police in Bergen County detained five men who they said were found carrying maps linking them to the blasts.**

The five men, who were in **a van stopped on Route 3 in East Rutherford** around 4:30 p.m., were being questioned by police but had not been charged with any crime late Tuesday. The **Bergen County Police bomb squad X-rayed packages but did not find any explosives**, authorities said.

However, sources close to the investigation said they found other evidence linking the men to the bombing plot.

"There are maps of the city in the car with certain places highlighted," the source said. **"It looked like they're hooked in with this. It looked like they knew what was going to happen** when they were at Liberty State Park."

Sources also said that **bomb-sniffing dogs reacted as if they had detected explosives**, although officers were unable to find anything. The FBI seized the van for further testing, authorities said.

Sources said **the van was stopped as it headed east on Route 3, between the Hackensack River bridge and the Sheraton hotel.** As a precaution, police shut down Route 3 traffic in both directions after the stop and evacuated a small roadside motel near the Sheraton.

Sources close to the investigation said **the men said they were Israeli tourists**, but police had not been able to confirm their identities. Authorities would not release their names.

East Rutherford officers stopped the van after the FBI's Newark Field Office broadcast an alert asking surrounding police departments to look for a white Chevrolet van, police said.

"We got an alert to be on the lookout for a white Chevrolet van with New Jersey registration and writing on the side," said Bergen County Police Chief John Schmidig. **"Three individuals were seen celebrating in Liberty State Park after the impact. They said three people were jumping up and down."**

The East Rutherford officers summoned the county police bomb squad, New Jersey state troopers, and FBI agents, who waited alongside the van as prosecutors from the U.S. Attorney's Office tried to obtain a warrant to search the van late Tuesday, Schmidig said.

By 10 p.m., members of the bomb squad were picking through the van and X-raying packages found inside, Schmidig said.

Sources said the FBI alert, known as a BOLO or "Be On Lookout," was sent out at 3:31 p.m.

It read:

"Vehicle possibly related to New York terrorist attack. White, 2000 Chevrolet van with 'Urban Moving Systems' sign on back seen at Liberty State Park, Jersey City, NJ, at the time of first impact of jetliner into World Trade Center.

"Three individuals with van were seen celebrating after initial impact and subsequent explosion. FBI Newark Field Office requests that, if the van is located, hold for prints and detain individuals."

FBI spokeswoman Sandra Carroll declined to comment on the incident late Tuesday.

State police Lt. Col. Barry W. Roberson confirmed the traffic stop at a late night news briefing at state police headquarters in Trenton. He would not elaborate, however.

Business records show an **Urban Moving Systems with offices on West 50th Street in Manhattan and on West 18th Street in Weehawken.** Telephone messages left at the businesses Tuesday evening were not immediately returned.

Business records show **the owner as Dominik Suter** of Fair Lawn. **A woman answering the telephone at Suter's home acknowledged he owned the company**

It was not clear Tuesday whether the van stopped by police is related to Suter's company.

A business traveler staying at the Homestead Studio Suites Hotel said she watched state troopers drive the suspects away in a procession of state police cars about 5 p.m.

The woman, who asked not to be identified, said **the people detained appeared to be white men**, but she could not give more details. About 5:30 p.m., police evacuated the hotel without offering guests an explanation.

"First, they told us we could hang out in the lobby, but then they told us we had to leave," the traveler said.

At 10 p.m., the hotel guest said she could see at least two police officers searching through the van while a crowd of other officers kept their distance. Except for police vehicles and a tow truck, the service road beside Route 3 was empty, she said. - [Bergen Record NJ \(Archived\)](#)

Wednesday, September 12, 2001 :

Three arrested with van full of explosives

4:27:11 AM

"Reports from New York are saying **three people have been arrested with a van of explosives. The van was stopped along the New Jersey turn-pike near the George Washington Bridge.** It was not clear why police stopped the van but when they did **they found it was laden down with tonnes of explosives.**" - [TCM Breaking News](#)

(08:45) Car bomb found on George Washington Bridge

"American security services overnight **stopped a car bomb on the George Washington Bridge** connecting New York and New Jersey.
The van, packed with explosives, was stopped on an approach ramp to the bridge. Authorities suspect the terrorists intended to blow up the main crossing between New Jersey and New York, Army Radio reported." - [Jerusalem Post \(Cached\)](#)

Exclusive: 911 Tapes Tell Horror Of 9/11 (Part 2)

Tapes Released For First Time

"JERSEY CITY, N.J. -- They are the first 911 calls from 9/11 to be released. NewsChannel 4 has an exclusive account of the tapes from Jersey City, which sent hundreds of cops and firefighters into the thick

of ground zero.

Dispatcher: Jersey City police.

Caller: Yes, **we have a white van, 2 or 3 guys in there, they look like Palestinians** and going around a building.

Caller: There's a minivan heading **toward the Holland tunnel**, I see the guy by Newark Airport **mixing some junk and he has those sheikh uniform.**

Dispatcher: He has what?

Caller: **He's dressed like an Arab.**" - [WNBC](#)

Thursday, September 13, 2001 :

Suspects `filmed New York atrocities'

2:51:49 PM

"There are reports **five men suspected of being involved in the attack on the World Trade Centre set up cameras to record the atrocity.**

The men set up cameras by the Hudson River and trained them on the twin towers.

The New York Times reports **they congratulated each other when the crashes occurred.**

The five are under investigation by police in Union City, New Jersey, but it is unclear if any of them are in custody.

The allegation came as police in New Jersey told the New York Times the hijackers who left from Newark airport on the flight which crashed in Pennsylvania had received aid from associates in the area.

The paper reported law officials said the team was "aided by confederates in Newark who were responsible for logistical support, including money, rental cars, credit cards and lodging".

And it emerged that FBI investigators believe each team of hijackers acted independently from each other but under orders from a supreme commander.

The conclusion was reached after evidence from the flights' passenger lists, payphone records, evidence taken from the rental car seized in Boston and the frantic phone calls made from the hijacked planes.

It was the commander who selected the flights to be hijacked and orchestrated the attacks to occur at about the same time.

But the man has not been publicly identified by investigators, the New York Times reports. His whereabouts are currently unknown." - [TCM Breaking News](#)

One Arrested, Others Detained at NY Airports

Friday, September 14, 2001

"The New York Times reported Thursday that a group of five men had **set up video cameras** aimed at the Twin Towers **prior to the attack** on Tuesday, and **were seen congratulating one another afterwards.**" - [FOX](#)

-

U.S. arrests of Israelis a mystery

by Doug Saunders, The Globe & Mail [Toronto]

Dec. 17, 2001

LOS ANGELES — U.S. officials have arrested, detained and questioned hundreds of people on vague suspicions of ties to terrorism since Sept. 11, but a few dozen cases are especially mysterious: **They are Israelis**, young and apparently Jewish, **working in the United States on temporary visas** and have little obvious connection to Islamic extremism.

The U.S. government has offered no explanation for the detentions, estimated to be as many as 60 in number, and some of them have begun speaking out in protest and asking courts to end their detention. But Washington appears to be treating them as palpable threats: Many remain in jail. Most have been charged with immigration violations, and either have been or will be deported.

Based on what the Israelis say about the questions they have been asked, **federal officials appear to believe they are** either Muslim extremists hiding behind false Israeli identities or **spies working for the Mossad**, Israel's intelligence agency.

If the latter is the case, it raises the possibility that Washington is using its antiterrorism campaign as an excuse to round up other groups of people it wants out. **"They asked if I was spying on anybody," said Yaniv Hani, 22**, who spent four weeks in custody after Sept. 11 and now faces charges from the Immigration and Naturalization Service for working with an improper visa. He said Federal Bureau of Investigation officials asked him whether he was really Muslim before **switching to questions about possible ties to Mossad. Mr. Hani worked for a number of years for Israel's military police.**

Israel has protested the arrests. Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Israeli embassy in Washington, said the FBI has not contacted Israel about spying allegations, and that "not a single one has been charged with intelligence violations. It has all been visa violations."

Another possibility is that **the FBI suspects the Israelis of taking part in a clandestine operation**. A majority of those arrested were employees of a Florida company, Quality Sales, that hires vacationing Israeli youth to work at vending carts in U.S. shopping malls.

Thomas Dean, a lawyer for the company, acknowledged that the Israelis had been issued the wrong type of visa, since they were tourists on working vacations rather than permanent workers. However, he noted that their cases had all been labelled "special interest" by the INS, a new designation indicating that they are suspects in the antiterrorism campaign, not regular immigration violators.

"Clearly that was what the FBI, from the very beginning, was very interested in talking about — their activity in the Israeli military or any kind of intelligence agency."

(Israel does have a history of spying against the United States, even though the two nations are officially allies. The most famous case is that of Jonathan Pollard, a U.S. military official convicted in 1987 of espionage for stealing top U.S. military secrets on behalf of Israel.)

Also, **five of the Israelis** came to the FBI's attention after they **were seen by New Jersey residents on Sept. 11 making fun of the World Trade Center ruins** and going to extreme lengths to **photograph themselves in front of the wreckage**. The FBI seized and developed **their photos**, one of which **shows Sivan Kurzberg flicking a cigarette lighter in front of the smouldering ruins in an apparently celebratory gesture**.

Steven Noah Gordon, a lawyer for the five, told The New York Times that **their behaviour may have been offensive**, but said the behaviour was not criminal — "and they were being treated as if it was." **The five have since been deported**.

U.S. officials have offered no explanation for the arrests, even to immigration judges. Last month, when the INS asked that bail be denied to 11 of the Israelis, a judge rejected the request, saying the government had been less than forthcoming with evidence.

"Although the [INS] alleges that these cases are 'special,' it has failed to present any credible evidence of the basis for this finding," Judge Elizabeth Hacker wrote. "The service has failed to submit any evidence of terrorist activity or of a threat to national security." - [The Globe & Mail \(Reprint\)](#)

5 Israelis detained for 'puzzling behavior' after WTC tragedy

By Yossi Melman

"**Five Israelis who had worked for a moving company** based in New Jersey are being held in U.S. prisons for what the Federal Bureau of Investigation has described as "**puzzling behavior**" **following the terror attack on the World Trade Center** in New York last Tuesday. The five are expected to be deported sometime soon.

The families of the five, who asked that their names not be released, said that their sons had been questioned by the FBI for hours on end, had been kept in solitary confinement for three days, and had been humiliated, stripped of their clothes and blindfolded.

The mother of one of the young men explained the chain of events as she understands it to Ha'aretz: She said that **the five had worked for the company, which is owned by an Israeli**, for between two months and two years. **They had been arrested some four hours after the attack on the Twin Towers while filming the smoking skyline from the roof of their company's building**, she said. It appears that **they were spotted by one of the neighbors who called the police** and the FBI.

The mother said that the families and friends of the five in Israel had known nothing of the men's whereabouts for a number of days.

"When they finally let my son make a phone call for the first time to a friend in the United States two days ago, **he told him that he had been tortured by the FBI in a basement,**" the mother said. "He was stripped to his underwear; he was blindfolded and questioned for 14 hours. **They thought that** because he has citizenship of a European country as well as of Israel that **he was working for the Mossad** [Israel's secret service]."

Seven FBI agents later stormed the apartment of one of the Israelis, searched it and questioned his roommate. **The Israeli owner of the company,** who has U.S. citizenship, **was also questioned.** Both men were subsequently released.

The families here complained that the Israeli consulate in New York and the situation room set up by the Foreign Ministry there to locate missing Israelis had done nothing to help their sons. The Foreign Ministry told the families that the FBI had denied holding the five and that the consulate had chosen to believe the FBI, the mother said.

The five were transferred out of the FBI's facility on Saturday morning and are now being held in two prisons in New Jersey by the Immigration and Naturalization Services. They are charged with illegally residing in the United States and working there without permits.

The Foreign Ministry said in response that it had been informed by the consulate in New York that **the FBI had arrested the five for "puzzling behavior."** **They are said to have had been caught videotaping the disaster and shouting in what was interpreted as cries of joy and mockery."** - [Haaretz](#) (09/17/01)

Caught In A Dragnet

Case of five Israelis held here since Sept. 11 reveals tension between civil rights and fight against terrorism.

Stewart Ain - Staff Writer

“Just as President George W. Bush was announcing Monday a new effort to deport foreigners illegally in this country, one of five Israelis jailed for working here illegally called his mother from jail to ask when he could go home. **The five men were arrested and imprisoned just hours after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.**

“He cried and asked how long it will take before he can come home,” Israela Marmari of Petach Tikvah said a half-hour after her son, Omer, 22, called from the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn. **“When they were arrested in September, it was believed they were Arabs connected with the terror in New York.”**

In the moving van they were driving for their employer, **Urban Moving Systems** in Weehawken, N.J., the men — **ages 22 to 27** and all single — **carried box cutters. One had \$4,000 in cash, another had a camera, and a third had two passports because he is also a German citizen.**

They were stopped by a police at about 3 p.m. Sept. 11 after two women saw them standing on the roofs of the moving company and their van, smiling as they took pictures of each other with the burning World Trade Center in the background.

No terrorism charges were ever filed, according to their lawyer, Steven Gordon. A spokesman for the Israeli Consulate in New York said flatly: “We were told specifically that they are not suspects” in the terror attacks.

The five were ordered deported Sept. 25 by an immigration judge after they acknowledged working here illegally. The Immigration and Naturalization Service would normally move expeditiously to deport them, but they have been caught up in the Bush administration’s effort to nab anyone even remotely connected with the terror attacks.

The Israelis are among more than 1,000 people arrested since the attack. As in most of the cases, the government was circumspect in releasing information about the arrests.

Gordon said he had difficulty communicating with his clients because when he called to speak with them at the Metropolitan Detention Center, authorities denied knowledge of their whereabouts. Family members also said they could not call and have spoken with them only twice since their arrests.

An INS spokesman, Russell Bergeron, declined to comment directly on the case but acknowledged there are delays in deporting foreigners picked up in connection with the terror attacks.

“The United States government is involved in a worldwide criminal investigation involving the murder of some 6,000 U.S. citizens,” Bergeron explained. “In the course of that investigation, there are individuals who have been arrested by the immigration service. Any individual arrested by INS as a result of this investigation and ordered deported from the United States will remain in custody until that release has been coordinated and cleared by all of the appropriate authorities involved in the investigation.

“We have an obligation to ensure that before individuals are sent out of the country, we are as certain as is humanly possible that they are not linked to or have information regarding the terrorist attack on the United States. There is a time frame before we have to consider releasing those individuals, and it is measured in months.”

He said that since Sept. 11, about 235 foreigners have been picked up for questioning by INS; about 185 remain in custody.

The American Civil Liberties Union joined with a coalition of civil liberties groups this week in filing a Freedom of Information Act request for information about all of those detained since Sept. 11.

Tim Edgar, the ACLU’s legislative counsel, said also he was concerned about a new terrorism law signed by Bush last week that gives law enforcement broad powers to track down and arrest suspected terrorists.

“I would say it is one of the most serious erosions of civil liberties since the 1996 Terrorist Act, and maybe even more serious,” he said.

Gordon said that as an American he could appreciate the precautions taken by the government. **But he said his clients have already passed lie detector tests**, been “subjected to rigorous interrogation” — including one 16-hour stretch at the beginning — and that they have not been questioned in more than a month.

“Their investigation has concluded because if there was anything else, they would be charged or continue to be questioned,” he said.

Families of the five said their incarceration has been difficult. Until this week, Marmari was held in isolation; the others were released from isolation a few days earlier. All are now in with the general prison population.

“They are in very bad condition emotionally,” said Israela Marmari, who noted that **her son had been working for the moving company only two weeks before his arrest.** “We know that everybody is doing everything they can in Israel and in New York [for them], but nobody knows when this is going to be over.

"They are good boys. They are so innocent. My son was in shock [after his arrest]. He said, 'Mommy, I can't believe it. We are Israeli and live with terror every day. How could anybody believe that Israelis could do anything like this?' "

Ronit Ellner said she had planned to come to the U.S. this month for 10 days to visit her son, **Oded, 27, who came to the U.S. six months before his arrest.** Ellner said that when she last spoke with Oded by phone, she did most of the talking.

"I wanted to make him strong and I told him it was all a bad dream that would be over," she said. "I said it would be over and he will come back home. He wants to come back. He misses us and he cries."

Katie Shmuel said her son, **Yaron, 26, who has dual citizenship, had worked for the moving company about six months.**

"It's all a big mistake," she said.

Heni Kayea, 35, the sister of the other two men, Paul and Sivan Kurzberg, 27 and 23, said the brothers have been kept separate since their arrest. Kayea said the family did not learn of their arrest until two days later when the mother of one of the other men picked up called her parents' home with the news.

"We called immigration and for a month they said there are no names like this in the computer," said Kayea, who lives in Charlotte, N.C.

Kayea said that **on the morning of the World Trade Center attack, each of the men called their parents in Israel to assure them they were well and were working in New Jersey at the time.** When the family learned that they were arrested in the "belief they were Arabs, we were shocked," she said.

"My brothers are tall with blue eyes and brown hair. They look like Europeans," Kayea said.

She said **Sivan, who had the camera, had planned to fly to India on Sept. 14** to meet friends there." – [Jewish Week](#) (11/02/01)

The White Van

Were Israelis Detained on Sept. 11 Spies?

June 21 — "Millions saw the horrific images of the World Trade Center attacks, and those who saw them won't forget them. But a **New Jersey homemaker saw something that morning that prompted an investigation into five young Israelis and their possible connection to Israeli intelligence.**

Maria, who asked us not to use her last name, **had a view of the World Trade Center from her New Jersey apartment building.** She remembers a neighbor calling her shortly after the first plane hit the towers.

She grabbed her binoculars and watched the destruction unfolding in lower Manhattan. **But as she watched the disaster, something else caught her eye.**

Maria says she saw three young men kneeling on the roof of a white van in the parking lot of her apartment building. "They seemed to be taking a movie," Maria said.

The men were taking video or photos of themselves with the World Trade Center burning in the background, she said. What struck Maria were the expressions on the men's faces. **"They were like happy, you know ... They didn't look shocked to me. I thought it was very strange,"** she said.

She found the behavior so suspicious that she wrote down the license plate number of the van and called the police. Before long, the FBI was also on the scene, and a statewide bulletin was issued on the

van.

The plate number was traced to a van owned by a company called Urban Moving. Around 4 p.m. on Sept. 11, **the van was spotted on a service road off Route 3**, near New Jersey's Giants Stadium. A police officer pulled the van over, **finding five men, between 22 and 27 years old**, in the vehicle. The men were taken out of the van at gunpoint and handcuffed by police.

The arresting officers said they saw a lot that aroused their suspicion about the men. **One of the passengers had \$4,700 in cash hidden in his sock. Another was carrying two foreign passports. A box cutter was found in the van.** But perhaps the biggest surprise for the officers came when **the five men identified themselves as Israeli citizens.**

'We Are Not Your Problem'

According to the police report, one of the passengers told the officers they had been on the West Side Highway in Manhattan "during the incident" — referring to the World Trade Center attack. **The driver of the van, Sivan Kurzberg, told the officers, "We are Israeli. We are not your problem. Your problems are our problems. The Palestinians are the problem."** The other passengers were his brother **Paul Kurzberg, Yaron Shmuel, Oded Ellner and Omer Marmari.**

When the men were transferred to jail, the case was transferred out of the FBI's Criminal Division, and into the bureau's Foreign Counterintelligence Section, which is responsible for espionage cases, ABCNEWS has learned.

One reason for the shift, sources told ABCNEWS, was that **the FBI believed Urban Moving may have been providing cover for an Israeli intelligence operation.**

After the five men were arrested, **the FBI got a warrant and searched Urban Moving's Weehawken, N.J., offices.**

The FBI searched Urban Moving's offices for several hours, removing boxes of documents and a dozen computer hard drives. **The FBI also questioned Urban Moving's owner.** His attorney insists that his client answered all of the FBI's questions. **But when FBI agents tried to interview him again a few days later, he was gone.**

Three months later 2020's cameras photographed the inside of **Urban Moving**, and **it looked as if the business had been shut down in a big hurry.** Cell phones were lying around; office phones were still connected; and **the property of dozens of clients remained in the warehouse.**

The owner had also cleared out of his New Jersey home, put it up for sale and returned with his family to Israel.

'A Scary Situation'

Steven Gordon, the attorney for the five Israeli detainees, acknowledged that his clients' actions on Sept. 11 would easily have aroused suspicions. "You got a group of guys that are taking pictures, on top of a roof, of the World Trade Center. They're speaking in a foreign language. They got two passports on 'em. One's got a wad of cash on him, and they got box cutters. Now that's a scary situation."

But Gordon insisted that his clients were just five young men who had come to America for a vacation, ended up working for a moving company, and were taking pictures of the event.

The five Israelis were held at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, ostensibly for overstaying their tourist visas and working in the United States illegally. Two weeks after their arrest, an immigration judge ordered them to be deported. But sources told ABCNEWS that FBI and CIA officials in Washington put a hold on the case.

The five men were held in detention for more than two months. Some of them were placed in solitary confinement for 40 days, and some of them were given as many as seven lie-detector tests.

Plenty of Speculation

Since their arrest, plenty of speculation has swirled about the case, and what the five men were doing that morning. Eventually, **The Forward**, a respected Jewish newspaper in New York, **reported the FBI concluded that two of the men were Israeli intelligence operatives.**

Vince Cannistraro, a former chief of operations for counterterrorism with the CIA who is now a consultant for ABCNEWS, said federal authorities' interest in the case was heightened when **some of the men's names were found in a search of a national intelligence database.**

Israeli Intelligence Connection?

According to Cannistraro, **many people in the U.S. intelligence community believed that some of the men arrested were working for Israeli intelligence.** Cannistraro said **there was speculation as to whether Urban Moving had been "set up or exploited for the purpose of launching an intelligence operation against radical Islamists in the area, particularly in the New Jersey-New York area."**

Under this scenario, **the alleged spying operation was not aimed against the United States, but at penetrating or monitoring radical fund-raising and support networks in Muslim communities like Paterson, N.J., which was one of the places where several of the hijackers lived in the months prior to Sept. 11.**

For the FBI, deciphering the truth from the five Israelis proved to be difficult. One of them, **Paul Kurzberg, refused to take a lie-detector test for 10 weeks — then failed it,** according to his lawyer. Another of his lawyers told us **Kurzberg had been reluctant to take the test because he had once worked for Israeli intelligence** in another country.

Sources say the Israelis were targeting these fund-raising networks because they were thought to be channeling money to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, groups that are responsible for most of the suicide bombings in Israel. "[The] Israeli government has been very concerned about the activity of radical Islamic groups in the United States that could be a support apparatus to Hamas and Islamic Jihad," Cannistraro said.

The men denied that they had been working for Israeli intelligence out of the New Jersey moving company, and Ram Horvitz, their Israeli attorney, dismissed the allegations as "stupid and ridiculous." Mark Regev, the spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in Washington, goes even further, asserting the issue was never even discussed with U.S. officials.

"These five men were not involved in any intelligence operation in the United States, and the American intelligence authorities have never raised this issue with us," Regev said. "The story is simply false."

No 'Pre-Knowledge'

Despite the denials, sources tell ABCNEWS there is still debate within the FBI over whether or not the young men were spies. Many U.S. government officials still believe that some of them were on a mission for Israeli intelligence. But the FBI told ABCNEWS, "To date, this investigation has not identified anybody who in this country had pre-knowledge of the events of 9/11."

Sources also said that even if the men were spies, there is no evidence to conclude they had advance knowledge of the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11. The investigation, at the end of the day, after all the polygraphs, all of the field work, all the cross-checking, the intelligence work, concluded that they probably did not have advance knowledge of 9/11," Cannistraro noted.

As to what they were doing on the van, they say they read about the attack on the Internet, couldn't see it from their offices and went to the parking lot for a better view. But **no one has been able to find a good explanation for why they may have been smiling with the towers of the World Trade Center burning in the background. Both the lawyers for the young men and the Israeli Embassy chalk it up to immature conduct.**

According to ABCNEWS sources, Israeli and U.S. government officials worked out a deal — and after 71 days, the five Israelis were taken out of jail, put on a plane, and deported back home.

While the former detainees refused to answer ABCNEWS' questions about their detention and what they were doing on Sept. 11, **several of the detainees discussed their experience in America on an Israeli talk show after their return home.**

Said one of the men, **denying that they were laughing or happy** on the morning of Sept. 11, **"The fact of the matter is we are coming from a country that experiences terror daily. Our purpose was to document the event."** - [ABC News \(Archive - Reprint\)](#) (09/21/02)

State Granted Access to Moving Company's Storage Facility

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 13, 2001

"NEWARK- The State Division of Consumer Affairs ("Consumer Affairs") is asking all citizens who have goods stored at **Urban Moving Systems' Weehawken warehouse** to immediately contact Consumer Affairs, Attorney General John J. Farmer, Jr., and New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Director Mark S. Herr announced today.

The State on Wednesday obtained a court order giving inspectors from Consumer Affairs access to the facility allowing consumers access to retrieve their goods and belongings. **The State**, at the same time, **filed a lawsuit** in Hudson County Superior Court **against Urban Moving Systems and its owner Dominick Suter** alleging violations of both the State's Consumer Fraud Act and regulations set forth in the Public Movers and Warehousing Licensing Act.

According to the complaint, **on or about September 14, 2001, Suter departed from the United States** and left no one acting as an agent for Urban.

The complaint also alleges that Suter violated the Mover's Act by, among other things, failing to provide Consumer Affairs the name of a current contact person or agent, not adequately responding to consumer requests for access to their belongings and not having an agent available for at least 20-30 per week to allow consumers access to their belongings.

"We became aware of the hardship consumers faced who could not get access to their belongings at Urban's warehouse," Attorney General Farmer said. "By obtaining this court order we can now offer consumers access to what is rightfully theirs. Our lawsuit should serve notice that we intend to prosecute those who violate our laws and undermine the public's trust."

"It appears that goods belonging to approximately 100 consumers are stored at the warehouse. Thus far we have only heard from 36 consumers," Herr said. "We have access to the facility for 30 days so we are urging consumers who have goods stored with Urban to contact us as soon as possible."

Consumers can gain access to the facility on an appointment basis and will have to provide proof of ownership to claim their goods, Herr said.

Consumers should contact Consumer Affairs at 973-504-6442 or 973-504-6228 to gain access to the Urban facility.

A violation of the Consumer Fraud Act carries a maximum penalty of \$7,500 for the first offense and \$15,000 for the second and each subsequent offense. A violation of the Licensing Act carries a penalty of \$2,500 for the first offense and \$5,000 for the second and each subsequent offense.

Deputy Attorney General Alan R. Niedz of the Division of Law is handling this matter for the State." - [New Jersey Law & Public Safety](#)

Spy Rumors Fly on Gusts of Truth

Americans Probing Reports of Israeli Espionage

MARCH 15, 2002
By MARC PERELMAN
FORWARD STAFF

"Despite angry denials by Israel and its American supporters, reports that Israel was conducting spying activities in the United States may have a grain of truth, the Forward has learned. However, far from pointing to Israeli spying against U.S. government and military facilities, as reported in Europe last week, **the incidents in question appear to represent a case of Israelis in the United States spying on a common enemy, radical Islamic networks** suspected of links to Middle East terrorism. **In particular, a group of five Israelis arrested in New Jersey shortly after the September 11 attacks** and held for more than two months was subjected to an unusual number of polygraph tests and interrogated by a series of government agencies including the FBI's counterintelligence division, which by some reports remains convinced that Israel was conducting an intelligence operation. **The five Israelis worked for a moving company with few discernable assets that closed up shop immediately afterward and whose owner fled to Israel.**

Other allegations involved Israelis claiming to be art students who had backgrounds in signal interception and ordnance. (See related story, Page 8.)

Sources emphasized that the release of all the Israelis under investigation indicates that they were cleared of any suspicion that they had prior knowledge of the September 11 attacks, as some anti-Israel media outlets have suggested.

The resulting tensions between Washington and Jerusalem, sources told the Forward, arose not because of the operations' targets but because Israel reportedly violated a secret gentlemen's agreement between the two countries under which espionage on each other's soil is to be coordinated in advance.

Most experts and former officials interviewed for this article said that such so-called unilateral or uncoordinated Israeli monitoring of radical Muslims in America would not be surprising.

In fact, they said, Israeli intelligence played a key role in helping the Bush administration to crack down on Islamic charities suspected of funneling money to terrorist groups, most notably the Richardson, Texas-based Holy Land Foundation last December.

"I have no doubt Israel has an interest in spying on those groups," said Peter Unsinger, an intelligence expert who teaches justice administration at San Jose University. "The Israelis give us good stuff, like on the Hamas charities."

According to one former high-ranking American intelligence official, who asked not to be named, **the FBI came to the conclusion** at the end of its investigation **that the five Israelis arrested in New Jersey last September were conducting a Mossad surveillance mission and that their employer, Urban Moving Systems of Weehawken, N.J., served as a front.**

After their arrest, the men were held in detention for two-and-a-half months and were deported at the end of November, officially for visa violations.

However, a counterintelligence investigation by **the FBI concluded that at least two of them were in fact Mossad operatives,** according to the former American official, who said he was regularly briefed on the investigation by two separate law enforcement officials.

"The assessment was that Urban Moving Systems was a front for the Mossad and operatives employed by it," he said. "The conclusion of the FBI was that they were spying on local Arabs but that they could leave because they did not know anything about 9/11."

However, he added, the bureau was "very irritated because it was a case of so-called unilateral espionage, meaning they didn't know about it."

Spokesmen for the FBI, the Justice Department and the Immigration and Naturalization Service refused to discuss the case. **Israeli officials flatly dismissed the allegations as untrue.**

However, the former American official said that **after American authorities confronted Jerusalem on the issue at the end of last year, the Israeli government acknowledged the operation** and apologized for not coordinating it with Washington.

The five men — Sivan and Paul Kurzberg, Oded Ellner, Omer Marmari and Yaron Shmuel — were arrested eight hours after the attacks by the Bergen County, N.J., police while driving in an Urban Moving Systems van. The police acted on an FBI alert after **the men allegedly were seen acting strangely while watching the events from the roof of their warehouse and the roof of their van.**

In addition to their strange behavior and **their Middle Eastern looks**, the suspicions were compounded when **a box cutter and \$4,000 in cash were found in the van.** Moreover, **one man carried two passports and another had fresh pictures of the men standing with the smoldering wreckage of the World Trade Center in the background.**

The Bergen County police immediately handed the suspects to the INS, which turned them over to a joint police-FBI terrorism task force set up after September 11 to deal with all possible links with the attacks. The five Israelis were detained in the high-security Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn in solitary confinement until mid-October. On September 25, they all signed papers acknowledging violations of U**** immigration law. At the end of October, the INS issued a deportation order which was enforced a month later after a review by the Justice Department and prodding by Jewish and Israeli officials. However, the former official said, this is just the official story.

In fact, he said, **the nature of the investigation changed after the names of two of the five Israelis showed up on a CIA-FBI database of foreign intelligence operatives**, he said. At that point, he said, the bureau took control of the investigation and launched a Foreign Counterintelligence Investigation, or FCI. FBI investigations into possible links to the September 11 attacks are usually carried by the bureau's counterterrorism division, not its counterintelligence division.

"An FCI means not only that it was serious but also that it was handled at a very high level and very tightly," the former official said. That view was echoed by several former FBI officials interviewed.

Steven Gordon, an American lawyer hired by the families to help secure their release, said he could not confirm which FBI division was in charge of the investigation. However, he acknowledged that "there were a lot of people involved, including counterintelligence officials from the FBI."

The men all underwent at least two polygraph tests each, the lawyer added. He said one of the Israelis took the test seven times, a very unusual total according to several polygraph experts interviewed by the Forward.

After the men were arrested, **FBI agents searched the warehouse of Urban Moving Systems in Weehawken, N.J.**, seizing computer hard drives and documents. **The warehouse was closed on September 14**, said Ron George, a spokesman for the New Jersey State Division of Consumer Affairs.

On December 7, a New Jersey judge ruled that the state could seize the goods remaining inside the warehouse. The state also has a lawsuit pending against **Urban Moving Systems and its owner, Dominik Otto Suter, an Israeli citizen.**

The FBI questioned Mr. Suter once. However, he left the country afterward and went back to Israel before further questioning. Mr. Suter declined through his lawyer to be interviewed for this article.

Earlier this year, the New York State Department of Transportation revoked Urban Moving System's license after discovering that the company's midtown Manhattan base was only a mailing address.

After they returned to Israel at the end of November, the five men told local media that they were kept in solitary confinement, beaten, deprived of food and questioned while blindfolded and in their underwear.

Mr. Ellner, one of the five Israelis, said on two occasions in recent weeks that the five men had decided not to grant any interviews right now "because we went through a very difficult period and we are not ready for this."

Their Israeli lawyer, Ram Horwitz, told the Forward he was still waiting for the results of the medical tests undertaken by the men in Israel to make a decision on an eventual lawsuit in the United States for mistreatment.

Mr. Horwitz insisted the men were not intelligence officers.

Irit Stoffer, an Israeli Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, said the allegations were "completely untrue" and that there were "only visa violations."

"The FBI investigated those cases because of 9/11," Ms. Stoffer said.

Charlene Eban, a spokeswoman for the FBI in Washington, and Don Nelson, a Justice Department spokesman, said they had no knowledge of an Israeli spying operation.

"If we found evidence of unauthorized intelligence operations, that would be classified material," added Jim Margolin, a spokesman for the FBI in New York.

One leading expert in American intelligence operations, Chip Berlet, a senior analyst at the Boston-based Political Research Associates, explained that **there "is a backdoor agreement between allies that says that if one of your spies gets caught and didn't do too much harm, he goes home. It goes on all the time. The official reason is always a visa violation."** - [The Forward](#)

Five Israelis were seen filming as jet liners ploughed into the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001 ...

Were they part of a massive spy ring which shadowed the 9/11 hijackers and knew that al-Qaeda planned a devastating terrorist attack on the USA? Neil Mackay investigates

02 November 2003

THERE was ruin and terror in Manhattan, but, over the Hudson River in New Jersey, **a handful of men were dancing. As the World Trade Centre burned and crumpled, the five men celebrated and filmed the worst atrocity ever committed on American soil** as it played out before their eyes.

Who do you think they were? Palestinians? Saudis? Iraqis, even? Al-Qaeda, surely? Wrong on all counts. **They were Israelis – and at least two of them were Israeli intelligence agents, working for Mossad**, the equivalent of MI6 or the CIA.

Their discovery and arrest that morning is a matter of indisputable fact. To those who have investigated just what the Israelis were up to that day, the case raises one dreadful possibility: that Israeli intelligence had been shadowing the al-Qaeda hijackers as they moved from the Middle East through Europe and into America where they trained as pilots and prepared to suicide-bomb the symbolic heart of the United States. And the motive? To bind America in blood and mutual suffering to the Israeli cause.

After the attacks on New York and Washington, the **former Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was asked what the terrorist strikes would mean for US-Israeli relations. He said: "It's very good."** Then he corrected himself, adding: "Well, it's not good, but it will generate immediate sympathy [for Israel from Americans]."

If Israel's closest ally felt the collective pain of mass civilian deaths at the hands of terrorists, then Israel would have an unbreakable bond with the world's only hyperpower and an effective free hand in dealing with the Palestinian terrorists who had been murdering its innocent civilians as the second intifada dragged on throughout 2001.

It's not surprising that **the New Jersey housewife who first spotted the five Israelis and their white van** wants to preserve her anonymity. She's insisted that **she only be identified as Maria**. A neighbour in her apartment building had called her just after the first strike on the Twin Towers. **Maria grabbed a pair of binoculars and, like millions across the world, she watched the horror of the day unfold.**

As she gazed at the burning towers, **she noticed a group of men kneeling on the roof of a white van in her parking lot**. Here's her recollection: **"They seemed to be taking a movie. They were like happy, you know ... they didn't look shocked to me. I thought it was strange."**

Maria jotted down the van's registration and called the police. The FBI was alerted and soon there was a statewide all points bulletin put out for the apprehension of the van and its occupants. **The cops traced the number, establishing that it belonged to a company called Urban Moving.**

Police Chief John Schmidig said: "We got an alert to be on the lookout for a white Chevrolet van with New Jersey registration and writing on the side. Three individuals were seen celebrating in Liberty State Park after the impact. They said three people were jumping up and down."

By 4pm on the afternoon of September 11, the van was spotted near New Jersey's Giants stadium. A squad car pulled it over and inside were five men in their 20s. They were hustled out of the car with guns levelled at their heads and handcuffed.

In the car was \$4700 in cash, a couple of foreign passports and a pair of box cutters – the concealed Stanley Knife-type blades used by the 19 hijackers who'd flown jetliners into the World Trade Centre and Pentagon just hours before. There were also fresh pictures of the men standing with the smouldering wreckage of the Twin Towers in the background. One image showed a hand flicking a lighter in front of the devastated buildings, like a fan at a pop concert. The driver of the van then told the arresting officers: "We are Israeli. We are not your problem. Your problems are our problems. The Palestinians are the problem."

His name was **Sivan Kurzberg**. The other **four passengers were Kurzberg's brother Paul, Yaron Shmuel, Oded Ellner and Omer Marmari**. The men were dragged off to prison and transferred out of the custody of the FBI's Criminal Division and into the hands of their Foreign Counterintelligence Section – the bureau's anti-espionage squad.

A warrant was issued for a search of the Urban Moving premises in Weehawken in New Jersey. Boxes of papers and computers were removed. **The FBI questioned the firm's Israeli owner, Dominik Otto Suter, but when agents returned to re-interview him a few days later, he was gone. An employee of Urban Moving said his co-workers had laughed about the Manhattan attacks the day they happened. "I was in tears," the man said. "These guys were joking and that bothered me. These guys were like, 'Now America knows what we go through.'"**

Vince Cannistraro, former chief of operations for counter-terrorism with the CIA, says the red flag went up among investigators when **it was discovered that some of the Israelis' names were found in a search of the national intelligence database**. Cannistraro says **many in the US intelligence community believed that some of the Israelis were working for Mossad and there was speculation over whether Urban Moving had been "set up or exploited for the purpose of launching an intelligence operation against radical Islamists"**.

This makes it clear that there was no suggestion whatsoever from within American intelligence that the Israelis were colluding with the 9/11 hijackers – simply that the possibility remains that they knew the attacks were going to happen, but effectively did nothing to help stop them.

After the owner vanished, the offices of Urban Moving looked as if they'd been closed down in a big hurry. Mobile phones were littered about, the office phones were still connected and the property of at least a dozen clients were stacked up in the warehouse. **The owner had cleared out his family home in New Jersey and returned to Israel**.

Two weeks after their arrest, the Israelis were still in detention, held on immigration charges. Then a judge ruled that they should be deported. But the CIA scuppered the deal and the five remained in custody for another two months. Some went into solitary confinement, all underwent two polygraph tests and at least one underwent up to seven lie detector sessions before **they were eventually deported at the end of November 2001. Paul Kurzberg refused to take a lie detector test for 10 weeks, but then failed it**. His lawyer said he was reluctant to take the test as **he had once worked for Israeli intelligence in another country**.

Nevertheless, their lawyer, Ram Horvitz, dismissed the allegations as "stupid and ridiculous". Yet **US government sources still maintained that the Israelis were collecting information on the fundraising activities of groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad**. Mark Regev, of the Israeli embassy in Washington, would have none of that and he said the allegations were "simply false". **The men themselves claimed**

they'd read about the World Trade Centre attacks on the internet, couldn't see it from their office and went to the parking lot for a better view. Their lawyers and the embassy say their ghoulish and sinister celebrations as the Twin Towers blazed and thousands died were due to youthful foolishness.

The respected New York Jewish newspaper, The Forward, reported in March 2002, however, that it had received a briefing on the case of the five Israelis from a US official who was regularly updated by law enforcement agencies. This is what he told The Forward: **"The assessment was that Urban Moving Systems was a front for the Mossad and operatives employed by it."** He added that "the conclusion of the FBI was that they were spying on local Arabs", but the men were released because they "did not know anything about 9/11".

Back in Israel, several of the men discussed what happened on an Israeli talk show. One of them made this remarkable comment: **"The fact of the matter is we are coming from a country that experiences terror daily. Our purpose was to document the event."** But how can you document an event unless you know it is going to happen?

We are now deep in conspiracy theory territory. But there is more than a little circumstantial evidence to show that Mossad – whose motto is **"By way of deception, thou shalt do war"** – was spying on Arab extremists in the USA and may have known that September 11 was in the offing, yet decided to withhold vital information from their American counterparts which could have prevented the terror attacks.

Following September 11, 2001, more than 60 Israelis were taken into custody under the Patriot Act and immigration laws. **One highly placed investigator told Carl Cameron of Fox News that there were "tie-ins" between the Israelis and September 11; the hint was clearly that they'd gathered intelligence on the planned attacks but kept it to themselves.**

The Fox News source refused to give details, saying: "Evidence linking these Israelis to 9/11 is classified. I cannot tell you about evidence that has been gathered. It's classified information." Fox News is not noted for its condemnation of Israel; it's a ruggedly patriotic news channel owned by Rupert Murdoch and was President Bush's main cheerleader in the war on terror and the invasion of Iraq.

Another group of around 140 Israelis were detained prior to September 11, 2001, in the USA as part of a widespread investigation into a suspected espionage ring run by Israel inside the USA. Government documents refer to the spy ring as an "organised intelligence-gathering operation" designed to "penetrate government facilities". Most of those arrested had served in the Israeli armed forces – but military service is compulsory in Israel. Nevertheless, a number had an intelligence background.

The first glimmerings of an Israeli spying exercise in the USA came to light in spring 2001, when the FBI sent a warning to other federal agencies alerting them to be wary of visitors calling themselves “Israeli art students” and attempting to bypass security at federal buildings in order to sell paintings. A Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) report suggested the Israelis “may well be an organised intelligence-gathering activity”. Law enforcement documents say that the Israelis “targeted and penetrated military bases” as well as the DEA, FBI and dozens of government facilities, including secret offices and the unlisted private homes of law enforcement and intelligence personnel.

A number of Israelis questioned by the authorities said they were students from Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, but Pnina Calpen, a spokeswoman for the Israeli school, did not recognise the names of any Israelis mentioned as studying there in the past 10 years. A federal report into the so-called art students said many had served in intelligence and electronic signal intercept units during their military service.

According to a 61-page report, drafted after an investigation by the DEA and the US September 11, 2001, when a report by a French intelligence agency noted “according to the FBI, Arab terrorists and suspected terror cells lived in Phoenix, Arizona, as well as in Miami and Hollywood, Florida, from December 2000 to April 2001 in direct proximity to the Israeli spy cells”. Immigration service, the Israelis were organised into cells of four to six people. The significance of what the Israelis were doing didn’t emerge until after

The report contended that Mossad agents were spying on Mohammed Atta and Marwan al-Shehi, two of leaders of the 9/11 hijack teams. The pair had settled in Hollywood, Florida, along with three other hijackers, after leaving Hamburg – where another Mossad team was operating close by.

Hollywood in Florida is a town of just 25,000 souls. The French intelligence report says the leader of the Mossad cell in Florida rented apartments “right near the apartment of Atta and al-Shehi”. More than a third of the Israeli “art students” claimed residence in Florida. Two other Israelis connected to the art ring showed up in Fort Lauderdale. At one time, eight of the hijackers lived just north of the town.

Put together, the facts do appear to indicate that Israel knew that 9/11, or at least a large-scale terror attack, was about to take place on American soil, but did nothing to warn the USA. But that’s not quite true. In August 2001, the Israelis handed over a list of terrorist suspects – on it were the names of four of the September 11 hijackers. Significantly, however, the warning said the terrorists were planning an attack “outside the United States”.

The Israeli embassy in Washington has dismissed claims about the spying ring as “simply untrue”. The same denials have been issued repeatedly by the five Israelis seen high-fiving each other as the World Trade Centre burned in front of them.

Their lawyer, Ram Horwitz, insisted his clients were not intelligence officers. Irit Stoffer, the Israeli foreign minister, said the allegations were “completely untrue”. She said the men were arrested because of “visa violations”, adding: “The FBI investigated those cases because of 9/11.”

Jim Margolin, an FBI spokesman in New York, implied that the public would never know the truth, saying: “If we found evidence of unauthorised intelligence operations that would be classified material.” Yet, Israel has long been known, according to US administration sources, for “conducting the most aggressive espionage operations against the US of any US ally”. Seventeen years ago, Jonathan Pollard, a civilian working for the American Navy, was jailed for life for passing secrets to Israel. At first, Israel claimed Pollard was part of a rogue operation, but the government later took responsibility for his work.

It has always been a long-accepted agreement among allies – such as Britain and America or America and Israel – that neither country will jail a “friendly spy” nor shame the allied country for espionage.

Chip Berlet, a senior analyst at Boston’s Political Research Associates and an expert in intelligence, says: “It’s a backdoor agreement between allies that says that if one of your spies gets caught and didn’t do too much harm, he goes home. It goes on all the time. The official reason is always visa violation.”

What we are left with, then, is fact sullied by innuendo. Certainly, it seems, Israel was spying within the borders of the United States and it is equally certain that the targets were Islamic extremists probably linked to September 11. But did Israel know in advance that the Twin Towers would be hit and the world plunged into a war without end; a war which would give Israel the power to strike its enemies almost without limit? That’s a conspiracy theory too far, perhaps. But the unpleasant feeling that, in this age of spin and secrets, we do not know the full and unadulterated truth won’t go away. Maybe we can guess, but it’s for the history books to discover and decide. - [Sunday Herald \[Wayback\]](#)

See also:

- [9/11 - Israeli spies filming WTC](#)
- [The Five Dancing Israelis Arrested On 9/11](#) - WRH