

IN MINNEAPOLIS, VEGAN = TERRORIST

How does one equate vegan potlucks with this restriction on permissible terrorist investigations?

Mere speculation that force or violence might occur during the course of an otherwise peaceable demonstration is not sufficient grounds for initiation of an investigation under this Subpart, but where facts or circumstances reasonably indicate that a group or enterprise has engaged or aims to engage in activities involving force or violence or other criminal conduct described in paragraph (1)(a) in a demonstration, an investigation may be initiated in conformity with the standards of that paragraph. [my emphasis]

I ask because apparently, Minneapolis' Joint Terrorist Task Force is recruiting people to infiltrate vegan potlucks to look for potential—what?—tahini enthusiasts?—in advance of the RNC convention this fall.

Paul Carroll was riding his bike when his cell phone vibrated.

[snip]

When Carroll called back, Swanson asked him to meet at a coffee shop later that day, going on to assure a wary Carroll that he wasn't in trouble.

Carroll, who requested that his real name not be used, showed up early and waited anxiously for Swanson's arrival. Ten minutes later, he says, a casually dressed Swanson showed up, flanked by a woman whom he introduced as FBI Special Agent Maureen E. Mazzola. For the next 20 minutes, Mazzola would do most of the

talking.

“She told me that I had the perfect ‘look,’” recalls Carroll. “And that I had the perfect personality—they kept saying I was friendly and personable—for what they were looking for.”

What they were looking for, Carroll says, was an informant—someone to show up at “vegan potlucks” throughout the Twin Cities and rub shoulders with RNC protestors, schmoozing his way into their inner circles, then reporting back to the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force, a partnership between multiple federal agencies and state and local law enforcement. The effort’s primary mission, according to the Minneapolis division’s website, is to “investigate terrorist acts carried out by groups or organizations which fall within the definition of terrorist groups as set forth in the current United States Attorney General Guidelines.”

Carroll would be compensated for his efforts, but only if his involvement yielded an arrest. No exact dollar figure was offered. [my emphasis]

Now, maybe the vegans we’ve got here in Michigan are dramatically different from those infesting Minnesota. But where I’m from, vegans tend to be fairly peaceful people. If they’re unwilling to steal a bee’s honey, I figure, they’re going to be unwilling to use force to make their point. So I’m really curious how this operation got beyond the “mere speculation that force or violence might occur” that the US Attorney’s own guidelines demands. And if you’re really intent on infiltrating groups of vegans in anticipation of a bunch of violence-loving Republicans coming to town, why use the JTTF? Last I heard, we were so threatened by terrorists that we had to give up all our phone data to AT&T. But now we’ve got time to infiltrate vegans.

I can only think of one explanation for this. Somehow, Rachel Paulose escaped the cubbyhole they've assigned her to in DC and returned to Minneapolis to continue doing absurd things with Minnesota's federal law enforcement efforts.