



**Written Statement for  
Committee on Oversight and Reform  
United States House of Representatives**

“75 Years After the Holocaust: The Ongoing Battle Against Hate”

**By Mr. Bradley W. Orsini**

**Senior National Security Advisor, Secure Community Network**

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## **About the Secure Community Network**

The Secure Community Network (SCN), a nonprofit 501(c)(3), is the official safety and security organization of the Jewish community in North America. Founded in 2004 under the auspices of The Jewish Federations of North America and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, SCN works on behalf of 146 Federations, the 50 largest Jewish non-profit organizations in North America and over 300 independent communities as well as with other partners in the public, private, non-profit and academic sectors to ensure the safety, security and resiliency of the Jewish people.

SCN serves as the Jewish community's formal liaison with federal law enforcement and coordinates closely with federal, state and local law enforcement partners on safety and security issues related to the Jewish community; through the organization's Operations Center and Duty Desk, SCN analyzes intelligence and information, providing timely, credible threat and incident information to both law enforcement and community partners. SCN's team of law enforcement, homeland security, and military professionals proactively works with communities and partners across North America to develop and implement strategic frameworks that enhance the safety and security of the Jewish people. This includes developing best practice policies, emergency plans and procedures, undertaking threat and vulnerability assessments of facilities, providing critical, real-world training and exercises to prepare for threats and hazards, offering consultation on safety and security matters, and providing response as well as crisis management support during critical incidents.

SCN is dedicated to ensuring that Jewish organizations, communities, as well as life and culture can not only exist safely and securely, but flourish.

## **About Bradley Orsini**

Bradley W. Orsini joined the Secure Community Network (SCN) as the Senior National Security Advisor in January 2020. In his role, Mr. Orsini provides security consultation, training, and direct response to critical incidents for Jewish Communities across North America.

From January 2017 to January 2020, Mr. Orsini served the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh as its first Director of Community Security. Mr. Orsini developed a Communal Security program that provided security consultations, building/organizational assessments, training/drills and threat mitigation to over 60 organizations to include schools, day care centers, synagogues, camps, assisted living facilities and various other Jewish organizations. In three years, Mr. Orsini provided security training and awareness to over 16,000 individuals in the Greater Pittsburgh area and the country.

Prior to joining the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, Mr. Orsini was a Special Agent (SA) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation from September 1988 until his retirement in December 2016. Upon completion of training in Quantico, Virginia, SA Orsini was transferred to the Newark, NJ Division of the FBI. SA Orsini spent over 16 years investigating violent crimes, gangs, drug organizations, public corruption and civil rights cases. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, SA Orsini was selected to supervise the New Jersey response in which he led all searches and arrests with a group of federal, state and local law enforcement officials.

In 2004, SA Orsini was transferred to the Pittsburgh Division where he was assigned to the Public Corruption/Civil Rights Squad. In September 2007, SA Orsini was promoted to Supervisory Special Agent (SSA) where he supervised the Public Corruption/Civil Rights Squad. SSA Orsini also supervised the Training and Community Outreach Programs and was the Crisis Management Coordinator for the Pittsburgh Division.

Prior to joining the FBI, Mr. Orsini was on active duty as an officer in the United States Marine Corps attaining the rank of Captain. Mr. Orsini earned a Bachelor of Science in Administration of Justice from the Pennsylvania State University.



**75 Year After the Holocaust: The Ongoing Battle Against Hate**

Testimony of Mr. Bradley W. Orsini

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Wednesday, 29 January 2020

Chairwoman Maloney, Ranking Member Jordan, Distinguished Members of the Committee:

On Monday, we commemorated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and International Holocaust Remembrance Day. As we paused to honor those killed in the name of bigotry and hate, we are acutely aware that those horrors do not only live in the annals of history.

Anti-Semitism is alive and thriving. The nature of the threat facing the Jewish community is complex, varied and increasingly deadly.

Thank you for your attention to this, and for convening this important conversation.

I am Brad Orsini, Senior National Security Advisor for the Secure Community Network and formerly, the Director of Community Security for the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh.

In January 2017, I retired after 32 years of federal government experience, 4 years in the United States Marine Corps and 28 years in the FBI as a Special Agent. I took the skills acquired over those years, especially in the FBI as a Civil Rights Coordinator, Violent Crime investigator and Crisis Manager and developed the Communal Security program for the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh as their first communal security director.

It was apparent in the Jewish community of over 50,000 people in western Pennsylvania, that a countless number of people experienced anti-Semitism, and that it was largely going unreported.

In the first synagogue I visited, I asked if they experienced hate mail, postings or any type of anti-Semitic slurs expressed to members of the congregation. Without hesitation, the answer was yes. When I asked what they do with "hate mail", the answer was, "we throw it away."

That wouldn't be the first time I heard that in my first few months as a communal security director.

Our goal from that point was to conduct an awareness campaign stressing the importance of reporting every sign of hate and provide the tools necessary for our community to build a conscious culture of security. We followed the "see something, say something" model, as developed by New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority and championed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

On top of “see something, say something”, we asked our community to “do something”, and commit to action.

Over the next 18 months, until October 27, 2018, the Pittsburgh community continued to experience anti-Semitism on a routine basis, but reporting escalated.

On October 27, 2018, 11 people were brutally murdered at the Tree of Life Synagogue. Members from all three congregations that worship there – Tree of Life, Dor Hadash and New Light – were killed and two seriously wounded. The brave men and women from the Pittsburgh Police Department and all surrounding law enforcement rushed to the shooting and, without hesitation, moved into the building to eliminate the threat. The Pittsburgh Police were exposed to gunfire and several officers suffered serious injuries.

This one, 90-minute event targeting the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh succeeded in terrorizing the entire Jewish community. The traumas of the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in our nation’s history are long-lasting and continue to this very day.

While we will never forget the 11 lives that were lost and the numerous people seriously injured that day, it is important to understand what steps were taken to mitigate loss of life.

Today, we make it a priority to educate and train Jewish communities across the country. We help them understand the importance of preparedness and what every individual who is a target of anti-Semitism must do to report and maintain vigilance. We have taken survivor testimonials from numerous individuals who survived the Tree of Life shooting. These individuals talk about the importance of awareness and the training they received that enabled them to commit to action, ultimately saving their lives and the lives of others.

As we continue to see a rise in hate speech and physical assaults targeted at the Jewish community, it is vital for Jews across the country to be committed partners with law enforcement and to report any signs of hate.

Numerous communal security protocols for Jewish institutions across the Pittsburgh community were established that played a role on October 27, 2018.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh Communal Security Model, initiated in January 2017, is based on three prongs:

- a. **Assessments of Buildings and Organizations.** Facilitate security assessments for organizations which lead to physical target-hardening and the drafting of written emergency operation procedures for every organization.
- a. **Training/Drills.** Train and drill in various security protocols for the entire community.
- b. **Anti-Semitism Threat Track/Mitigation/Law Enforcement Liaison.** Collect and document every sign of hate. Report to law enforcement to mitigate the threat.

### **Assessments of Buildings and Organizations**

Physical security and target-hardening our buildings is one layer in a holistic security program. All Pittsburgh organizations are afforded assessments of their facilities and security protocols. The assessment focuses on identifying gaps and vulnerabilities and possible solutions to them. The organizations are provided written feedback to establish realistic goals and objectives.

### **Training**

We instituted an aggressive training program and made it available to anyone in the Jewish community of Pittsburgh. Our goal was to teach our entire community to become “first responders”. We focus on the importance of knowing what to do in the event of danger, including an armed intruder. We trained individuals to survive the first three to five minutes of an attack until help arrives. Our training platform consists of Situational Awareness, Active Shooter, Hate Crime Indicators, Usher/Greeter Training, Stop the Bleed and various other protocols. In the first three years of this approach, we trained over 16,000 people in these security protocols in more than 250 different training sessions.

Prior to October 27, 2018, we trained over 5000 people in over 100 training sessions. Those training efforts played a life-saving role for numerous people who were at the Tree of Life building that day.

Several individuals survived this horrific attack because of quick decision-making and the commitment to action they learned through preparedness training. Witness testimonials have demonstrated and validated the need for everyone to be trained so they are able to assess their options and potentially save their own life. Many of these individuals now feel a sense of duty to

talk about their experiences and to help communities prepare in the event of another tragedy. These testimonials have been a powerful training tool for the Jewish community to understand not only the rise in anti-Semitism but the real steps necessary for awareness, reporting and training to “commit to action” in the event of an incident.

Rabbi Jeffrey Myers, Tree of Life Congregation, changed his typical practice of not carrying his cell phone on Shabbat as an observant Jew. After an active shooter training session we provided, Rabbi Myers understood the importance of alerting the police as quickly as possible and started carrying his phone. This one act alone saved lives, as he was the first to call 911 and the Pittsburgh Police responded immediately.

When the police entered the building, it should be noted that no other civilians were shot and the Pittsburgh Police conducted themselves in heroic fashion to mitigate the threat and apprehend the shooter.

Critically, these efforts are reflective of the comprehensive, strategic, best-practice approach that the Secure Community Network is implementing for communities across the United States. We know these efforts save lives. Recognizing the increasing threat to our communities and institutions, the expanded reach of these efforts is essential.

Additionally, there are three other training initiatives that the Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh instituted prior to the Tree of Life shooting that played an instrumental role on October 27, 2018.

**Pittsburgh Police Recruit Holocaust Initiative.** This is an initiative modeled after the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and its relationship with law enforcement. The Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh worked with officials from the City of Pittsburgh Department of Public Safety to train all new police recruits prior to their graduation, requiring all new recruits attend the four-hour training session at the Holocaust Center in Pittsburgh. While there, recruits learn about the Holocaust, often directly from a survivor. They tour the museum and learn about the current threat picture and recent anti-Semitic incidents. This program has been beneficial to police officers in gaining a greater understanding of anti-Semitism and cultural issues that may help them in their day-to-day interaction with the community. While much anti-Semitic hate speech may be first amendment protected speech, the training better equips law enforcement



professionals to deal with this rise in hate speech and helps alleviate fears throughout the community.

**Pittsburgh Department of Public Safety Rescue Task Force Initiative.** This initiative involved relationship-building with the City of Pittsburgh Department of Public Safety and the Jewish community, culminating in a full-scale exercise on January 25, 2018. The exercise was to practice the newly formed Pittsburgh Rescue Task Force, inclusive of police, fire and EMS working together to rescue individuals caught in a “warm” zone during an active shooting event. We opened up our facilities for first responders to train over a three-month period prior to the full-scale exercise. The purpose of the task force is to rescue injured victims of an active shooter event while the shooting continues to occur. When police move in to mitigate the threat, tactical EMS and other medical staff, accompanied by a law enforcement officers, work together to render life-saving first aid.

The Pittsburgh Jewish communal security program worked with representatives from the Pittsburgh Police to develop this full-scale exercise, incorporating Jewish community members as role players and allowing first responders to practice at one of the largest Jewish facilities in Pittsburgh. More than 200 attendees took part in the exercise, including first responders, community members and staff from the Jewish Community Center.

It should be noted that the first time the Rescue Task Force was deployed in Pittsburgh was on October 27, 2018 the day of the Tree of Life shooting. I believe lives were saved that day because of the initiation of this task force and its relationship with the community.

**Stop the Bleed Initiative.** The Stop the Bleed program originated in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, in December 2012. It was recognized that the victims of the shooting at Sandy Hook died due to excessive blood loss, and that victims may have been prevented from going into shock before emergency services arrived had blood loss prevention efforts been rendered. With this knowledge, the American College of Surgeons formed a group known as the Hartford Consensus with the intent to eliminate preventable death due to blood loss after intentional acts of mass violence.

From the Hartford Consensus and the American College of Surgeons emerged the Stop the Bleed program, formally launched by the White House in October 2015. The goal of the Stop the Bleed

program is to teach people how to control bleeding and become immediate responders in the event of life-threatening injuries involving loss of blood, promoting the message that “everyone can save a life.”

Shortly after the launch of the Stop the Bleed program, leaders in Trauma Surgery from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center initiated one of the largest Stop the Bleed programs in the world. Under the leadership of Drs. Andrew Peitzman, Matthew D. Neal, and Raquel Forsythe along with Benjamin Reynolds, PA-C and David Bertoty, RN, the Western Pennsylvania Stop The Bleed program secured \$1.3 million dollars in philanthropic support from UPMC and announced the ambitious goal of placing a bleeding control kit in every public school building and a tourniquet on the belt of every law enforcement officer in Western Pennsylvania.

Through additional support and partnerships with organizations such as the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, the initiative spread rapidly, extending even outside of Western Pennsylvania into Ohio, West Virginia, and New York. As of December 2019, over 60,000 people have been trained in the region, with bleeding control kits widely disseminated and tourniquets available not only to law enforcement in Western Pennsylvania, but programs across the state. This included an initiative to provide tourniquets and training to all 4,500 members of the Pennsylvania State Police Force. By September 2019, the Stop the Bleed initiative has collectively trained over one million people around the world to save a life.

As part of this program, Dr. Neal partnered with the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh to train the community over multiple training sessions. Also, bleeding control kits were placed into every synagogue, Jewish day school, Jewish pre-school and all other major Jewish communal organizations.

On October 27, 2018, Dr. Keith Murray responded to the Tree of Life Synagogue and rendered life-saving first aid to community members and Pittsburgh police officers. Dr. Neal and Dr. Forsythe treated victims of the shooting at UPMC Presbyterian, all of whom survived.

**Anti-Semitism and Threat Tracking/Mitigation/Law Enforcement Liaison.** In the spring of 2017, the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh worked with FBI officials to start tracking anti-Semitism and the threats emanating from hate speech and hate incidents. As we continued to train and bring awareness of the various hate groups in the Greater Pittsburgh area, community

members started reporting. The FBI provided the ability for our Jewish communal security program to track and report threats and incidents through a Virtual Command Center (VCC) of the Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal. This allowed us to capture all anti-Semitic threats and hate speech that our community reported into the VCC. The information/intelligence is immediately viewed and assessed by law enforcement officials and appropriate steps are taken through an assessment or an initiation of an active investigation. This has been an invaluable partnership between community and law enforcement to help assess the true threat to our Jewish community.

This VCC is just one part of the importance of continual engagement between law enforcement and security professionals working on behalf of the community. The ability to collect and share information and intelligence with law enforcement helps our community to be more aware and in a better position to effectively report information in a timely manner. This engagement with the FBI and other law enforcement agencies enabled the Pittsburgh communal security program to share and disseminate intelligence both ways to better secure the community.

As the Jewish community's official liaison with federal law enforcement, particularly the FBI and DHS, the Secure Community Network continues to work on ways to better share information and intelligence in order to establish what the true threat is in our Jewish communities across the country.

### **October 27, 2018 and Beyond**

On October 27, 2018, our community witnessed the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in our nation's history. The shooting had a profound impact on Jews across the world.

In Pittsburgh, our communal security efforts prior to the shooting were focused on preparedness through awareness and education. Not everyone in the community thought it was necessary to prepare or take an active role in their own security. Some left that solely to law enforcement, or ignored the issues and the rise in anti-Semitic activity.

After the shooting, that all changed. It not only changed in Pittsburgh, but in Jewish communities across the country.

I will never forget walking through that horrific crime scene on October 27, 2018, and witnessing the destruction that one man caused because of hateful anti-Semitism. I am certain that those who were in the building that day, to include our community members as well as first responders, will never forget the images they witnessed that day. In almost three decades of law enforcement, that particular crime scene is hard to describe. People were murdered simply because they were Jews gathered to pray. For a countless number of people, that image will never be erased. It cannot, nor will it ever be forgotten.

We need to take any lesson learned from that day and teach the entire community to help safeguard from an anti-Semitic act with the potential to turn violent. We continue those efforts in Pittsburgh and across the country.

I have been working in the Jewish community for over three years now. I have witnessed a community that is caring, compassionate and willing to help others, no matter their faith affiliation.

From my experience, there are several clear steps we need to take to support, enhance and further develop the efforts that have already saved lives.

- 1. Education.** The number of people in the United States that deny or do not know the magnitude of the Holocaust is staggering. Education on the Holocaust and other atrocities, like the Tree of Life shooting, should be taught in our public schools for children to understand the devastation that hate causes.
- 2. Reporting.** Hate crimes reporting is inconsistent, at best. Communities should be educated on the process and encouraged to report, and law enforcement supported through increased funding to support reporting and investigative efforts.
- 3. Address Domestic Terrorism.** Increased funding would allow the FBI to pursue and investigate domestic terrorism cases, to include encouraging the designation of domestic terrorist groups with overseas ties as foreign terrorist organizations.
- 4. Increase Funding for the NSGP.** The Nonprofit Security Grant Program has placed electronic locks on exterior doors of Jewish community centers, cameras on synagogues and panic buttons in school classrooms. NSGP funds can now also be used to support planning, exercises and training for everyday citizens. All of these efforts can be the

difference between life and death, and increased funding means more institutions can make these life-saving investments.

Just a few weeks ago, I left my position as the Director of Community Security for the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh. I started my new role as the Senior National Security Advisor for the Secure Community Network. I look forward to continuing this work on a national level to keep our Jewish communities safe.