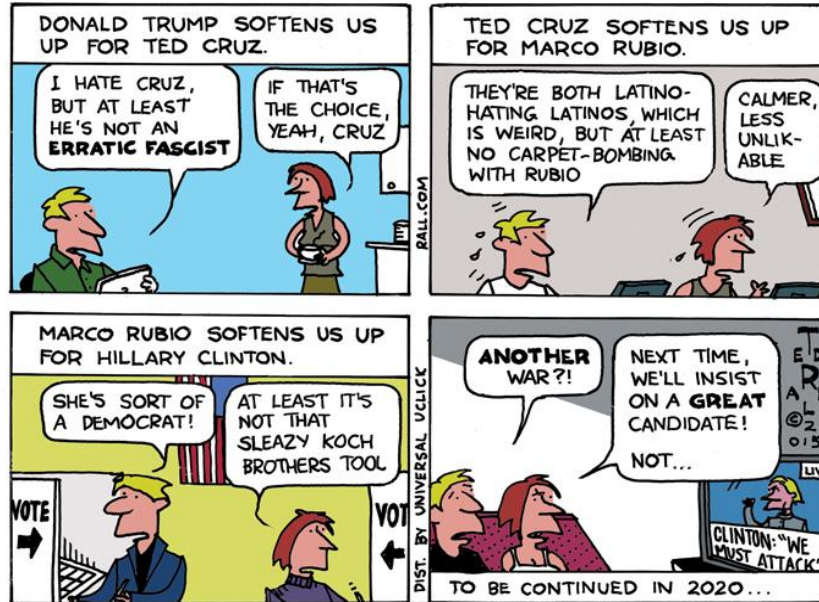


## Military Resistance 14A4



## AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

### Airman From Long Island Killed In Afghanistan



Staff Sgt. Louis Bonacasa

NEW YORK - An airman from Long Island was among six U.S. service members-- including an NYPD detective -- killed in a suicide attack in Afghanistan, the Pentagon announced.

Staff Sgt. Louis M. Bonacasa, 31, of Coram, died December 21 when a suicide bomber on a motorcycle rammed his patrol near Bagram Air Base, the Department of Defense said. He was assigned to the 105th Security Forces Squadron based out of Stewart Air National Guard Base, New York.

The AP reported that Bonacasa had a wife and 5-year-old daughter.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo ordered flags on state government buildings to be flown at half-staff on December 24 in Bonacasa's honor. "On behalf of all New Yorkers, I extend my deepest sympathies to the family, friends and fellow servicemen of Staff Sgt. Bonacasa," Cuomo said in a statement. "We will join his loved ones in honoring his valor, leadership and service to this great nation. His sacrifice will be remembered with gratitude."

Another New Yorker -- Tech Sgt. Joseph Lemm, 45, of West Harrison -- was also killed in the attack. He was detective with the NYPD's Bronx Warrant Squad. In his role with the Air National Guard, he was also assigned to the 105th Security Forces Squadron.

Maj. Adrianna M. Vorderbruggen, 36, of Plymouth, Minnesota, Staff Sgt. Michael A. Cinco, 28, of Mercedes, Texas, Staff Sgt. Peter W. Taub, 30, of Philadelphia, and Staff Sgt. Chester J. McBride, 30, of Statesboro, Georgia, also died on the bombing.

"Our heartfelt sympathies go out to the families and friends of those affected in this tragic incident, especially during this holiday season," U.S. Army Brig. Gen. William Shoffner said in a statement.

## **POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE  
WAR**

## **Taliban Bomber Hits Restaurant For "Foreigners And Wealthy Afghans" In Kabul**

Jan 1, 2016 AFP

KABUL – A Taliban car bomber struck a French restaurant popular with foreigners in Kabul on Friday, killing two people in a New Year’s day attack that marks the latest in a series of

Fifteen others were wounded in the attack on Le Jardin, an Afghan-owned eatery, which caused a piercingly loud explosion and left a building engulfed in flames.

Spokesman Sediq Sediqqi says a second attacker, who was arrested by police, was wearing a military uniform and carrying arms and grenades.

The attack comes a day after Afghanistan announced four-way talks in Pakistan on Jan 11, aimed at jump-starting peace negotiations with the resurgent Taliban.



An Afghan policeman stands guard in front of a French restaurant “Le Jardin” after an attack in Kabul, Afghanistan January 2, 2016. (REUTERS/Mohammad Ismail)

Security forces cordoned off the area and firefighters and ambulances were seen rushing to the restaurant, which sports a large garden festooned with rose bushes and is a popular hangout for foreigners and wealthy Afghans.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid on Twitter claimed several foreigners had been killed and wounded in the suicide attack.

Friday’s bombing evoked memories of an audacious Taliban attack on another restaurant popular with expatriates, the Taverna du Liban, in January 2014, which left 21 people dead, including 13 foreigners.

Then, desperate customers tried to hide under tables as one attacker detonated his suicide vest at the fortified entrance to the eatery and two other militants stormed inside and opened fire.

The latest attack comes just days after Pakistan's powerful army chief General Raheel Sharif visited Kabul to try to prepare the ground for fresh peace talks with the resurgent Taliban.

On Monday, just a day after Sharif's visit, a Taliban bomber detonated an explosives-packed vehicle near Kabul airport, killing one civilian in an attack targeting a military convoy.

Observers say the intensifying insurgency highlights a push by the Taliban to make more military gains to try to achieve greater concessions during talks.

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## **POLICE WAR REPORTS**

# **Police “Making False Statements And Intimidating Witness Who Saw Chicago Teenager Fatally Shot”**

## **“Police Tried To Get One Witness To Change Her Account”**

## **“She Was Held Against Her Will And Intensively Questioned For Over Six Hours”**

December 31, 2015 CBS

CHICAGO — Thirty days before Mayor Rahm Emanuel faced the biggest test of his political life, City Hall received a blockbuster letter from attorneys representing Laquan McDonald, accusing police of making a series of false statements and even intimidating at least one witness who saw the Chicago teenager fatally shot by Officer Jason Van Dyke.

That March 6, 2015 letter from attorney Jeffrey Neslund, quickly set in motion negotiations that led to an out-of-court legal settlement, reached just more than a month later — an astonishingly quick resolution for any legal matter.

After a bruising campaign, Emanuel won re-election on April 7, as those settlement talks quietly neared conclusion.

**In the letter, which was part of about 1,400 emails released by the city on New Year's Eve, Neslund informs Deputy Corporation Counsel Thomas Platt that police dash cam video "confirms that Mr. McDonald did not lunge toward police" which is "contrary to the false statements the city allowed the (police union) spokesman to spin to the media."**

Neslund then prophetically warned Platt that "the graphic dash cam video will have a powerful impact on any jury and the Chicago community as a whole. This case will undoubtedly bring a microscope of national attention to the shooting itself as well as the City's pattern, practice and procedures of rubber-stamping fatal police shootings of African-Americans as 'justified.' "

Indeed, the release of the video sparked national attention on Chicago police practices, led to the firing of Police Supt. Garry McCarthy, a series of policy changes—and even an apology—from Emanuel, and multiple protests through downtown Chicago.

**The letter alleges that police officers tried to get one witness—who was so appalled at the incident that she screamed at Van Dyke to "stop shooting"—to change her account.**

**The witness, whose name was redacted in the documents, was transported to the police station "where she was held against her will and intensively questioned for over six hours."**

**She was finally released at 4 a.m. after demanding a lawyer.**

McDonald, who was carrying a knife, was shot 16 times on Oct. 20, 2014 near 40th Street and Pulaski Road, as officers were responding a report of a person breaking into cars.

"There is no plausible justification for such an excessive use of deadly force. ... Yet officer Van Dyke chose to empty his 9 mm pistol into the body of Laquan McDonald rather than allow other officers to employ non lethal force."

Van Dyke has since been charged with first-degree murder and has pleaded not guilty.

The piles of documents also show city officials began corresponding among themselves about the shooting.

Emails show officials from the mayor's office and that of the Independent Police Review Authority were in contact about the case. As CBS 2's Dana Kozlov reports, that raises the question: Just how independent is the Independent Police Review Authority?

Mayoral spokesperson Adam Collins says inter-office communication is not unusual. He adds, "The documents show there was no attempt to cover anything up by this office."

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**Bank Robbers With Badges:  
How A Thieving Florida Police  
Department Made Millions  
Through Drug Money Laundering;  
“The Police Laundered The Money  
Through Hundreds Of Bank Accounts  
— Taking At Least \$1.7 Million For  
Themselves”  
“The Task Force Took In Millions More  
Dollars Than What It Reported”**



These stacks of drug cash were picked up by Bal Harbour police in Chicago on July 9, 2012. The money was laundered by the Tri-County Task Force and then returned to the drug organizations, after police took a cut for themselves. (photo: Miami Herald)

01 January 16 By Michael Sallah and Joanna Zuckerman Bernstein; Miami Herald

When local police created a task force to pose as money launderers for drug cartels, they generated millions in profits. Questions abound over where that money went.

For a police force in a small community of oceanfront condominiums and elegant boutiques, the plan was ambitious: a sting operation to take on some of the nation's most dangerous drug organizations.

In need of a partner, Bal Harbour police reached across the state to an agency on the edge of the Everglades: the sheriff's office of Glades County.

Posing as money launderers, the two became unlikely allies in a task force that took in more than \$55.6 million from drug cartels and other criminal groups, while traveling across the country on dozens of first-class and business flights and frequently staying at luxury hotels.

By the time it ended in late 2012, the Tri-County Task Force made no arrests or major drug seizures, leaving those duties to federal agents.

**For their role, the police laundered the money through hundreds of bank accounts — taking at least \$1.7 million for themselves for brokering the deals— then returned the rest to the same criminal groups selling drugs in U.S. cities.**

**Three years after the task force ended, confidential records show officers withdrew hundreds of thousands in cash with no records to show where the money went.**

“They were like bank robbers with badges,” said Dennis Fitzgerald, an attorney and former Drug Enforcement Administration agent who taught undercover tactics for the U.S. State Department.

“It had no law enforcement objective. The objective was to make money.”

### **An Undercover Sting Operation Generated Millions For A Police Task Force That Never Made A Single Arrest.**

**For nearly three years, the undercover officers and their informants — some using fake identities — struck deals with the drug organizations, charging them commissions to launder their money in what became the largest state undercover operation in decades, records show.**

Along the way, the task force spent tens of thousands on trips to Las Vegas and San Juan, and purchased expensive items like Mac computers and FN P90 submachine guns.

The 12-member task force drew the attention of the Department of Justice three years ago in an investigation that found Bal Harbour misspent money from seizing cars and cash to pay for police salaries, leading to the resignation of Police Chief Tom Hunker in 2013.

But an investigation by the Miami Herald found officers spent far more money during the undercover sting operation from an entirely different pool of funds that was never examined by federal investigators.

Two months after the Herald began its examination, Bal Harbour ordered the first ever audit of the millions that once flowed into undercover accounts at SunTrust Bank in Bal Harbour during the laundering sting from 2010 through 2012.

## **Money On The Table**

Mark Overton, a veteran Miami law enforcement commander hired as Bal Harbour police chief last year, said auditors are still trying to track the money placed in accounts at the bank just a block from police headquarters. The total amount recovered: \$245,000.

Under state law, police are allowed to set up sting operations to take on the scourge of drugs and money laundering in Florida. In their roles, police are even permitted to charge the criminal groups a commission, like any money launderer, and keep the money for evidence.

But at every step, the officers turned the undercover unit into an unchecked ATM for their task force and informants, with little attention to making their own arrests as they collected drug cash in places as far away as San Juan and New York.

The Miami Herald gained unprecedented access to the confidential records of the undercover investigation, reviewing thousands of records including cash pickup reports, emails, DEA reports, bank statements and wire transfers for millions of dollars.

### **“Police Routinely Withdrew Cash Totaling \$1.3 Million. There Are No Records To Show Where The Money Was Spent”**

“Police routinely withdrew cash — thousands at a time — totaling \$1.3 million from undercover bank accounts, but to this day there are no records to show where the money was spent. “In all my years of law enforcement, I’ve never seen anything like it,” Chief Overton said.

**“Bal Harbour officials say they cannot find receipts for hundreds of thousands in expenses, including five-star hotel bookings, dinners that ran up to \$1,000 and scores of purchases like laptops, iPads, electronic money counters, flower deliveries and even iTunes downloads.**

**“While posing as launderers, police delivered nearly \$20 million to storefront businesses in Miami-Dade to launder the money for drug groups — gathering critical evidence against the business owners — yet took no action against them.**

Years later, the businesses are still open, some still suspected by federal agents of laundering for the cartels.”

In addition to the Herald’s findings, auditors hired by Bal Harbour have found even more transactions that have raised troubling questions among village administrators, prompting them to widen the scope of their own inquiry.

After gaining access to reams of bank documents, auditors discovered the task force took in millions more dollars than what it reported, possibly for additional laundering deals with criminal networks, according to confidential sources.

So far, examiners have found that cash deposits were made totaling \$28 million in SunTrust that do not appear anywhere in the records created by the police. Just the amount of money turned up “is shocking,” said Overton, in light of police duties to mark such large sums.



Overton, 52, declined to comment on details of the audit, but said it was “turning up more questions than answers. The fact that there are no records makes it very difficult to answer any questions.”

For more than a quarter century, local police have carried out undercover laundering stings to win the confidence of criminals, mostly under the direction of prosecutors with help from the DEA.

Though the Tri-County Task Force worked with the DEA, the unit was not overseen by prosecutors, nor did it operate with strict financial controls, including yearly audits.

In 2012, top leaders of the DEA ordered the unit to seek special permission from state prosecutors before the undercover cops continued to fly outside Florida to carry out deals with criminal groups with the help of federal agents, according to emails obtained by the Herald.

But the task force continued to pick up millions in drug money without approval, jetting into cities like Chicago and New York and meeting with the money couriers in quiet neighborhood and strip center parking lots, task force records show.

One veteran Miami criminal lawyer said the Justice Department should have questioned much earlier why a task force from two small communities with no money-laundering problems was flying across the country to collect cash belonging to drug cartels. In 2012, the task force’s final year, Bal Harbour reported just one violent crime — an aggravated assault — in the village of 2,500 people.

“Bal Harbour is this beautiful town that has absolutely no crime, and it’s investigating money laundering?” asked Robert Amsel. “I’m not even sure they need a police department. Why do they need machine guns? It’s outrageous.”

### **“It Was Strictly For The Money”**

Hunker, 64, a veteran commander who spent years as a narcotics officer in Miami Beach, said the millions in deals his agents reached with criminal groups were all properly documented, and the money detailed in records.

As the former police chief of Bal Harbour, he said he was not involved in the day-to-day decisions of the unit, but his officers would have followed a routine: tracking the money.

He disputed the findings that an additional \$28 million was raked in by the task force. “There’s no way,” he said. “I know the numbers.”

As far as the task force not making any arrests, Hunker said the goal was to infiltrate the drug networks by posing as money launderers — a classic undercover tactic — then pass the intelligence to federal agents.

He said Bal Harbour became involved in the operation “because we had the snitches,” referring to informants he had worked with over the years with ties to criminal groups. “It’s no different than Crime Stoppers. If you get information about a murder in Chicago, aren’t you going to call police and tell them about it?”

A former commander of South Florida IMPACT — another undercover unit — Hunker said the information his officers passed on to federal agents when picking up drug cash in other cities led to numerous arrests and the seizure of large quantities of heroin and cocaine. A task force report in 2012 said the arrests topped 200.

“We’re not doing this just for the money,” Hunker said. “We’re doing this because it’s an alternative way to stop drug trafficking.”

However, agents at DEA headquarters said they could not confirm arrest figures or drug seizures that came from tips from the Tri-County Task Force, which, despite its name, never involved officers from more than two counties.

“There were arrests, we can say that, but there’s no way we can validate those numbers. We have no idea what they are basing those numbers on,” said Rusty Payne, a DEA spokesman.

The task force did not document the names of the 200 people who were arrested.

One former DEA supervisor said the task force helped his team with cases that sparked arrests and raids for drugs and cash in Atlanta. “They would come to us and say, we have this opportunity, here’s a target that’s operating in your area of responsibility. We would evaluate that target,” said Richard Crock, now retired from the agency.

He said he could not recall the number of arrests and no longer has access to records, but said his agents achieved “significant results” with the Florida cops.

The Tri-County Task Force was launched at a time law enforcement agencies across Florida were looking to boost their budgets during one of the state’s toughest economic periods. The foreclosure crisis took a toll on property values, prompting a plunge in home prices in nearly every county.

Because of a relationship between Hunker and Tommy O’Keefe, a former Miami-Dade officer working for Glades County, the two sides agreed to launch an investigation to tap into a program called Equitable Sharing. Under the plan, local police can claim seized property — cash, cars, boats — in federal court and then share the proceeds with the Justice Department.

Hunker had spent years cultivating ties to confidential informants who could break into the network of the drug cartels.

For Glades, one of the poorest counties in Florida, its involvement was simple: It needed the money. “We had to find a revenue stream,” said Duane Pottorff, chief of law enforcement for Glades. “It allowed us to have resources we wouldn’t normally have.”

With just 18 deputies, Glades had a limited staff to devote to the task force, but it agreed to play a critical role: Sheriff Stuart Whiddon had the power under Florida law to deputize people from outside his agency.

By swearing in two retired officers living in New York, Paul Christensen and Fidel Devivo, the task force could bring in new cases from the north, where Mexican drug cartels were reaping millions.

Fitzgerald, the former DEA agent who wrote a textbook on undercover stings, said the move to deputize people so far from home was driven by a law enforcement model that's built on generating income. Neither officer had ever worked in Florida. "It was strictly for the money," he said. Christensen and Devivo could not be reached. Sheriff Whiddon declined to be interviewed.

### **“Officers Swept Into Cities To Pick Up Cash For Laundering Deals But Did Not Report The Money Coming In”**

The task force set up shop in a beige trailer with tinted windows across from the Bal Harbour village offices, and within days, members began reaching criminal groups in a string of deals that would soon rival any undercover operation in the nation in the amount of dollars brought in.

A review of confidential task force records, bank wire instructions and emails shows the unit was striking two deals a week on average, and sometimes jetting into two states on the same day.

The first took place in February 2010 in Houston, where two sergeants picked up a red suitcase stuffed with cash — \$460,458 — with the help of DEA agents, and then flew back to Bal Harbour with the money.

After returning to the trailer, they carried out what became a ritual: counting and photographing the bundles, then driving them down the street to SunTrust, where police opened accounts under shell company names.

A week later, the next pickup was in San Juan — a container filled with \$499,860 — and another one five days later in Houston for hundreds of thousands. In nearly every deal, the police took their cut off the top — about 3 percent — in a pool of money that would soon reach hundreds of thousands.

The money came in different containers, including a Gucci gift box, a Chicago Bears T-shirt, a tortilla box and a JanSport backpack. In a leafy neighborhood in Queens, N.Y., in 2010, officers picked up \$152,740 delivered by a woman pushing a baby stroller, reports stated.

After every pickup, the task force would also get its instructions from money brokers working with the criminal groups about where to send the drug cash to launder.

Hundreds of times, the orders would be to wire the money into the bank accounts of Miami export shops and storefronts — some of the businesses secretly helping to hide the drug cash, records and interviews show.

While the officers were creating records for some deals, another trend was unfolding that would not be discovered until recently by auditors.

For months at a time, officers swept into cities to pick up cash for laundering deals but did not report the money coming in. At least 30 times, they deposited hundreds of thousands in the bank and even wired the money to storefront businesses to launder, sources said.

In the first three months of 2012, officers moved \$1.1 million into banks and businesses to conceal the drug cash for the criminal groups, but never documented their actions.

They did it again from June to August of the same year: flying across the country, according to travel records, followed by massive amounts of cash placed in their accounts at SunTrust in deals that topped \$1.4 million.

**The task force says it carried out 235 deals with drug groups during the three years it operated, but auditors have turned up dozens more cases never reported, totaling \$28 million, confidential sources said.**

The creation of records is one of the most critical duties of a task force, because agents are empowered to break the law and launder money through U.S. banks to snare criminals, said former DEA agents.

### **“It’s As Bad As Anything I Have Ever Heard In My Career”**

Perhaps the more pressing issue: How much the officers kept for their commission. At 3 percent of the total, it would have been in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

“It’s as bad as anything I have ever heard in my career,” said Michael Levine, a trial consultant and former DEA agent who once conducted internal affairs investigations for his agency. “You have to document every dollar. Every email. Every phone call. It’s infuriating.”

With the number of pickups rising, so did expenses for a unit that was traveling most of the time outside Florida, records show.

Instead of paying for the operation from police budgets, the task force turned to the drug cash — evidence money that was only supposed to be spent with a court order, according to legal experts.

**Without court approval, officers charged airfare, hotels, food and rental cars to the commissions reaped by the task force for laundering the cash.**

They flew nearly 40 times on first-class or business premium flights.

They stayed at places like the Bellagio in Las Vegas and the Rincon Beach Resort in Puerto Rico, charging tens of thousands for the trips. They dined at restaurants like Morton’s in North Miami Beach and the Chop House in Chicago.

The officers flew to Las Vegas for training school in 2010, staying at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino, charging \$9,410 in hotel expenses, and at home they spent \$2,094 for scattered bookings at the One Bal Harbour, now a Ritz-Carlton. They spent \$25,000 on weapons and \$100,000 on laptops and other electronics.

**They also began withdrawing large amounts of cash from the bank — at least a dozen times without filing any documents to show how the money was spent.**

**In all, the Herald found that officers took out \$547,000. In addition, auditors have turned up more money withdrawn: \$800,000, with no supporting records.**

“They would have sent me to prison,” said Bill Gately, a former U.S. Customs agent who supervised the largest undercover operations in his agency’s history. “Every dime we generated was approved by auditors. You can’t just spend it.”

By the end of 2011, the task force members were juggling major deals, sometimes several a week.

Officers found they needed to move quickly or the criminals would turn to others to launder the money. “Things were moving so fast. They were going from nickle-and-dime to million-dollar deals,” said Pottorff of Glades County.

### **“Another Practice Was Taking Place That Was Creating Potential Dangers For Other Agents Outside The Task Force”**

In three years, Bal Harbour police overtime doubled, with six officers charging \$558,000 for duties that included collecting the drug cash and counting it in the trailer, a task that could take hours at a time. In one year, 2012, Sgt. Paul Deitado, the task force team leader, racked up 933 hours, boosting his regular pay by 76 percent to \$153,394.

Jerry Speziale, a former agent who served on a DEA task force, said the number of deals was alarming because it did not appear the task force was taking the time to investigate its own cases. One cash pickup can propel agents to spend months on a single case until the criminal organization is infiltrated.

Speziale said most task forces need to manage themselves so they stop the pickups and focus on the endgame: arrests. “You have to start focusing on the investigations,” he said. “You can’t just do pickup after pickup after pickup. You can’t just be driven by the money. How else are you going to infiltrate and dismantle a trafficking group?”

Emails obtained by the Herald show the unit was passing along information to DEA agents in Atlanta and New York to investigate cases, arrest drug suspects and seize their cash. But in three years, it made no arrests of its own.

The rule of any undercover unit is to seize far more money from criminal groups than what a task force launders and returns to the streets.

But that didn’t happen. The task force passed on tips that led to federal agents seizing nearly \$30 million from criminal groups in 2010 and 2011, records show. But during that same period, it laundered \$50 million — far more than what was taken off the streets.

While the officers were striking deals, another practice was taking place that was creating potential dangers for other agents outside the task force.

In early 2010, the officers began sending millions to banks overseas in countries like Panama and China in laundering deals without alerting the DEA, creating potential hazards for other agents who may have been zeroing in on the same targets, said Justice Department reports.

Hunker, who denied the claims, said the only money he knew that was sent overseas was to pay informants for steering deals to the cops, but that he was not aware of every wire.

The Herald found 138 payments totaling nearly \$7 million into accounts of people and businesses.

**Levine, the former DEA internal affairs agent, said the task force would have been breaking the law unless it received permission from the federal government. “You could be jeopardizing the life of an undercover agent,” he said. “It goes against every standard of training.”**

Not until Justice Department examiners came to Bal Harbour to conduct a routine inquiry into the police program for seizing property and cash did the task force come under the scrutiny of an outside agency.

In early 2012, the Office of Inspector General began combing through the records of the Bal Harbour police’s participation in the seizure program that allows the police to share money with the Justice Department.

What dominated their attention, however, were the money-laundering activities. Twice, agent Matthew McCloskey tried to probe into the operation — even questioning the legal right of a task force to work outside Florida. But for several months, he could not get key questions answered, according to emails.

“The main question never addressed was the number of money-laundering transactions,” wrote McCloskey that summer in an Aug. 10 email to Deitado, the team leader. In an earlier question to Deitado, he asked: “Under whose authorization has Bal Harbour received to launder drug proceeds?”

With heated concerns, the DEA imposed a new rule: Brian M. McKnight, financial operations chief, said the task force would now need a signed letter from the Miami-Dade state attorney or the state attorney general to keep picking up drug cash with the help of the DEA, according to a Sept. 14, 2012, email.

However, no such permission was granted, said spokespersons from both offices.

With millions of dollars at stake, Chief Hunker reached out to Amos Rojas Jr., a supervisor with the Miami-Dade state attorney’s office. “Amos,” he wrote five days after the new rules were imposed, “Let me know on this!”

But it’s not clear what action Rojas took, if any, to help the Tri-County Task Force. Now U.S. marshal for South Florida, Rojas declined to be interviewed.

## **“Auditors Discovered The Task Force Took In Millions More Dollars Than What It Reported”**

In addition to the Herald’s findings, auditors hired by Bal Harbour have found even more transactions that have raised troubling questions among village administrators, prompting them to widen the scope of their own inquiry.

After gaining access to reams of bank documents, auditors discovered the task force took in millions more dollars than what it reported, possibly for additional laundering deals with criminal networks, according to confidential sources.

So far, examiners have found that cash deposits were made totaling \$28 million in SunTrust that do not appear anywhere in the records created by the police. Just the amount of money turned up “is shocking,” said Overton, in light of police duties to mark such large sums.

Overton, 52, declined to comment on details of the audit, but said it was “turning up more questions than answers. The fact that there are no records makes it very difficult to answer any questions.”

For more than a quarter century, local police have carried out undercover laundering stings to win the confidence of criminals, mostly under the direction of prosecutors with help from the DEA.

Though the Tri-County Task Force worked with the DEA, the unit was not overseen by prosecutors, nor did it operate with strict financial controls, including yearly audits.

In 2012, top leaders of the DEA ordered the unit to seek special permission from state prosecutors before the undercover cops continued to fly outside Florida to carry out deals with criminal groups with the help of federal agents, according to emails obtained by the Herald.

But the task force continued to pick up millions in drug money without approval, jetting into cities like Chicago and New York and meeting with the money couriers in quiet neighborhood and strip center parking lots, task force records show.

One veteran Miami criminal lawyer said the Justice Department should have questioned much earlier why a task force from two small communities with no money-laundering problems was flying across the country to collect cash belonging to drug cartels. In 2012, the task force’s final year, Bal Harbour reported just one violent crime — an aggravated assault — in the village of 2,500 people.

“Bal Harbour is this beautiful town that has absolutely no crime, and it’s investigating money laundering?” asked Robert Amsel. “I’m not even sure they need a police department. Why do they need machine guns? It’s outrageous.”

Two days after Hunker sent the email, the task force flew to Chicago to get another bundle — \$99,030 — with help from Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents and the Cook County Sheriff’s Office.

Still lacking approval, officers returned to New York in October to pick up \$498,000 with help from DEA agents, records show. Before the month was over, officers returned to New York five more times to pick up nearly \$700,000.

Rusty Payne, the spokesman for DEA, said members of his agency worked with the task force to finish “the investigations that had already been underway” in New York and could not pull out until those cases were finished. Mia Ro, a spokeswoman for the Miami DEA, said her office stopped working with the task force in September 2012 when it failed to produce a letter from state prosecutors.

The Justice Department wrote a scathing report the next month, criticizing Bal Harbour village for using seized cash to pay for salaries of two task force members. As for the money-laundering operation, the DOJ found sweeping deficiencies, including poor record keeping, no money-laundering arrests and operating the task force without any oversight by prosecutors.

Although federal agents noted the millions flowing into the task force’s bank accounts were never audited, the DOJ never did its own audit, either.

Under questioning by the DOJ, task force members said the total amount they laundered was \$56 million, but records now being examined by auditors show the number was far higher — possibly \$83 million, with no records to account for the difference.

“It’s troubling,” said Jorge Gonzalez, the Bal Harbour village manager who was hired after the task force disbanded. “It was all done completely outside of the sunshine.”

Shortly after the task force disbanded three years ago, the FBI began a probe of the police force in 2013, including the money-laundering operation. The investigation ended last year when the local office of the FBI said prosecutors determined the case did “not appear to be a violation within the FBI’s jurisdiction,” wrote George L. Piro, special agent in charge, in a letter. At no time did the FBI conduct an audit of the task force finances, records show.

### **“The Lack Of An Audit By The FBI “Was Like Finding A Dead Body, And Then Not Taking Fingerprints, Blood Spatter, DNA And All The Other Forensics You Do”**

Levine, former investigator for the DEA’s Office of Professional Responsibility, said the lack of an audit by the FBI “was like finding a dead body, and then not taking fingerprints, blood spatter, DNA and all the other forensics you do. It’s unbelievable.”

Overton said he asked the FBI last month to review the most current audit results, but said the examination by Bal Harbour will not conclude for several months. The next step: questioning members of the unit, including Hunker.

Most commanders are no longer on the force: Hunker resigned under pressure in 2013 after the DOJ inquiry. Capt. Greg Roye resigned last year after Overton was hired as chief. Roye, 49, declined to be interviewed. Deitado, 43, who did not respond to interview requests, resigned in October.



Other members still in the department, Sgt. Edwin Vargas, Detective Hector Gonzalez, and Officer Paul Eppler declined to be interviewed. Sgt. Alejandro Alvarez resigned in 2013 and could not be reached.

In the meantime, Overton has returned the police to their primary mission: patrolling the oceanfront community. The department's foray into the world of money laundering "wasn't within the realm of reason," he said.

Fitzgerald, the retired DEA agent, said ultimately his former agency bears a share of the responsibility for allowing Bal Harbour officers into places thousands of miles from their small Florida town and helping them pick up cash.

"It's just unbelievable. It couldn't have gone on without the complicity of the DEA," he said, adding the agency never stopped to vet the amount of money Bal Harbour had actually laundered for criminals. "They couldn't have been flying around the country picking up cash without the DEA."

He said until the millions taken in by the task force are accounted for, questions will abound over how much was laundered and how much was spent.

"It's follow the money. Follow the money," said Fitzgerald. "It's one of the oldest sayings in investigative work."

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## **Cop Punching 9-Months Pregnant Woman In Front Of Her Children: "I Am Pregnant!" She Is Heard Screaming Approximately 10 Seconds Before Officer Begins To Punch Her With Closed Fists"**

April 6, 2015 By Cassandra Fairbanks, Free Thought Project

Quinlan, TX— In a video posted online on April 4, a Hunt County sheriff's deputy is seen brutally assaulting a woman in front of her crying children as she screams out in pain while informing the officers that she is pregnant.

The incident reportedly began when Child Protective Services was accompanied by the two deputies to perform a home interview with the family.

When presented with the court order by the deputies, the unidentified woman asked to see the paperwork again before allowing the officers into her home. The woman

reportedly told BrettSanders.me that instead of allowing her to read the court order, the officers then forced their way into the home and pinned her against her kitchen counter.

The 38-week pregnant woman screamed in agony as her stomach was pressed up against the kitchen counter. Her children are present and crying as they witness their mother being beaten by those they are taught to trust

“I am pregnant!” she is heard screaming approximately ten seconds before the officer begins to punch her with closed fists. The video ends abruptly at this point, as the person filming hopefully went to intervene.

After the video ends, the woman was reportedly taken to jail and charged with assaulting a police officer. It is unclear what happened before the camera started rolling, but from what we can see, there is definitely someone else who deserves an assault charge.

Her son was reportedly taken and placed into foster care, despite family members being willing to take him in.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**



**“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.**

**“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.**

**“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”**

**“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”**

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

**Nothing has more revolutionary effect, and nothing undermines more the foundations of all state power, than the continuation of that wretched and brainless régime, which has the strength merely to cling to its positions but no longer the slightest power to rule or to steer the state ship on a definite course.  
-- Karl Kautsky; The Consequences of the Japanese Victory and Social Democracy**

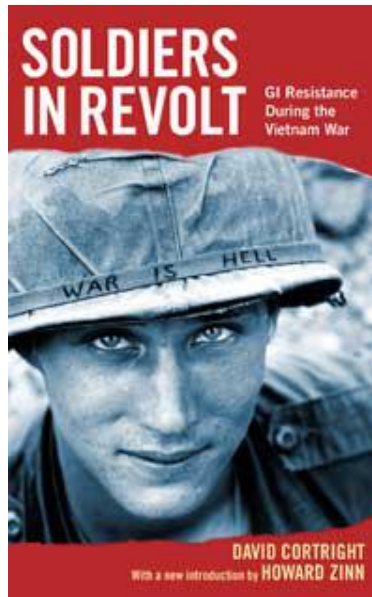
**“On April 27 [1968] A Group Of  
Forty Active-Duty People Marched  
At The Head Of An Anti-War  
Demonstration In San Francisco,  
“The First Time GIs Led A Civilian  
Peace Rally”**

**“On February 16, 1969, The Alliance  
Sponsored A Peace Rally In Downtown  
Seattle, With Two Hundred Active- Duty  
People Leading A Crowd Of Several  
Thousand”**

**[No, they didn't go to DC begging the Imperial Congress to stop the war. They weren't fools. They knew that when the army rebelled, the war would end. They did, and it did. T]**

**Excerpts from: SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975.**

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**The young people forced into the ranks by the Vietnam build-up expressed a sometimes articulate, sometimes desperate, opposition to an unwanted mission.**

The GI movement imbued the military with the voice of a troubled citizenry, providing a measure of democratic restraint on though otherwise unresponsive and imperious institutions of war.

The appearance of coffeehouses and a burgeoning GI press, in an atmosphere of mounting disillusionment over stalemate in Vietnam, set the stage for the first significant GI action.

The Army's huge armored training center at Fort Hood experienced a particularly rapid deterioration of troop morale, especially among combat returnees, and throughout the Vietnam period witnessed extensive unrest and drug use (the base's copious marijuana supplies earned it the sobriquet "Fort Head").

The civilians who opened the Oleo Strut in the summer of 1968 thus met with an enthusiastic response; with the founding of Fatigue Press, a long history of successful GI activism began.

The first political gathering of Fort Hood soldiers occurred in Killeen on July 5, 1968. A "Love-In" and countercultural festival was held in Condor Park, featuring rock music and anti-war speeches; approximately two hundred soldiers attended, most of them white.

The atmosphere at the base grew considerably tenser in the following weeks, however, as thousands of troops were prepared for possible use against civilian demonstrators at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago — culminating in a dramatic and important act of political defiance among black troops.

On the evening of August 23, over one hundred black soldiers from the 1st Armored Cavalry Division gathered on base to discuss their opposition to Army racism and the use of troops against civilians.

After a lengthy, all-night assembly, which included a visit from commanding general Powell, forty-three of the blacks were arrested for refusal to follow orders.

The action of the blacks was spontaneous and unrelated to the work of the white soldiers (reflecting a common pattern of parallel but separate development of dissent among blacks and whites), but the Oleo Strut GIs supported the brothers and helped with their legal defense.

Because of widespread support for the resisters, especially among blacks, the Army's treatment of the Fort Hood 43 was not as harsh as it might have been; most received only light jail sentences.

The San Francisco Bay Area has been in the vanguard of most of the radical movements in the United States during the past decade, and the GI movement was no exception. With the support of two local GI newspapers, The Ally and Task Force, area servicepeople were among the first to speak out in 1968.

**On April 27 a group of forty active-duty people marched at the head of an anti-war demonstration in San Francisco, the first time GIs led a civilian peace rally.**

Two months later, also in San Francisco, nine AWOL enlisted men (five soldiers, two sailors, one airman, and one Marine) publicly took sanctuary at Howard Presbyterian Church in moral opposition to the war. After a forty-eight-hour "service of celebration and communion," they were arrested by MPs on July 17.

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**In the fall, the growing network of GI activists in the area laid plans for the largest servicemen's peace action to date — an active-duty contingent for the scheduled October is anti-war rally in downtown San Francisco.**

**Among the efforts to mobilize area soldiers and distribute literature about the march was Navy nurse Susan Schnall's daring feat of dropping leaflets from an airplane onto five area military bases (for which she was later court-martialed).**

**As the demonstration date approached, military authorities became nervous that a large number of GIs might become involved, and, in a manner that became standard whenever protests were planned, sought to prevent servicemen from attending.**

A communication from the Military Airlift Command in Washington, later anonymously released to The Ally, depicted the military's attitude toward even lawful dissent: it urged that "this demonstration be quashed if possible because of possible severe impact on military discipline throughout the services."

**On the Saturday of the actual march, soldiers at the nearby Presidio were detained for mandatory company formations, while special maneuvers and other diversions were held at several West Coast bases.**

**Despite such obstruction, two hundred active-duty GIs and some one hundred reservists marched at the head of the demonstration, in what was the largest gathering yet of the expanding GI movement.**

Two days later, in an incident partly inspired by the show of antiwar strength on October 12, twenty-seven inmates of the Presidio stockade held a sit-down strike to protest the shooting death a few days earlier of fellow prisoner Richard Bunch and to call attention to unbearable living conditions—what became known later as the Presidio mutiny. (For a sensitive and penetrating account of the Presidio incident see Fred Gardner's *Unlawful Concert*.)

As the GI movement emerged, civilian radical organizations played an important role in helping to sustain rank-and-file dissent. One of the first agencies to recognize the changes taking place within the Army was the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) and its closely allied counterpart, the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA). One of the first examples of this co-operation was the GI-Civilian Alliance for Peace (GI-CAP) and the newspaper Counterpoint at Fort Lewis.

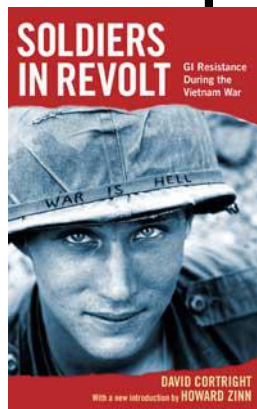
**Aided by SMC activists, GI-CAP developed into one of the most successful early GI-movement groups, with as many as fifty servicemen at regular weekly meetings.**

**On February 16, 1969, the Alliance sponsored a peace rally in downtown Seattle, with two hundred active-duty people leading a crowd of several thousand.**

A few months later, the servicemen formed their own organization apart from the civilians and continued their work as an all GI group.

**MORE:**

## **FREE TO ACTIVE DUTY: A Vietnam Soldier Wrote The Book All About How An Armed Forces Rebellion Stopped An Imperial War**



SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City,  
New York

**[CIVILIANS: \$16 INCLUDING POSTAGE:  
BUY ONE FOR A FRIEND/RELATIVE IN THE SERVICE.  
CHECKS, MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO: THE MILITARY  
PROJECT]**

**Requests from active duty or  
orders from civilians to:  
Military Resistance  
Box 126  
2576 Broadway  
New York, N.Y.  
10025-5657**

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## **F-35 Blows New Year's Resolution, Gains \$25 Billion**



Department of Defense and Flickr images

January 1, 2016 Duffle Blog

LANCASTER, Calif. — The F-35 is experiencing yet another setback in development after reportedly blowing its New Year's resolution of "losing a couple billion dollars" in just the first few days of the calendar year.

Joining nearly 92% of Americans who fail to achieve their New Year's resolution, the F-35 was reportedly found alone in a dark hangar at the far end of an Edwards Air Force Base runway gorging itself on taxpayer dollars in silent shame.

"Ever since it lost the dogfight to the 1970's era F-16, the F-35 has been really depressed," said Air Force spokesman Lt. Col. Jerry Baskin.

"We have been telling the F-35 that it was because it was not wearing its 'stealth coating,' but deep down it knew it was because of its over-sized engine nozzle."

While the news comes as a shock to friends and co-workers, those close to the program are not surprised. Navy test pilot Lt. Ben Robbins, who now flies an EA-18G Growler after his F-35C gained a whopping \$64 million in 2015, is not surprised at all.

"Yeah, yeah — I have heard it all before," said Robbins. "This is the year the F-35 is going to improve its turn radius and show bullies around the world that it is worth the \$1.5 trillion dollar price tag.' Whatever."

"Lockheed software developers need to upload a Waste Watchers app during the next update," he added. "This isn't 'She's All That.'"

After this most recent relapse, numerous health professional and aerospace engineers have offered their services pro bono to help the F-35 overcome it's demons. Dr. Lisa Belle, a licensed psychotherapist who specializes in binge consumption, suggests radical interpersonal psychotherapy to deal with the F-35's key enablers.

"Rather than letting the F-35 fail and overcome every time it faces an obstacle or Congressional review, the Department of Defense jumps right in and comforts it with more money," Belle told Duffel Blog.

"The F-35 feels as though it is only around because of some government sunk-cost fallacy and, because of the 'too big to fail' comments, now suffers from program dysmorphic disorder."

The call to action by a team of specialists is coming just in time, as the Joint Strike Fighter program is being delayed another several years.

According to officials within the Pentagon, the F-35 has locked itself in its maintenance bay with \$163 billion appropriated for the VA, refusing to come out unless the government pays for its surgery to make it an F-22.

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## **CLASS WAR REPORTS**

# **Class War Republika Srpska:**



**Regime Bows Passes Law  
Attacking Working Class;  
“The Head Of RS Trade Unions,  
Ranka Misic, Addressed The  
Assembly To Appeal To Deputies To  
Reject The Law”  
“Security Took Me Out, Dragged Me Over  
The Floor And Kicked Me Out Of The  
Building” “This Is Not A Path To  
Democracy But To Enslavement”**

29 Dec 15 Danijel Kovacevic, BIRN

Banja Luka

Amid angry protests by trade unions and strong criticism from opposition parties, parliament in Bosnia's Serb-majority entity, Republika Srpska, on Tuesday adopted a controversial new labour law.

**The law is the key condition for Bosnia to obtain vital new financial support from the IMF.**

Bosnia's other entity, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, already adopted this law this summer.

Adoption of the law, and fresh IMF funding, is widely seen as the only option to save both the Republika Srpska and the rest of Bosnia from a liquidity crisis.

**Claiming that the law was drafted by the IMF and was intended to weaken workers' rights, unions staged mass protests as the RS assembly started its session on Monday.**

Opposition parties also condemned the law and walked out of the assembly session in protest.

Protests resulted in minor scuffles between demonstrators and the police, but there were no confirmations of injuries.

On Monday, the head of the RS trade unions, Ranka Mistic, addressed the assembly to appeal to deputies to reject the law, but her speech was interrupted and she was eventually carried out of the building by security.

“When I tried to address the deputies and warn them that they are adopting a law that is damaging to workers ... security took me out, dragged me over the floor and kicked me out of the building,” Mistic told the media. “This is not a path to democracy but to enslavement.”

Surrounded by strong police forces, which were supported by special police units and snipers, deputies from the ruling coalition ignored the protests, remained in session and after several breaks adopted the disputed law early on Tuesday.

Union officials told BIRN that they expected to continue meeting and discussing the situation on Tuesday.

“We are disappointed by the acts of the government and the assembly. We were expecting more understanding,” Velka Odzakovic, the secretary general of the RS trade unions, told BIRN.

She said that unions were now contemplating their next moves, including a possible appeal to the entity’s constitutional court against the law.

Meanwhile, the Republika Srpska Prime Minister, Zeljka Cvijanovic, denied that the police used excessive force against Ranka Mistic. She also accused unions of aiming at “toppling the RS institutions and not fighting for workers’ rights.”

The government tried to negotiate a compromise with trade unions and employers’ associations throughout the last week.

When the talks finally fell apart over the weekend, the ruling coalition, led by the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats, SNSD, decided to move ahead and adopt the law.

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## **DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK**

# **Engineers Can’t Stop Los Angeles’ Enormous Methane Gas Leak: “The Worst Environmental Disaster Since The BP Oil Spill In 2010”**

December 26, 2015 Written by MELISSA CRONIN, Motherboard

In early December, the Southern California Gas Company said that plugging the leak, which sprang in mid-October, would take at least three more months.

Right now, the single leak accounts for a quarter of the state's entire methane emissions, and the leak has been called the worst environmental disaster since the BP oil spill in 2010.

“Our efforts to stop the flow of gas by pumping fluids directly down the well have not yet been successful, so we have shifted our focus to stopping the leak through a relief well,” Anne Silva, a spokesperson for the Southern California Gas Company, told Motherboard, adding that the company is still exploring other options to stop the leak.

**“The relief well process is on schedule to be completed by late February or late March.”**

Part of the problem in stopping the leak lies in the base of the well, which sits 8,000 feet underground. Pumping fluids down into the well, usually the normal recourse, just isn't working, said Silva. Workers have been “unable to establish a stable enough column of fluid to keep the force of gas coming up from the reservoir.” The company is now constructing a relief well that will connect to the leaking well, and hopefully provide a way to reduce pressure so the leak can be plugged.

It's worth noting that the type of gas involved in this leak is part of what makes it so sinister.

Methane, the main component of natural gas, is 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide when it comes to climate change impact. About one-fourth of the anthropogenic global warming we're experiencing today is due to methane emissions, according to the Environmental Defense Fund. Leaks like the current one in California, it turns out, are a major contributor.

In Pasadena, for instance, just 35 miles from the leak in Aliso, investigators found one leak for every four miles:

So far, over 150 million pounds of methane have been released by the leak, which connects to an enormous underground containment system.

**Silva says that the cause of the leak is still unknown, but research by EDF has also revealed that more than 38 percent of the pipes in Southern California Gas Company's territory are more than 50 years old, and 16 percent are made from corrosion- and leak-prone materials.**

Right now, relief efforts have drilled only 3,800 feet down—less than half of the way to the base of the well.

At that rate, the torrent of methane pouring into California won't be stopped any time soon.

Clarification: An earlier version of this story noted that the gas smells like rotting eggs but did not say why. Methane is an odorless gas; a chemical called mercaptan is added to it to create a foul-smelling odor, in case of leaks like this one.

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## **OCCUPATION PALESTINE**

### **Zionists Attack Palestinian Vehicles, As Usual**

28-12-2015 The Palestinian Information Center

RAMALLAH -- A group of Israeli settlers attacked late Sunday Palestinian vehicles while passing near al-Bireh city in the West Bank.

Local sources affirmed that settlers from Beit El illegal settlement stoned Palestinian cars passing at the main road near Jalazoun refugee camp in al-Bireh city.

Attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinians in the West Bank have escalated recently from what was already an unacceptably high level.

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### **Palestinian Building Under Construction Demolished In Occupied Jerusalem, As Usual: “Palestinians Are Often Forced To Demolish Their Own Homes In Order To Avoid Paying Heavy Fines”**

DEC. 29, 2015 Ma'an

JERUSALEM -- Israeli forces on Tuesday tore down a building under construction in the occupied East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sur Bahir, its owner told Ma'an.

Raed Rabayaa said that Israeli forces stormed and closed the area, before bulldozers moved in and demolished the building, “without prior notice.”

Rabayaa's two-story building consisted of three apartments and was destroyed after being constructed without the necessary building permits from the Jerusalem municipality.

Israeli government policies make it nearly impossible for Palestinian residents of Jerusalem to obtain building permits, according to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel.

Palestinians are often forced to demolish their own homes in order to avoid paying heavy fines charged by the Jerusalem municipality for the demolition of homes built without a permit.

Thousands of Palestinians have been displaced in East Jerusalem since Israel occupied the area in 1967 in a move never recognized by the international community.

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## **Little Girl Pursued By Notorious Zionist Settler In Hebron: Twisted Freak Marzel Is Well-Known Among Palestinians Living In Hebron Who Fear The Right-Winger; “Irmeileh Told Ma’an That Israeli Forces Present In The Area Did Not Stop Marzel From Chasing His Children”**



Baruch Marzel: Loves Chasing Little Girls. [www.israelnationalnews.com](http://www.israelnationalnews.com)-420

DEC. 29, 2015 Ma’an

HEBRON -- A Palestinian father living in Hebron’s Old City told Ma’an that his 7-year-old daughter was injured while being chased by notorious Israeli extremist Baruch Marzel on Monday.

Raed Abu Irmeileh said that he had to take his daughter, Dana, to the Hebron Governmental Hospital “after she had fallen to the ground while being chased by Baruch Marzel near the Ibrahimi mosque.”

Irmeileh told Ma’an that Israeli forces present in the area did not stop Marzel from chasing his children, and assaulted his 10-year-old son Hutasem as well as two brothers Nabil, 14, and Farhat Nader al-Rajabi, 10.

An Israeli army spokesperson did not have immediate information on the incidents.

Irmeileh is one of thousands of Palestinians living in the Israeli-controlled center of Hebron -- the largest city in the occupied West Bank -- among hundreds of Israeli settlers living illegally in the area.

Israeli rights group B’Tselem regularly documents Israeli settlers attacking locals under the protection of Israeli forces in Hebron.

Marzel is well-known among Palestinians living in Hebron who fear the right-winger, follower of radical rabbi Meir Kahana and member to the Kach movement -- outlawed by Israel in 1994 under anti-terrorism laws.

Hebron’s Old City was declared a closed military zone in November, banning entrance to the area to all except registered Palestinian residents and Israeli settlers.

Palestinian PM Rami Hamdallah following the ban called for the presence of Palestinian security forces in al-Shuhada Street and Tel Rumeida areas of Hebron in order to provide “security and protection” for Palestinians against Israeli settler assaults.

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## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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