

# Brooklyn Terror Plot Shows No Community Is Immune

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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## Terrorist groups are increasing their efforts to radicalize individuals online and encourage lone-wolf attacks.

**T**he arrest in New York and Florida of three individuals who aspired to travel to Syria and join the Islamic State group underscores the threat of small scale terrorism. While their purported plots here in the homeland -- to target the President, police or regular people in Coney Island -- were notional, they fit a disturbing trend.

Cognizant of the difficulty of executing large-scale attacks, terrorist leaderships in recent months have urged followers and sympathizers to be more entrepreneurial. Such "lone-offender" terrorism is now a very real threat.

The Paris attacks were carried out with minimal funding, planning, participants, or even contact with a formal terrorist group. It is all too easy now for vulnerable people, mostly but not only young men, to be radicalized on the internet; in some cases, the radicalization process has shrunk to just a matter of weeks.

In September, an ISIS spokesman called for Muslims in the West to initiate their own killing sprees. One issue of *Dabiq*, ISIS' glossy magazine, promised that Americans and Europeans would "not feel secure even in your bedrooms." The Somali terror group Al-Shabaab recently called for attacks on Western shopping malls. Now, in Brooklyn, police arrested two men with notional plans to conduct attacks here at home if they could not get to Syria.

No community is immune, and the FBI director warned there are open cases across the country. Parents, educators, and other community authority figures need to learn how to recognize warning signs, and how to intervene. They are in the best position to realize that something is happening and to be able to address it -- in this case, a mother confiscated her son's passport.

This is a good news story -- the men were apprehended and no one was hurt -- but such threats will persist. It is far

more difficult for Americans to get to Syria and Iraq than for Europeans, and the risk that they will instead turn their attention toward domestic targets is real.

*Matthew Levitt is the Fromer-Wexler Fellow and director of the Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence at The Washington Institute, where Kelsey Segawa is a research assistant.* ❖

*New York Daily News*

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