

The usual suspects oppose Safe Communities

On January 24th a handful of white extremists [\[link\]](#) appeared before the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security [\[link\]](#) to lie about immigrants and about the provisions of the Safe Communities Act. This relatively small number of opponents is loud and extremely well-funded. Almost all are financed or fronted by two organizations identified as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center — the Federation for American Immigration Reform, [FAIR [\[link\]](#)] and the Center for Immigration Studies, CIS. [\[link\]](#) Both were founded by white supremacist Michigan ophthalmologist John Tanton. [\[link\]](#) And both are described as extremist groups that "mainstream hate" by the Anti-Defamation League.

So on January 24th it was Old Home Week at the State House for all the Usual Suspects, who appear together repeatedly. [\[link\]](#) And it's time legislators knew precisely who they were listening to.

FAIR - Federation for American Immigration Reform

Tom Hodgson, who testified on January 24th in the Gardner auditorium, is not so much a county sheriff as he is a spokesman for FAIR. Hodgson serves on FAIR's National Advisory Board [\[link\]](#) and often sticks Massachusetts taxpayers with his travel expenses to FAIR events. Hodgson's neglect of his day job in favor of his anti-immigrant crusade is costing incarcerated people their lives, health and rehabilitation.

Donald Rosenberg dropped in from Westlake Village, California to testify. [\[link\]](#) Rosenberg is the president of AVIAC [\[link\]](#), Advocates For Illegal Alien Crime, a front group for FAIR whose events, such as the September 2019 "Angel Families" event in Washington DC, are organized [\[link\]](#) by FAIR (whose legal arm, IRLI, the Immigration Reform Law Institute, provides legal services for AVIAC). Susan Tully, FAIR national field director and friend of Tom Hodgson, even admitted the connection [\[link\]](#) to AVIAC in a Facebook post: "Working with our new group AVIAC."

Maureen Maloney, AVIAC's Vice President, also testified at the State House. Maloney told attendees [\[link\]](#) at a 2017 event that the Catholic Church isn't doing enough to turn its back on its own values: "The Catholic bishops make a fortune off of the refugees and the illegal aliens, and I'm a Catholic," she claimed. When Maloney and Rosenberg (and FAIR) kicked off their organization at the National Press Club in Washington DC, their featured speaker [\[link\]](#) was America's white supremacist legislator Steve King, who was stripped of his committee assignments by Trump's Tea Party GOP — no mean accomplishment in an age of concentration camps [\[link\]](#) for Central American children and Stephen Miller's brainstorm [\[link\]](#) to ship DACA recipients out of the country in boxcars. [\[link\]](#) Maloney herself is no slouch when it comes to unvarnished racism. Maloney was previously a member of The Remembrance Project, a group similar to AVIAC, also with substantial white supremacist connections. [\[link\]](#)

CIS - Center for Immigration Studies

Jessica Vaughan fled Massachusetts for South Carolina and is now the "Director of Policy Studies" for the Center for Immigration Studies. [\[link\]](#) Vaughan testified for five minutes and answered questions for fourteen more before the Joint Committee. Rather than focus on the SPLC's designation of CIS as a hate group, just consider Vaughan's own words and deeds [\[link\]](#): "Vaughan has[previously discussed her work [\[link\]](#) with *The American Free Press*, [\[link\]](#) a virulently anti-Semitic newspaper founded by Willis Carto, [\[link\]](#) a Holocaust denier who was active on the radical right for over five decades before his death in 2015. She has also been a featured speaker at multiple extremist events including white nationalist publisher The Social Contract Press's [\[link\]](#) annual Writer's Workshop [\[link\]](#) and the Federation for American Immigration Reform's [\[link\]](#) Sheriff Border Summit. [\[link\]](#) At the Writer's Workshop, white nationalist Peter Brimelow [\[link\]](#) of the racist website VDARE [\[link\]](#) also spoke. In 1996, Vaughan appeared on an episode of 'Borderline,' a show produced by FAIR, alongside Chilton Williamson, a longtime editor of *Chronicles* magazine, a publication with strong neo-Confederate ties that caters to the more intellectual wing of the white nationalist movement."

Lou Murray, whose group Bostonians Against Sanctuary Cities [\[link\]](#) appears to be a front for CIS (with ties to FAIR), sat right next to Vaughan and yielded most of his time to her. Many of Murray's public appearances feature Vaughan [\[link\]](#), Hodgson, and retired ICE agents. Murray's group's Facebook page [\[link\]](#) is also littered with links to FAIR and CIS. When Michelle Malkin was disinvited from an appearance at Bentley College, Murray and Vaughan [\[link\]](#) organized a private event for her. And as if to demonstrate how insular this little circle is, Murray and Vaughan hosted Maureen Maloney [\[link\]](#) at one of their events in West Roxbury. Murray, who was a 2016 Republican National Convention delegate, hates Muslims just as much as he does Latinos. Murray serves on Trump's Catholic Advisory Group [\[link\]](#) and has "nothing but high praise" for Trump's 2017 executive order to ban Muslims. Murray said the US government should help "those populations who are most vulnerable," including "the Christian population who is most at risk from ISIS, Al Qaeda and other Islamic dangers."

Steve Kropper of MCIR, the Massachusetts Coalition for Immigration Reform, also testified before the Joint Committee. Kropper, who in 2012 was arrested for violating a domestic violence restraining order, [\[link\]](#) came to the microphone joking about his divorce. The rest of his testimony was equally unamusing. MCIR appears to be another CIS front group, but is also affiliated with another of white supremacist John Tanton's groups, the *Social Contract Press*. MCIR's president John Thompson wrote in 2016 [\[link\]](#) in the *Social Contract Press* that immigrants "are natural constituents for politicians desirous of expanding the welfare state. They could potentially provide career opportunities for social workers, ethnic militants, immigration lawyers, and poverty activists for generations to come." Thompson goes on to quote Jason Richwine, [\[link\]](#) a white supremacist known for his paper, "IQ and Immigration Policy," which says, among other things:

- "No one knows whether Hispanics will ever reach IQ parity with whites, but the prediction that new Hispanic immigrants will have low-IQ children and grandchildren is difficult to argue against."

- "the totality of the evidence suggests a genetic component to group differences in IQ, but the extent of its impact is hard to determine."
- "The statistical construct known as IQ can reliably estimate general mental ability, or intelligence. The average IQ of immigrants in the United States is substantially lower than that of the white native population, and the difference is likely to persist over several generations. The consequences are a lack of socioeconomic assimilation among low-IQ immigrant groups, more underclass behavior, less social trust, and an increase in the proportion of unskilled workers in the American labor market."

Thompson also quotes Robert Rector, [\[link\]](#) of both the Heritage Foundation and CIS, whose 2007 study of the costs of undocumented refugees was rejected [\[link\]](#) by even conservative Republicans (and eventually the Heritage Foundation itself) and Rector was blasted for his report's sloppiness and dishonesty.

In March 2005 MCIR member Robert Casimiro, [\[link\]](#) a Weymouth resident, flew to Arizona to join up with an armed militia called the *Minuteman Project*. According to a press release, "the project's participants will also be conducting auxiliary border patrols, 'spotting' people crossing illegally and reporting them to the border patrol and the local authorities." The Anti-Defamation League [\[link\]](#) reported that Minuteman "members belonging to active vigilante groups, including their leadership, have been arrested on weapons charges and white supremacist and anti-governments groups continue to express interest and take part in organized 'patrols' of the border."

These were the people who had the Legislature's ear on January 24th.

Who is Tom Hodgson?

Bristol County Sheriff Thomas Hodgson can be relied upon to offer his opinion on any topic, day or night, by phone, studio visit, or from his own in-house broadcasting facility at the Dartmouth, Massachusetts jail he has run for 22 years. Boston Globe columnist Joan Vennochi calls Hodgson the "Sheriff from Trumpachusetts" [\[link\]](#) and ultraconservative radio host Chris McCarthy at New Bedford's WBSM radio station (where Hodgson sometimes sits in) calls him "America's Sheriff." [\[link\]](#) In 2017 radio host Bob McClain interviewed the sheriff at an anti-immigrant event and marked him as a character from Central Casting: "The face you're looking at now — this guy looks like a cop, doesn't he?" [\[link\]](#) Hodgson has been such a go-to guy for the media that in 2015 the Boston Globe asked his opinion on the Iran deal. [\[link\]](#)

Hodgson is New England's scrubbed-up version of Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio, convicted of racial profiling and civil rights abuses, and subsequently pardoned by Donald Trump. Hodgson knows he's selling a brand, and the product can be described like this — an elected official above petty politics, a tough lawman totally devoted to protecting the people of Bristol County, and a man of faith and strong conviction who says what he thinks at all times, consequences be damned. Of course, *caveat emptor*. To really understand Tom Hodgson, you need an outside review.

Hodgson works hard at both national and retail politics. One day he'll be in Washington posing at the President's side in a sea of Stetson-hatted sheriffs. The next day he's in a photo op with kids he claims he's keeping on the straight and narrow. Or his employees are on the phone making daily health checks of seniors. Appointed by Governor William Weld in 1997, Hodgson replaced a sheriff who had been unchallenged for twenty years. When forced to compete at the polls, Hodgson overcame the resistance in Bristol County's multicultural cities and focused instead on high-income, white voters in towns north of Fall River. And he decisively beat his competitors in the next three elections. In 2016 he ran unopposed.

Boss Hogg comes to Town

Not long after being appointed Sheriff in 1997, Hodgson set about creating his brand and his kingdom. He added 100 officers, a SWAT team, and rolled out slave-style chain gangs. A 2000 article in the New Bedford Standard Times on "The Hodgson Empire" noted: "Once little more than a warden, the Bristol County sheriff is now the very visible head of what has become the largest law enforcement agency in Southeastern Massachusetts, with interests far beyond the mere housing and transportation of county prisoners."

Hodgson began acquiring equipment and staff and loaning them out to local police forces on his own terms — stepping on many toes in the process. When Hodgson instituted chain gangs, not only were NAACP and religious leaders beside themselves, New Bedford Mayor Fred Kalisz was hopping mad. "You can't just go into a community and change the way public safety is done. We have operations, established entities, contracts [...] To have someone come in with what some would call a privatized police force and try to force their ways on the community is just not productive." George Leontire, New Bedford's City Solicitor, put it less charitably: "He thinks it says 'I'm a tough-guy boss.' But I think he's a Boss Hogg."

Lee Charlton, then-president of the NAACP New Bedford at the time, recalled that Hodgson was enamored of Maricopa County, Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who put prisoners in chains and pink jump suits. It was not only mean-spirited and reminiscent of slavery and Jim Crow, Charlton told me, but inefficient and divisive. [\[link\]](#) A chain gang couldn't go into a restaurant chained together, so food had to be brought to them. A chain gang couldn't use public toilets, so a porta-potty had to accompany them. And the publicity-grabbing stunt caused friction between prisoners who allowed themselves to be chained and those who saw them as sell-outs.

The use of chain gangs had also rubbed salt into the county's deep racial wounds. In the whitest communities of Bristol County Hodgson was selling chain gangs to people who thought "urban" criminals were "invading" them and who believed, in Charlton's words, that they had to "fear people like me."

Hodgson, who grew up in Maryland, where Frederick Douglass was born, and who worked in a Massachusetts city associated with Douglass' freedom, seemed insensitive to the echoes of slavery and Jim Crow. Charlton chalks it up to opportunism: "Sheriff Hodgson would set fire to his favorite relative if it became politically cold in the room."

Besides the chain gangs, Hodgson increased K9 units, which are often loaned out to local police departments. And he also purchased new patrol vehicles. In 2000 the Fourth of July parade in Fall River featured "a contingent of heavily armed sheriff's deputies — helmeted, with combat boots laced to mid-shin, machine guns at the ready — flanked by some of his 10 canine officers and a small armada of gleaming new trucks and vans emblazoned with the now-ubiquitous yellow and black insignia of the department."

Waving away criticism, Hodgson remained unapologetic: "[W]e are completely within our constitutional mandate. Counties were actually established even before the state. [...] And I've never been a guy who believes before we can do anything we have to get a consensus. I've kind of been the guy to go out and do it." [\[link\]](#)

The High Sheriff

On February 12, 2018 Jefferson Beauregard Sessions III (named for both a Confederate president and a Confederate general) stood before roughly 400 sheriffs, including Hodgson, at the winter conference of the National Sheriff's Association (NSA), talking about the anti-immigration victories their collaboration had produced. [\[link\]](#) Toward the end of his talk, Sessions departed from his prepared remarks to praise sheriffs as an "Anglo-American" institution. [\[link\]](#) For those who knew the former Alabama senator, whom Coretta Scott King once accused of suppressing the African-American vote, it was not difficult to parse his meaning. [\[link\]](#) In 2006, for instance, Sessions remarked that "almost no one coming from the Dominican Republic to the United States is coming because they have a skill that would benefit us and that would indicate their likely success in our society." [\[link\]](#)

But Sessions was not wrong about the shared British-American institution of sheriff. In Britain the Office of High Sheriff (originally *shire reeve*) had been a Royal appointment. Puritans brought the institution with them to New England. In Massachusetts the office was established in 1692 and it is mentioned in the 1780 constitution. [\[link\]](#) The position eventually became an elective office and today sheriffs in Massachusetts serve a six year term, just like a U.S. senator. [\[link\]](#)

A Massachusetts sheriff's duties, then as now, were largely *assumed* from British Common Law. In practice, the responsibilities of the state's fourteen sheriffs consist mainly of running county jails, serving papers, and transporting prisoners. Sheriffs of the Commonwealth do not conduct patrols as they do in Western states. Originally funded by counties, a 2010 state law transferred fiscal control to the state. But the legislation also exempted many departmental accounts from oversight and contained an "entrepreneurship" clause allowing sheriffs to keep any money they "earned." This has been an open invitation to corruption and a tool for thwarting oversight. [\[link\]](#)

Rogue Sheriffs

A Google search on "rogue sheriff" returns over 28,000 results. Like violent police officers, unaccountable sheriffs are a national problem. Policing and prison reformers constantly wonder why there are so many of them. [\[link\]](#) It may say more about our American values than anything, but one rarely hears of a candidate for sheriff talking about prisoner rehabilitation. Americans seem to want tough and mercurial sheriffs. When Tom Hodgson ran for Sheriff in 2010 he ran on jail as a *deterrence*. "Jail is not a country club," he said to the camera. "That's why, once you've done time in the Bristol County House of Correction, you won't want to come back." [\[link\]](#) When *Fault Lines* director Lucy Kennedy produced her documentary *American Sheriff* in 2018, Hodgson openly boasted of not giving prisoners quite enough food. [\[link\]](#)

Anyone who has studied the history of American sheriffs and their ambiguous mandates knows just how much power [\[link\]](#) they have and how little accountability [\[link\]](#) is required of them.

A Massachusetts sheriff's six-year term is three times longer than a state representative's and two years longer than the Attorney General's or the Governor's. What state legislator dares challenge a powerful and long-lived sheriff? More often than not, the power and influence of a sheriff arrive without an election. Four of the current sheriffs were originally appointed; in 1997 Hodgson was the first of them. [\[link\]](#) Voter apathy and ignorance also play a role in the impunity sheriffs enjoy. Many voters — if they even know who the sheriff is — have no idea what a sheriffs does besides locking up the "bad guys." [\[link\]](#)

In Massachusetts electoral democracy has been on the ropes for some time. [\[link\]](#) Ballotpedia ranks political competitiveness and considers primaries, general elections, and open seats. In 2016 Massachusetts scored 40th out of 50 states in open seats (i.e., nobody wants the job). [\[link\]](#) The state ranked 40th in challengers to incumbents. [\[link\]](#) And Massachusetts ranked 43rd in unchallenged general elections. [\[link\]](#) In the 2016 Democratic Primary there were no challengers in any of the nine U.S.Congressional districts. [\[link\]](#) At the state level half the candidates for the Governor's Council ran unopposed. [\[link\]](#) In almost half the state legislature primaries [\[link\]](#) and in 29 out of 42 state senate races there were no challengers. [\[link\]](#) And in the 2016 general elections, half of the state's sheriffs ran unopposed. Hodgson was one of them. [\[link\]](#)

With sheriffs choosing sides in culture and immigration wars, enjoying longer terms than other state politicians, and having few challengers, they have inordinate political power both locally and nationally. And with virtually no accountability built into state law, sheriffs do as they please. Of the five Republican sheriffs in Massachusetts, all support the Trump administration's immigration polices. Three of them — Sheriffs Hodgson, Cummings, and McDonald — currently have agreements with ICE. [\[link\]](#) The other Republican sheriffs are thinking about it.

Abuses

Like many sheriffs, Tom Hodgson runs several jails: America's oldest prison, the Ash Street Jail in New Bedford; mens' and womens' facilities in Dartmouth; and the Carreiro immigration facility in Dartmouth. [\[link\]](#) From the day Hodgson became sheriff, complaints of abuse began.

In 2009 a judge ruled that Hodgson was housing prisoners under cruel and unusual conditions. Prison Legal News reported that prisoners were being triple-bunked at the Ash Street Jail, forced to sleep on the floor in "boats" (portable bunks), and "dry-celled" by being deprived of access to a toilet. [\[link\]](#) The Ash Street jail is unsanitary, requiring meals to be prepared at the Dartmouth facility and delivered to New Bedford. [\[link\]](#) Prisoners complain of heat in summer and cold in winter and two of the sheriff's facilities have failed to document safe prison temperatures. [\[link\]](#) In 2009 — after 11 years of justice denied — the Suffolk Superior Court ruled on a legal complaint that the sheriff had violated prisoners' rights by housing them in "cruel and unusual" conditions.

Attorney Greta Janusz, who represented one of the three inmates in the lawsuit, said Hodgson has had "a very cavalier attitude over the 11 years of the lawsuit. He has an attitude that he's above the law."

[\[link\]](#)

Starvation

In July 2018 the New Bedford community group Bristol County for Correctional Justice received a letter from a prisoner at the Bristol County House of Correction. Along with complaints of violence and neglect, the prisoner described the jail's food: "The food we get is not enough to feed a five year old child. We get nothing but soy products with either rice or mashed/scalloped potatoes every day. Never mind breakfast: it's either one of three things — grits, oatmeal, or tasty-ohs. Some meats that they give have hundreds of tiny little bones that break your teeth. We all put in grievances but they said it's just fat and it's healthy." [\[link\]](#)

In 2018, following a food strike by prisoners [\[link\]](#) in July, the New Bedford Standard Times found [\[link\]](#) "expired food in the pantry and meals some inmates consider inedible or too small, pushing them to rely on high-priced snacks from the commissary." One prisoner said, "A lot of people, they ... give their trays away because they can't eat some of this stuff." The sheriff's response: "I always tell people, 'Look, [if you want] cake, cookies, you want more ounces of orange juice or what have you, don't come here [...] You can have all you want on the outside.'"

In reality, there is no juice. And until the Standard Times investigated there were also no fresh fruits or vegetables.

Inmate Fees

On July 8, 2002 Hodgson decided to impose a \$5 a day fee on his prisoners. The following day Attorney James Pingeon filed suit challenging Hodgson's arbitrary fees as unconstitutional. For the next two years, as the case worked its way through the courts, families of even pre-trial detainees continued to be billed. Besides the per-diem rate, the sheriff also imposed a \$5 co-pay for medical visits, a \$3 prescription co-pay, a \$5 eyeglass co-pay, a \$5 charge for a haircut, and fees for taking the GED exam. Because of widespread starvation, prisoners were also obliged to buy food in the commissary, and because of freezing cold cells and the shabby clothing provided, prisoners often needed to buy additional jackets at the commissary. [\[link\]](#) Hodgson's scheme was struck down by Superior Court Judge Richard Moses in 2004, but Hodgson wasn't ready to throw in the towel.

When the case finally reached the State Judicial Court in 2009, Hodgson's lawyers claimed that English Common Law gave them the right to assess prison charges. [\[link\]](#) James Pingeon, who filed the original suit, argued to the justices, "There was never any independent common law right to charge prisoners, and (sheriffs) didn't do it." [\[link\]](#) The justices also expressed doubts about an obscure 1820 law Hodgson's lawyers had dug up relating to the rights of "masters of jails" being able to assess certain fees. "By imposing the remaining challenged fees, the sheriff acted in excess of his authority and contrary to the intent of the Legislature," Justice Roderick Ireland wrote for the court in a unanimous ruling. [\[link\]](#)

But Hodgson wasn't ready to take "no" for an answer. In 2010 the Massachusetts House passed a bill to permit prisoner fees, but the Senate rejected it. In 2012 Hodgson tried once again, but this time the House overwhelmingly rejected his legislation. And most stinging of all, the entire Bristol County House delegation voted against him. But Hodgson *still* wasn't ready to stop wasting taxpayer money on failed legal challenges. "I'm not going to let it go, Some things are worth fighting for. I'm like a pit bull on your pant leg." [\[link\]](#)

In January 2017, as Hodgson was being sworn in, he made headlines for proposing that his prisoners build Trump's wall on the Southern border. But his other proposal that evening was that he'd again be filing legislation to impose a \$5 daily fee on prisoners. [\[link\]](#)

Securus Kickbacks

Another of Hodgson's price-gouging schemes involves prisoner telephone charges.

On May 2, 2018, attorneys from Prisoners' Legal Services (PLS) of Massachusetts, the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC), the Legal Services Center at Harvard Law School and attorneys from Bailey & Glasser LLP sued Bristol County Sheriff Hodgson and Securus Technologies, Inc., alleging the phone contract between the jail and Securus constituted an illegal kickback scheme. Between August 2011 and June 2013 Hodgson raked in \$1.7 million in "commissions" from Securus. For 2011-2013 Hodgson received a lump sum payment of \$820,000. [\[link\]](#)

The suit charged that the kickback scheme, which effectively doubled the real cost of a phone call, imposed numerous hardships on prisoners and their families. In a press release from PLS, staff attorney Bonnie Tenneriello said, "What consumers are being charged has no relationship to the actual cost of providing phone service," PLS compared a call from a Massachusetts Department of Corrections prison — costing \$0.10 per minute with no fee for the first minute — with a call from the Bristol County jail costing \$3.16 for the first minute and an additional \$0.16 per minute. [\[link\]](#)

"We're hoping this [case] establishes a principle that these kinds of kickbacks should be illegal everywhere," Tenneriello said. "It's cruel and senseless to make prisoners' families pay for the running of the prison through their phone calls. Why should a prisoner's child be denied that bedtime call because it's needlessly expensive? Contact with family is known to help prisoners succeed on release."

At least one suicide at the Bristol County jail has been linked to the exorbitant cost of phone calls. Kellie Pearson, one of the plaintiffs in the PLS suit and the fiancée of Michael Ray, who took his own life in the jail in 2017, said, "For Michael, I think that just put more pressure on him and made him feel worse." [\[link\]](#)

Family Visitation

In 2018 Hodgson announced he was stopping in-person visitation of prisoners. Instead of seeing a prisoner through plexiglass, family members and friends would now be required to use video conferencing supplied by Securus Technologies. In a press statement, the ACLU wrote that "Cutting off the human contact of in-person visitation is cruel to people in jail, their families and loved ones." [\[link\]](#)

Fortunately, it didn't take long for prison reformers to add protections for in-person visitation to the sweeping criminal justice reform package that the Massachusetts legislature passed in 2018. [\[link\]](#)

Cold Turkey

In 2018 and 2019 Bristol County for Correctional Justice conducted interviews with men in substance abuse treatment programs who had been incarcerated at the Bristol County House of Corrections. In dozens of interviews the men told interviewers that newly-incarcerated prisoners are pulled off medications and must endure painful withdrawal. Upon release, prisoners are given a single shot of Vivitrol [\[link\]](#) to block opioid receptors for a month. [\[link\]](#)

Sheriff Hodgson has refused to participate in a pilot Department of Corrections medically-assisted treatment (MAT) program that several other Massachusetts sheriffs are participating in. [\[link\]](#) The program would offer methadone, buprenorphine or naltrexone to people leaving prison within 30 days. In neighboring Rhode Island, MAT treatment has been widely used for several years. Those without treatment in jail are at extreme risk of overdosing on the "outside" because their tolerance to drugs has dropped and they reenter the world with the same triggers for their drug use. [\[link\]](#) A 2013 study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* showed that, in the two weeks after release, former inmates

overdose at rates nearly 130 times as high as the general population. [\[link\]](#)

Medical Neglect

In April 2018 an Oakland, California group, IMM-Print, published an extremely detailed account of medical neglect of an ICE detainee at the Bristol County House of Correction. [\[link\]](#) The anonymous author named numerous members of the jail's medical staff who were employed by Correctional Psychiatric Services (CPS), which serves several other Massachusetts county jails.

CPS was founded in 1994 by Dr. Jorge Veliz, who co-founded Boston Clinical Consulting (a Guatemalan healthcare company) in 2007 and in 2009 co-founded the Mederi Psychiatric Hospital in Guatemala. Veliz was also a staff psychiatrist at Bridgewater State Hospital [\[link\]](#) and MCI-Norfolk. [\[link\]](#) The Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the company is Beth Cheney, a clinical social worker. [\[link\]](#)

The ICE detainee's story documented repeated instances of medical neglect of a dangerous and painful abscess, and the increasing desperation of the prisoner. Whether medical or mental health, willful neglect kills prisoners. Michael Ray put in medical slips repeatedly before his suicide: "If something happens to me, I want people to know that I've been getting no help, no matter how many mental health slips I've put in," Ray wrote shortly before his death. [\[link\]](#)

CPS has been linked to suicides at other Massachusetts jails. In 2017 Barnstable County outsourced its medical and psychiatric care to CPS. [\[link\]](#) Within three weeks there were two suicides. [\[link\]](#) A local nurse wrote the Cape Cod Times warning of substandard care by CPS. "By contracting with CPS, the Barnstable County Sheriff's Office is, unfortunately, putting inmates at risk, as well as putting his loyal staff at risk. Suicide attempts (and completions) negatively affect those working directly with inmates, both long- and short-term." [\[link\]](#)

PLS Attorney Bonnie Tenneriello told the Boston Globe: "Sheriff Hodgson prides himself on running a no-frills jail, and it shows in the lack of mental health care, the lack of programs, and an environment that's really punitive," she said. "This is the kind of environment that mental illness and despair thrive in." [\[link\]](#) Hodgson spends the least on inmate care of any county jail. [\[link\]](#)

While the Bristol County House of Correction pays the American Correctional Association to produce glowing, A+ perfect ratings [\[link\]](#) of its operations, many criminal justice experts regard ACA ratings as a waste of money, even a fraud. [\[link\]](#) To-date there has been no credible investigation of neglect or suicides other than the Sheriff's own in-house whitewash which concluded that "his jail staff did everything right in all cases." [\[link\]](#) Attorney General Maura Healey wrote a letter to two Republican-appointed state agencies asking them to investigate, but to-date not one has investigated the jail with the most prisoner deaths. [\[link\]](#)

On September 27th, the same day Tom Hodgson was giving the president an award in Washington, DC on the taxpayer dime, one of his prisoners died. [\[link\]](#) Scott Lajoie's death followed two suicides in Summer 2019 and set another record for a sheriff who seems to have little interest in his day job. Already leading the state in suicides and coming in a close second on both recidivism [\[link\]](#) and assaults by correctional officers, Hodgson's jail took second place with three times the state average for pre-trial detention deaths. Since January 2019, 13 people have died in pre-trial custody. That's an average of *less than one* per county. In Fall 2019 Hodgson's death count is already up to three. [\[link\]](#)

Torturing the Mentally III

In 2018 Prisoners Legal Services and Mental Health Legal Advisors brought a class action suit against Bristol County jail, naming Hodgson, a superintendent, and various medical personnel as defendants. "1. Plaintiffs and the class they represent are prisoners with mental illness in the custody of the Bristol County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) who have suffered harm as a result of their confinement or 'segregation.' 2. The Plaintiffs are, or have been, held in tiny cells in BCSO segregation units for substantial periods of time under extremely harsh conditions and are denied the programs and services available in the general prison population." [\[link\]](#) Hodgson disputed charges: "It's a frivolous lawsuit," Hodgson told a Standard-Times reporter. The sheriff also questioned the timing of the suit since the state legislature was then drafting a sweeping criminal justice reform package. [\[link\]](#)

Abuse by Corrections Officers

The corrections officers at the Bristol County House of Correction have among the highest rates of complaints of excessive force in the state.

According to Jesse White, an attorney for the Prison Brutality Project of Prisoners' Legal Services, between November 2016 and November 2018, there were 19 reports of excessive use of force at the Bristol County House of Correction, according to Jesse White, a staff attorney for the Prison Brutality Project of Prisoners' Legal Services. Bristol County's number tied Suffolk County's, and only Worcester County had more complaints of excessive force. [\[link\]](#)

Some of this violence is reserved exclusively for ICE detainees.

In June 2018 Freedom for Immigrants released its National Report on Abuse Motivated by Hate, which focused on bias- and hate-motivated abuse in ICE detention facilities. [\[link\]](#) Bristol County was mentioned in the report several times. [\[link\]](#) Aída Chávez also reported on the Bristol County abuses in the Intercept: "A man detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was told by an officer at the Bristol County House of Corrections in North Dartmouth, Massachusetts, that he would 'bet for him in a fight against another detainee.' When the man refused to engage in fights for the entertainment of officials and tried to file a complaint, the officer told him, 'No one will believe baboon complaints.' The detained man was then subjected to retaliation and further humiliation. Officers denied him hygiene products and his food was thrown away. They continued to refer to him as a 'baboon' and 'gorilla,' and

encouraged others to 'rattle his cage.'" [\[link\]](#)

Members of New Bedford's large Guatemalan community say that corrections officers treat Latinos unfairly. Adrian Ventura, head of the Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores (CCT), said that "[Hodgson] makes it hard for families [of detainees] to visit. He metes out cruel treatment to Latinos. One of his security detail, the guy looks like a gang member. He's in charge of torture, solitary, tormenting people. This guard belongs to a white supremacist group. He's the one who dictates the mistreatment of Latinos. The thing is, he's supposedly a guard but [...] he's not a guard because he doesn't wear a uniform and he's carrying. Rapes occur there — rapes! — of men. But the guy was not, is supposedly not a guard." [\[link\]](#)

Suicides

Tom Hodgson's Bristol County House of Correction has the highest suicide rate among prisoners of any county jail in the state. [\[link\]](#) Hodgson is fighting several wrongful death lawsuits. [\[link\]](#) Attorney General Maura Healey has called for an investigation of Hodgson's jail, but to-date not one branch of Massachusetts government has lifted a finger to stop the deaths. [\[link\]](#)

In October 2013 Aaron Brito committed suicide in the Bristol County jail after only one night in detention. Deborah Taylor learned of her son's death from a woman at the jail who refused to identify herself. "They said: 'Your son died today. If you want more information today, call St. Luke's Hospital.'" [\[link\]](#) In July 2017 Deborah Taylor filed suit in Superior Court against Hodgson and Correctional Psychiatric Services (CPS), alleging neglect and wrongful death. The complaint also alleged that Hodgson and CPS had failed to provide medical and investigation records. [\[link\]](#)

On September 12, 2014 Devon Prado committed suicide in the Bristol County jail. Her father, David Prado, filed suit in 2017 against Hodgson, Correctional Psychiatric Services, the Department of Corrections and Bristol County commissioners for his daughter's wrongful death. Prado alleged that CPS staff knew of his daughter's history of depression, had failed to note her suicidal ideation in transfer documents, and had responded to her tearing a sheet in strips by placing Devon in solitary confinement. [\[link\]](#)

In April 2015 Brandon St. Pierre was arrested for a road rage incident. At his hearing, St. Pierre's lawyer begged the Court not to send his suicidal client back to the Bristol County jail but to Bridgewater State Hospital. Judge Daniel O'Shea denied counsel's request, making a psychiatric determination from the bench that St. Pierre was competent to stand trial. Nevertheless, on May 5, 2015, when sending St. Pierre to the Bristol County jail, O'Shea had him classified as Q5 (suicidal) and ordered jail officers to ensure his safety. [\[link\]](#) A day later St. Pierre committed suicide at the jail. [\[link\]](#) On February 21, 2018 Barbara Kice, Brendan St. Pierre's mother, filed a suit in Massachusetts Superior Court alleging that Sheriff Hodgson, Corrections Officer Dylan Bedard, and an unspecified "Jane Doe" violated St. Pierre's Fourteenth Amendment rights by improperly caring for a person known to be suicidal. [\[link\]](#)

In 2016 Kevin Leonardo was arrested for statutory rape and incarcerated at the Bristol County jail. During his arraignment, Leonardo told officers, "As soon as I have a chance, I'm going to do it [suicide]." [\[link\]](#) The judge noted the threat and filed a Suicide Notification form to be transmitted to the jail. [\[link\]](#) Colleen Lewis, Leonardo's sister, concerned about his history of depression, was assured by her brother's attorney that Leonardo would be monitored closely. Leonardo killed himself in February 2016. Lewis declined to sue, saying only, "Nothing ever changes there." [\[link\]](#)

On March 5, 2017 Tyler Holdsworth hanged himself in the Ash Street jail. [\[link\]](#)

On June 10, 2017 Michael Ray committed suicide in the Bristol County jail. Ray had been awaiting trial on armed robbery charges. [\[link\]](#) As with previous suicides, Ray had been left unmonitored. Hodgson refused to take responsibility for the lapse. "We have very high standards here and we're constantly looking for ways to improve." Instead, Hodgson blamed the jail's suicides on the opioid epidemic — though Ray had been in custody for almost two years and drugs could not figure into his death. According to his family, Ray was not getting the help he needed for depression. "If something happens to me, I want people to know that I've been getting no help, no matter how many mental health slips I've put in," Ray wrote shortly before his death. [\[link\]](#)

In January 2018, with the body count rising, Hodgson released an internal review of the seven most recent suicides prepared by Correctional Psychiatric Services, the medical provider named in many of the suits. [\[link\]](#) The report, as well as subsequent press releases and fluff pieces, [\[link\]](#) cast blame on the prisoners' mental health and drug issues for their deaths and exculpated corrections officers. Most importantly, it also exonerated the very company that prepared the internal review. [\[link\]](#)

In 2018 WGBH News ran the first of two reports on prison suicides in the Commonwealth. [\[link\]](#) The report, written by New England Center for Investigative Reporting (NECIR) reporters Jenifer McKim and Chris Burrell, took Hodgson to account for fudging details of his self-investigation into the death of Michael Ray on June 10, 2017. [\[link\]](#)

Yet Hodgson's priorities — going on the road to promote FAIR's anti-immigrant agenda instead of managing his healthcare contractor and corrections officers — may account for his jail's high death rate.

On June 1, 2017 the sheriff was having brunch [\[link\]](#) with Mass Fiscal Alliance [\[link\]](#), a group that has added anti-immigrant rhetoric to its advocacy. Nine days later Michael Ray was dead. Two weeks after Ray's death, on June 28th, Hodgson was back at it again, attending a Federation for American Immigration Reform event called "Hold Their Feet to the Fire." [\[link\]](#)

By Summer of 2019 the Bristol County jail had two more suicides. [\[link\]](#) A third death in late September 2019 pushed Bristol County into second place for pre-trial jail deaths in the Commonwealth. [\[link\]](#)

But nobody was really paying attention. Hodgson was in Washington DC giving an award to Donald Trump. [\[link\]](#)

Celebrity Prisoners

For a sheriff who enjoys the limelight as much as Hodgson, celebrity prisoners have provided a lot of free publicity.

While awaiting trial for murder, ex-Patriots tight end Aaron Hernandez spent ten months in Bristol County jail's segregated housing unit — 120 days of it solitary. [\[link\]](#) While writing his book, "All-American Murder," author James Patterson interviewed Hodgson at length and in the process learned that Hodgson and Hernandez had had a number of intimate conversations and that the two studied scripture together. But, Patterson writes, "the conversations with the sheriff weren't staying between the two of them." According to Hernandez's lawyers, there was "an unprecedented degree of cooperation between DAs and the sheriff. Hodgson had 'abandoned his role as a professional jailer and energetically embraced his role as a full-time agent of the district attorney,' the lawyers claimed, taking every opportunity to speak, publicly, about his most famous prisoner and engaging in 'self-promotion and virtually non-stop publicity of every imaginable kind.'" [\[link\]](#) Citing exploitation and "bizarre and unprecedented restriction" on counsel, Hernandez's lawyers successfully transferred their client to Suffolk County, where he eventually took his own life. After Hernandez's suicide, Hodgson gave dozens of interviews about the athlete and released over 900 private communications from Hernandez to the Boston Globe. [\[link\]](#)

Michelle Carter, the subject of a two-part Home Box Office documentary began serving a fifteen month sentence in Bristol County for allegedly texting her boyfriend into committing suicide. Hodgson enjoys discussing the case. [\[link\]](#) Like Hernandez, Carter was eventually removed from Hodgson's jail without explanation and is serving out the remainder of her sentence in an unknown facility. [\[link\]](#)

Slave Labor

In 1864 the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery — *"except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted."* Today many sheriffs still operate like slave masters, lending out prisoners for projects to friends and political allies. When Hodgson offered to send "his" prisoners — whom he once gang-chained together in the Southern style — to the Mexican border to build Donald Trump's wall, he had already been lending out human beings for 18 years. [\[link\]](#)

It's disappointing that many local institutions, including even churches, see nothing wrong with taking advantage of Hodgson's slave-lending. If pre-release prisoners were being paid minimum wage for their labor, sending them out for meaningful work would be an acceptable practice. Hodgson may call them "volunteers" but they are literally not free to "volunteer" without some measure of compulsion.

There are only two beneficiaries of prison slavery — the institution accepting free labor — and the sheriff, who always seems to make another friend in the community with work someone else performed.

Corruption

Allegations of corruption have dogged Tom Hodgson for 20 years. He's been accused of patronage, boosting pensions for his friends, taking questionable gifts from supporters, receiving kickbacks, abusing taxpayer money for personal use, playing fast and loose with the Sheriff's Office finances, and spending millions on losing court challenges.

Patronage

In Bristol County, Massachusetts, accusations of political patronage have long dogged Sheriff Tom Hodgson. When Hodgson ran for Sheriff the first time in 1998 after an interim appointment by William Weld, the Standard-Times endorsed his opponent, Rep. Joseph McIntyre. [\[link\]](#) McIntyre accused Hodgson of running a "patronage bazaar" in the sheriff's office, and the newspaper's endorsement slammed Hodgson for practices ranging from "hiring of publicity agents to his fattening of the payroll with patronage employees, who repay him with campaign contributions that he encourages."

Both of Hodgson's challengers in 2010, John Quinn and Alan Garcia, charged Hodgson with trading jobs and pensions for political support. [\[link\]](#) During one campaign debate, Quinn charged, "the Sheriff has spent millions of dollars on unnecessary legal fees to three lawyers who are his personal friends and political contributors. [\[link\]](#) Hodgson has also hired dozens of high paid administrators in unnecessary patronage jobs that enable them to qualify for pension payments for decades to come." When announcing his candidacy, Alan Garcia took a similar swipe at Hodgson: "We will be promoting people inside the prisons based on performance and merit, not political maneuvering or political patronage." [\[link\]](#)

In 2008 the state's Commission on Judicial Conduct forced Judge Michael Livingstone off the bench for ethics violations. Almost immediately, Tom Hodgson snapped up Livingstone to run the jail's medical program. It certainly appeared to be a case of political back-scratching. The Standard Times reported, "the politically connected Livingstone was previously the legal counsel to the New Bedford City Council and a city solicitor." [\[link\]](#) Hodgson even acknowledged that former state Sen. William Q. "Biff" MacLean Jr., New Bedford City Councilor John T. Saunders and former mayor Judge John Markey [had] approached him looking for a job for Livingstone. In 2011 Livingstone, who had stopped coming to work, resigned amid accusations that his job had been nothing more than a scheme permitting him to extend his state pension benefits. When asked for comment on October 6, 2011, Hodgson claimed to have "no idea." On that particular day the sheriff was more focused on slamming Gov. Deval Patrick's immigration policies on Lou Dobbs' FOX News show. [\[link\]](#)

Several of Hodgson's lawyers are donors. In 2010 John Quinn, who was running against Hodgson, charged that \$1.3 million of state money went to donor lawyer and "Special Deputy" Bruce Assad. [\[link\]](#) Two of Assad's family members work for Hodgson. According to state Comptroller records, Craig Assad is Hodgson's Assistant Supervisor of Training, and Steven Assad is a corrections officer.

Another million dollars in legal fees went to attorney Ronald Lowenstein, whose family's contributions in 2004 violated state campaign finance laws. Lowenstein's former partner, Robert Novack — also a donor and currently the sheriff's counsel — was made a \$70K a year part-time employee, qualifying him for a state pension and health benefits. [\[link\]](#)

He ain't heavy, he's my donor

Tom Hodgson has had a contentious relationship with his corrections officers. Five officers were punished for speaking publicly about labor negotiations with the sheriff and by 2008 Hodgson had spent \$1 million on a losing case he took all the way to the Supreme Court. Hodgson also spent \$3.7 million on other legal cases, making him far and away the most profligate legal spender of all county sheriffs. By 2010 Hodgson had flushed \$4.7 million of taxpayer money down the drain. \$1.3 million of that was forked over to Attorney — and "Special Deputy" — Bruce Assad (whose sons work for the sheriff) and another \$1.3 million to attorney Ronald Lowenstein, a donor whose family was flagged in 2004 for giving more than the legally permitted campaign maximum. [\[link\]](#)

Many of the sheriff's employees or contractors are also donors. Filings with the Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance show a current quarter million dollar war chest and a history of \$1.3 million in donations. [\[link\]](#) Though the chronologically earlier occupations of many of Hodgson's donors are unlisted in OCPF filings, their subsequent occupations (from hundreds of entries) include: corrections officer, canine officer, captain, warrant apprehension officer, internal affairs officer, deputy, chief, contractor, investigator, or simply BCSO. It pays to donate to Tom Hodgson.

The (wink wink) house rental

Hodgson, who owns a home in the Azores, rents a house on Hathaway Road in Dartmouth, where he pays \$500 a month to the owner, former Acushnet Rubber CEO James DeMello. [\[link\]](#) Home rentals in the area are at least \$1500 a month. While DeMello has given Hodgson approximately \$2700 [\[link\]](#) in campaign donations since 2010, the value of rental "savings" over the same period has been worth roughly \$120,000.

Failed State Audits

Few were surprised that the sheriff's priorities and controversial spending induced financial problems and scandals. In 2009 the Bristol County Sheriff's Office was running a \$5.4 million deficit. [\[link\]](#) The hemorrhage of funds was not limited to Hodgson's buying spree on staff, police boats, command centers, SWAT teams, K9 programs, and vehicles. He refused to accept lower court rulings [\[link\]](#) and ultimately wasted a million dollars fighting a losing labor dispute all the way to the Supreme Court. [\[link\]](#) The Executive Office of Public Safety and the Department of Correction both offered to help him with financial management, which the sheriff flatly rejected. [\[link\]](#)

A 2010 performance audit by the State Auditor found the Bristol County Sheriff's Office failed to account for \$1.6 worth of inventory. Its employees weren't using the Massachusetts Management Accounting and Reporting System properly. The Bristol County Sheriff's Office was still hemorrhaging money — and no one was keeping score except for local journalists. It took a group of investigative reports from the New England Center for Investigative Reporting to shame a legislative committee constituted to study administration and finance irregularities into doing its job. Many of the problems the committee identified still exist. The need for sheriff accountability is as acute as ever. [\[link\]](#)

In its 2018 audit of the Bristol County Sheriff's Office the Auditor discovered numerous problems with the sheriff's relationship to ICE. First, the sheriff "forgot" to transfer \$350,000 of ICE payments to one of the accounts that are not monitored by the state Comptroller. Second, the auditor questioned whether the Bristol County Sheriff's Office was being properly remunerated by ICE. Third, the auditor faulted the Bristol County Sheriff's Office for not having empirical data on which to base its per-diem charges. And, finally, 36% of the sheriff's expense vouchers would not pass muster in any local business, much less state government. [\[link\]](#)

Use of public funds for private purposes

In 2018, Bristol County for Correctional Justice [\[link-disclosure\]](#) filed a public information request [\[link\]](#) for Tom Hodgson's travel records. [\[link\]](#) The New Bedford group wanted to know what the sheriff was doing at his \$156,000 a year job. Was he using public funds for anti-immigrant advocacy having nothing to do with his official responsibilities? And with a prisoner suicide epidemic at the jail, was all the time Hodgson spent away from his duties contributing to the deaths? The Bristol County Sheriff's Office eventually responded with nearly 500 pages of invoices, although ten months of travel records were missing and many of the events the sheriff attended were not included in the PDF documents. But it was still quite an eye-opener. Hodgson had stuck Massachusetts taxpayers with the bill for tens of thousands of dollars worth of trips to Washington, the Rio Grande, Foxwoods, FOX News appearances, anti-immigrant events like "Hold Their Feet to the Fire" and an AIPAC conference. He was away for many weeks every year. Correspondence also showed that Dan Stein of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) had acted as Hodgson's booking agent. Instead of doing the county's work, Tom Hodgson was working for FAIR. The New Bedford group subsequently filed a complaint [\[link\]](#) with the Office of the Inspector General but the OIG never issued any findings. It was another case of government refusing to hold a sheriff accountable for questionable conduct.

The Codfather

The New Bedford waterfront has its share of crime, including organized crime. Carlos Rafael, *aka* the "Codfather," is now serving time in federal prison on numerous charges, including money laundering. Though no criminal connection has been established between Rafael and Hodgson, two of Hodgson's officers were convicted of stuffing cash into Thanksgiving turkeys being transported to the Azores for repatriated deportees (you can't make this stuff up). The money was then deposited into the

"Cofather's" accounts. James Melo, a captain with the Bristol County Sheriff's Office, was convicted in Federal court of "conspiracy to commit offenses against the United States and one count of structuring the export of monetary instruments." [\[link\]](#) Melo got a slap on the wrist: twelve months of probation. [\[link\]](#) Sheriff's Deputy Antonio Freitas was not so lucky. Freitas, who also served as a deputized ICE agent for Hodgson, was convicted of charges similar to Melo's but served one year of prison. [\[link\]](#)

There is a fascinating account of Rafael's money-laundering and the role one of Hodgson's employees played in it buried in an appeal from federal prosecutors Mark T. Quinlivan and Andrew E. Lelling. [\[link\]](#) In the document, Rafael boasted of his close relationship with Hodgson and the influence it played in obtaining both a job and a raise for Freitas:

"I got him the job, I got him the raises, so he'll do what the fuck I tell him to do. He called me. He says, 'what the fuck is going on, everybody got a promotion in this fuckin' place but me.' So I'm like this [gestures] with the sheriff. I called the Sheriff and I said ']what the fuck are you doing to me Tom? Fuckin Freitas has been there for so many fuckin' years, you're not going to give him a fuckin' promotion and a raise?' 'Jesus Carlos, we do not have enough money in the budget.' I said fuck off, find a way, give the kid a raise. He got his promotion, right, so he called me and said I want to thank you very much, I finally got my fuckin' promotion and my raise. So it's nice to know people."

When Hodgson was called to the witness stand during Freitas' trial, "Hodgson remembered Rafael's saying over the phone that he needed a promotion. But Rafael's call did not influence his decision, Hodgson stressed." And Quinlivan and Lelling simply took his word for it. Lelling, Trump's appointee to Massachusetts US Attorney, made news when his office indicted Judge Shelley Richmond Joseph and Clerk Wesley MacGregor on Conspiracy to Obstruct Justice charges for allegedly preventing ICE agents from arresting a defendant in their court. [\[link\]](#) Lelling's move was slammed by Attorney General Maura Healey, retired Supreme Judicial Court Judge Geraldine Hines, and others as "overzealous, grandstanding, and politically motivated." [\[link\]](#)

Rafael had access to the sheriff and knew that Freitas "worked on customs with the immigration unit of the Sheriff's Department. And he said that Freitas could also help them get their cash out of the country by bypassing airport security." Freitas also worked as a deputized ICE agent at the jail and had "completed a multiday training program for ICE officers that covered (among other topics) financial crimes, including structuring and bulk-cash smuggling — an instructor, for example, told attendees that structuring involved "having more than \$10,000 in cash and breaking it into smaller amounts to conduct financial transactions in order to avoid the reporting requirements."

Freitas was not only well-positioned, but perfectly trained for his job with the Cofather. And he owed both to Tom Hodgson. [\[link\]](#)

FOIA Follies

The Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice had to file a lawsuit to obtain records related to the Bristol County Sheriffs Department's participation in federal ICE programs, but Hodgson violated the state's public records law by failing to produce the documents. [\[link\]](#) "Sheriff Hodgson appears to think he is above the law," said Sophia Hall, Staff Attorney at the Lawyers' Committee.

Patrols

Tom Hodgson's job may be running the county jail, but he has greater ambitions. In 2003 Hodgson decided that New Bedford neighborhoods were "killing fields" and he was going to do something about it. Without municipal sign-off Hodgson launched patrols on the city streets, angering Mayor Fred Kalisz, who filed a complaint against Hodgson in Superior Court. The move was also met with hostility by New Bedford police officers and skepticism by Bristol County District Attorney Paul Walsh, who worried about Hodgson's lesser-trained officers compromising investigations, putting the real police at risk, or failing to coordinate with them. [\[link\]](#) But Hodgson is nothing if not persistent. In 2017 retired Fall River police sergeant Jeffery T. Gregory, in an op-ed in the Fall River Herald, blasted Hodgson for colluding with Fall River mayor Jasiel Correia (recently charged with a second set of federal corruption charges) to allow Hodgson's officers to patrol the streets of Fall River [\[link\]](#) in violation of a labor agreement and to take over running the city's jail. [\[link\]](#)

Recruitergate

In 2015 Hodgson deputized thirteen military recruiters. But as soon as the members of the armed forces had been sworn-in, the Department of Defense sent a Naval petty officer to investigate; it was improper since the the *Posse Comitatus Act* of 1878 specifically prohibits U.S. armed forces from surveilling, arresting, detaining, or searching people, or seizing their property. Hodgson defended his actions: "We're doing these things for the right reasons, certainly for the public's protection and for our national security." And he blasted then-president Obama for launching a "mind-boggling investigation." [\[link\]](#)

Don't you touch me!

In 2014 Hodgson's daughter Michelle was briefly held in custody following a mass shooting at the Jalice Cafe, a New Bedford nightclub. Michelle L. Hodgson was among a large group of people congregating outside the night when she was arrested for impeding the investigation. "Don't you touch me!" she said to an officer, and reportedly threatened to have his job. "Do you know that my father's the sheriff?" [\[link\]](#) Sam Sutter, the Bristol County District Attorney, recused himself from the case, a special prosecutor from Boston was brought in. Eventually all charges were dropped and the officers involved were "disciplined." [\[link\]](#)

The protection racket

When it comes to protecting the people of Bristol County, Hodgson's harsh policies have been responsible for more suicides than any other county jail, his high recidivism rates have done little to protect citizens from re-offenders, and throughout his career Hodgson has stubbornly opposed public safety measures like needle exchanges, safe injection sites or driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants. [\[link\]](#)

Speaking at a GOP "Second Amendment Night" event in 2014 in Fairhaven, Hodgson apologized for sponsoring an assault weapons ban as a City Councilor. [\[link\]](#) As a former Maryland cop, Hodgson was now born again and confessing his sins. He told Republicans he hadn't done his homework and that it was only after he met with the Gun Owner's Action League that he "got a good education on firearms" and finally saw the light.

But if public safety is really on Hodgson's mind, it's not the county's 389,000 voters he's thinking of. [\[link\]](#) A 2018 FOIA request by a New Bedford community group, Bristol County for Correctional Justice [\[link\]](#), documented dozens of trips Hodgson made to Washington DC, [\[link\]](#) to AIPAC conventions and junkets to the Rio Grande, [\[link\]](#) to week-long events organized by the far-right Federation for American Immigration Reform and its sister organization, the Center for Immigration Statistics. He has used official letterhead to promote a national march against "Amnesty." [\[link\]](#) All of this was paid for by state taxpayers. And almost all of it is related to lobbying for harsh immigration policies. [\[link\]](#)

Anglo-Saxons vs the Gang of Eight

On April 18, 2013, halfway through the Obama Administration, a group of eight senators known as the *Gang of Eight* stood before the cameras confident that immigration reform was very close. At precisely the same moment in another Senate room, Alabama Senator Jefferson Beauregard Sessions III (named for both a Confederate president and general) had organized a parade of county sheriffs, including Tom Hodgson, to lobby against reform as a gratuitous "amnesty" for "criminal aliens."

When it was his turn at the microphone, Sheriff Thomas Hodgson painted a picture of five million people patiently waiting in lines outside American borders to become citizens — and another twelve million dangerous, criminal aliens living among us, "disrespecting" American laws. [\[link\]](#)

Hodgson invoked his Anglo-American heritage: "My father immigrated from England, and he raised thirteen children here." Hodgson later told a PRI reporter, "My father didn't walk around the streets hiding every time a police car came by, put his head down or what have you. My father came the right way." [\[link\]](#)

Matt Cameron, a Boston immigration attorney, takes issue with orderly immigration lines: "Where is this line? Where does it start? How long is it? Are there bathrooms?" He also points out that, thanks to overtly racist policies before 1965, Anglo-Saxons like Hodgson's father were preferred. "You can whitewash your own family history all you want, but it's *always* been this way." [\[link\]](#)

Hodgson described undocumented immigrants as filthy, disease-ridden burdens on their communities: "Illegal immigrants are creating public health hazards, public safety concerns," said Hodgson, "living in homes, one-room apartments with three families, taking mattresses off the streets that are infested with bedbugs, filling our emergency rooms for lack of a better care and costing the taxpayers millions and millions of dollars." [\[link\]](#)

The Gang of Eight's immigration reforms never had a chance.

Five years later, on February 12, 2018, Hodgson was in Washington again — this time at the winter conference of the National Sheriff's Association (NSA). Donald J. Trump was now the President, anti-immigrant policies were being quickly announced, and the NSA event was something of a victory celebration. Before falling from grace with the President, Jeff Sessions — now *Attorney General Sessions* — stood before the roughly 400 sheriffs talking about the anti-immigration victories their collaboration had produced. [\[link\]](#)

Channeling the Trump administration's dark vision of "urban" and immigrant "carnage," Sessions praised the sheriffs for their power and their ambition, arguing that America was suffering a resurgence of violent crime fed by drugs. [\[link\]](#) Sessions claimed that in El Salvador gangs like MS-13 were now "trying to send younger and more violent gang members to the United States to replenish their depleted ranks." America was under siege by foreign criminals. Sessions praised Florida sheriffs for their cooperation with a newly muscular Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and complained about "sanctuary" laws that limited cooperation. He promised to make more forfeiture funds and military surplus available for sheriffs, telling them he would always have their backs. [\[link\]](#)

Then Sessions departed from his prepared remarks to praise sheriffs as an "Anglo-American" institution. [\[link\]](#) It was an unfortunate ad lib for former Alabama Senator Sessions, whom Coretta Scott King once accused of suppressing the African-American vote. [\[link\]](#) For those who knew him, it was also not difficult to parse Jeff Sessions' meaning. In 2006 he remarked that "almost no one coming from the Dominican Republic to the United States is coming because they have a skill that would benefit us and that would indicate their likely success in our society." [\[link\]](#)

The message was clear: non-European immigrants did not belong in the United States, and the National Sheriffs Association and the Trump administration were now going to be partners in keeping them out.

Violations of the Lunn Decision

In June 2018 an El Salvadoran national, Moises Rivas, had been living in New Bedford for many years when he was picked up for a non-violent offense, His family's attempts to post bail were frustrated by the jail's insistence that Rivas was being held for immigration reasons. [\[link\]](#) With help from the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice, Rivas sued Hodgson for depriving him of his rights under the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments and a list of federal and state laws. Rivas complained that Hodgson and the Sheriff's Office had detained him without legal process at the Ash Street Jail in New Bedford, and that the only basis for his detention for over two weeks was a Form I-247 ICE detainer. Rivas's complaint charged that Hodgson's decision to violate his Constitutional rights was motivated by Hodgson's well-known "animus towards immigrant communities." [\[link\]](#)

Rivas's complaint also noted that this was a violation of the State Judicial Court's Lunn decision, which ruled that an ICE detainer alone was insufficient to detain a prisoner: "Massachusetts law provides no authority for Massachusetts court officers to arrest and hold an individual solely on the basis of a Federal civil immigration detainer, beyond the time that the individual would otherwise be entitled to be released from State custody." [\[link\]](#)

The thin-skinned sheriff fired back: "The allegations made by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice in a complaint filed against myself and others from Bristol County are completely false, unethical and a clear attempt by an illegal immigration advocacy group to make a political statement." Hodgson then shifted blame to three court magistrates for the refusal to permit bail. [\[link\]](#)

The sheriff then began defending his right to detain Rivas — not as an officer of the Commonwealth, but as federal officers: "Because we are certified ICE representatives — our officers are, who have gone through the four-week training." [\[link\]](#)

Subsidizing ICE at state expense

During the sheriff's annual ICE 287(g) hearings in April 2019, Hodgson claimed that since 2007 he has "earned" \$61 million of ICE reimbursements [\[link\]](#) for the Commonwealth, a number greeted with increasing skepticism. [\[link\]](#) In fact, state figures document the loss to taxpayers of Hodgson's bargain basement ICE detention. [\[link\]](#) The FY2017 Massachusetts Sheriff's Association's "Spending per Inmate Report" for all counties shows that the average cost [\[link\]](#) per prisoner per day in the Commonwealth's 13 county jails is roughly \$134 — well over the \$98 that ICE reimburses Hodgson and the \$90-\$94 it reimburses other Massachusetts sheriffs. New Bedford state representative Antonio Cabral says, "I'm not sure if we are making money off the ICE detainees. It actually would be a good analysis. It's one that I have never been able to see." A 2018 state audit of the Sheriff admonished Hodgson in the mildest manner possible: "Bristol County Sheriff's Office should establish a policy that requires the adequacy of [ICE] compensation to be annually reviewed and, if necessary, adjusted." [\[link\]](#) The report also faulted the sheriff for misplacing \$349,000 and failing to document reimbursements. Hodgson

defended the reimbursement rate which, he says, is \$10 over daily custody and care costs.

The MSA has not published these figures for the last two years, even though they are legally required to do so. This reporter obtained them by calling the Deputy Director of the MSA and requesting them by email. Although the calculations are simple division of two numbers by a third, the BCSO did not submit figures to the MSA claiming it did not have the right template. [\[link\]](#)

The Tanton Network

Spike Lee's new film, *BlackKkKlansman*, opens with an unhinged racist, Dr. Kennebrew Beauregard, standing in front of a screen as D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* is projected onto his face. Beauregard laments the glory days when Anglo-Saxons were unchallenged masters of the nation, repeating several times, "We had a great way of life." Today that lost "great way of life" has become a dog whistle for white supremacists and anti-immigrant groups who want to "make American great" again.

Beauregard may be a fictional character, but John H. Tanton was not. [\[link\]](#) Tanton was a Michigan ophthalmologist who single-handedly created a network of over a dozen white supremacist and anti-immigrant groups. [\[link\]](#) The Southern Poverty Law Center describes about half of them as hate groups.

The three best-known are: the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), a lobbying and action group with great influence within the Trump administration; and the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) and NumbersUSA, both of which produce anti-immigration reports and statistics.

Thomas Hodgson sits on FAIR's National Board of Advisors [\[link\]](#) and has appeared at anti-immigrant events sponsored by both FAIR and CIS — both considered hate groups by the SPLC. [\[link\]](#)

Federation for American Immigration Reform

Not quite so laser-focused on law and order as it claims to be, FAIR's mission has always been the preservation of Anglo-Saxon dominance from rapacious hordes of brown non-English speakers. To carry out its mission, FAIR has consistently peddled white supremacy, eugenics, and dubious statistics on immigration. FAIR's legal wing, the Immigration Reform Law Institute, once headed by Kris Kobach, provides legal help for anti-immigrant community groups. [\[link\]](#)

FAIR's founder John Tanton expressed the organization's mission most clearly: "I've come to the point of view that for European-American society and culture to persist requires a European-American majority, and a clear one at that." [\[link\]](#) And when Tanton talked about "Europeans" he meant whites: "As Whites see their power and control over their lives declining, will they simply go quietly into the night? Or will there be an explosion?" [\[link\]](#)

George Washington University's Gelman Library has a repository of letters between Tanton and Otis Graham, [\[link\]](#) a close friend of Tanton who helped him launch and run FAIR in the 1980s and who served as a board member of the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS). Tanton and Graham wanted to create what they called a "League for European-American Defense, Education and Research."

In 1991 Tanton and Graham took great interest in KKK leader David Duke's campaign for the Louisiana governorship and were encouraged by Duke's founding of the National Association for the Advancement of White People: "[T]here is a lot going on out there on the cultural and ethnic (racial) difference" front, Tanton wrote. Appealing to racists was ultimately going to be "all tied to immigration policy. At some point, this is going to break the dam."

FAIR was thus explicitly created to promote white interests: "There is currently no socially acceptable umbrella organization to which persons of European ancestry can belong to defend and promote their common interests. Absent such an organization in a highly organized society, European-Americans will continue to see their history rewritten, their character and accomplishments denigrated, and their faults magnified. They will steadily lose ground and position to other groups... For those not resigned to this gradual or not so gradual decline, a new organization tailored to the needs and interests of European-Americans as a group is essential." [\[link\]](#)

As a proponent of eugenics, Tanton also argued for sterilization of the "lesser" races: "Do we leave it to individuals to decide that they are the intelligent ones who should have more kids? And more troublesome, what about the less intelligent, who logically should have less? Who is going to break the bad news to less intelligent individuals], and how will it be implemented?" [\[link\]](#)

Today FAIR functions mainly as an anti-immigration lobbying group and is deeply embedded in the Trump administration. [\[link\]](#) MediaMatters notes that the mainstream media often cites FAIR's "statistics" indiscriminately. [\[link\]](#) The Libertarian CATO Institute slams FAIR's studies and statistics as "fatally flawed" and "sloppy." [\[link\]](#)

Dan Stein

FAIR's current president is Dan Stein. [\[link\]](#) Bristol County for Correctional Justice, a New Bedford community group, has documented Stein's coordination of media appearances for Bristol County Sheriff Thomas Hodgson. In a very real sense Hodgson works for FAIR. [\[link\]](#)

In an interview with "Alt-Right" darling Tucker Carlson, Stein maintained that Latinx refugees coming to the U.S. are godless, low-IQ haters: "Immigrants don't come all church-loving, freedom-loving, God-fearing [...] Many of them hate America, hate everything that the United States stands for. Talk to some of these Central Americans. Should we be subsidizing people with low IQs to have as many children as possible, and not subsidizing those with high ones?" [\[link\]](#)

For Stein, immigration is a matter of maintaining white political power. He worries about a power shift attending newer waves of immigration. "It's almost like they're getting into competitive breeding," Stein said in 1991. "You have to take into account the various fertility rates in designing limits on immigration." [\[link\]](#)

In addition to Stein views on newer immigrants, FAIR's president indulges in a personal anti-Irish conspiracy theory: "I blame ninety-eight percent of responsibility for this country's immigration crisis on Ted Kennedy and his political allies, who decided some time back in 1958, earlier perhaps, that immigration was a great way to retaliate against Anglo-Saxon dominance and hubris, and the immigration laws from the 1920s were just this symbol of that, and it's a form of revengism..." [\[link\]](#)

Center for Immigration Studies

Like FAIR, the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) was founded by John Tanton and publishes questionable reports on immigration. [\[link\]](#) According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, CIS maintains links to white supremacist and anti-semitic groups. [\[link\]](#) The Southern Poverty Law Center has documented 2,012 occasions that CIS circulated white nationalist content. [\[link\]](#)

CIS Executive Director Mark Krikorian, who first worked at FAIR, quipped after the deadly 2010 Haitian earthquake: "My guess is that Haiti's so screwed up because it wasn't colonized long enough." [\[link\]](#)

Jessica Vaughan, CIS Director of Policy Studies, may be the organization's best known face. Vaughan is well spoken and comfortable testifying before Congressional subcommittees. But, the Anti-Defamation League reports, Vaughan had no second thoughts in April 2014 when she gave an interview to an anti-Semitic newspaper, the American Free Press, founded by Holocaust denier Willis Carto. [\[link\]](#)

Hodgson goes to work for FAIR and CIS

In 2011, According to an annual report, FAIR began cultivating sheriffs like Hodgson. "In 2011, we identified sheriffs who expressed concerns about illegal immigration." FAIR staff "met with these sheriffs and their deputies, supplied them with a steady stream of information, established regular conference calls so they could share information and experiences, and invited them to come to Washington to meet with FAIR's senior staff. We invited sheriffs who played the most prominent roles in addressing illegal immigration locally to FAIR's national talk radio event, *Hold their Feet to the Fire*, where they shared their stories and expertise with listeners across the country." Since roughly that time Hodgson has been a FAIR spokesman. [\[link\]](#)

In July 2014 Hodgson visited the Rio Grande on a trip organized by FAIR's National Field director, Susan Tully, who said: "What we're doing down here in the Rio Grande Valley is all about public education of our law enforcement officials so that they can see exactly what is going on along the border." [\[link\]](#)

The Anti-Defamation league already knew Tully to be a conspiracy theorist. Tully claimed, with no proof, that four million immigrants were granted amnesty in 1986 and that the Obama Administration was running school buses across the border to provide free K-12 education for Mexicans. [\[link\]](#) The SPLC tracked Tully's involvement in organizing a racist housing ban on immigrants in Fremont, Nebraska. [\[link\]](#) And, when useful for organizing purposes, Tully created the factoid that Illinois had more "illegal aliens" than California out of whole cloth. [\[link\]](#) Tully has also been involved with an Oregon anti-immigration group with extensive militia and white supremacist links. [\[link\]](#)

When FAIR National Advisory Board member Richard Lamm said that "new cultures" in the U.S. are "diluting what we are and who we are," he didn't mean just Latinos but Muslims as well. Susan Tully made his meaning crystal clear: "They are not coming here to become Americans," Tully said. Rather, Muslims are "promoting colonization of their own religion, of their own culture in towns and taking them over." [\[link\]](#)

Tully has been spreading hate since 2002 for FAIR.[\[link\]](#) During an interview with radio host Phil Valentine at a 2006 FAIR event in Tennessee, [Tully claimed](#) that a Border Patrol agent in Laredo, Texas described arresting the same man seven times. Tully said she asked the agent, "What do you do on the eighth time?" and Valentine interjected: "Shoot him!" Tully laughed and the FAIR crowd cheered.

In March 2015 Hodgson again appeared with Tully at the Fisherman's Club in New Bedford. [\[link\]](#). Hodgson has appeared at a number of FAIR's "Hold their Feet to the Fire" event coordinated by Tully, most recently in 2016, [\[link\]](#) 2017, [\[link\]](#) 2018, [\[link\]](#) and 2019. [\[link\]](#)

In 2016 the Sheriff was one of three speakers at a "Patriots Unity Day" rally in Randolph. The second speaker was Jessica Vaughan of CIS. The third speaker was Raymond Hanna from the anti-Muslim hate group ACT for America which also has white supremacist ties. [\[link\]](#) ACT and FAIR have strong connections — and Tully figures into them. In 2016 Tully spoke at an ACT for America event in Idaho. [\[link\]](#) ACT for America also has a Nazi problem. In Arkansas ACT's "March Against Shariah" events were organized by a Nazi and publicized on Stormfront. [\[link\]](#)

On March 28, 2017 Hodgson testified with CIS Director of Policy Studies Jessica Vaughan at Border Security and Immigration Enforcement hearings in Washington. [\[link\]](#)

In June 2017 the Sheriff appeared with Dan Stein and Michelle Malkin at an annual "Hold their feet to the fire" broadcast with anti-gay bigot Sandy Rios. [\[link\]](#) Malkin too has links to white supremacist groups, including VDARE, as well as to Islamophobic groups. Malkin also opposes the 14th Amendment, which gave citizenship to slaves. [\[link\]](#)

In September 2017 the SouthCoast Chamber of Commerce hosted Bristol County Sheriff Hodgson at the Wamsutta Club to discuss immigration. [\[link\]](#) During his presentation the sheriff cited questionable statistics from FAIR, claiming that illegal immigration costs taxpayers \$116 billion a year. [\[link\]](#)

FAIR Board of Advisors

Over the years Hodgson has had many associations with Muslim-bashers, Anti-semites, gay-bashers, Birthers, and every variety of conspiracy theorist — many of them members of FAIR's National Advisory Board. In November 2017 Hodgson joined that board. [\[link\]](#)

When asked if this new affiliation could be construed as endorsement of their views or poor judgment on his part, Hodgson bristled: "I'm on a Board of Advisors. I go once a year to listen." [\[link\]](#)

But Hodgson is too modest. In 2014 the sheriff was not listening but *speaking* to FAIR's National Board of Advisors when he conducted a two-hour dinner discussion on "The Effect of the President's Decisions on DACA and its Impact on Our Law Enforcement Challenges." Likewise, Hodgson participated in the National Board's 2016 "Sanctuary Cities and Law Enforcement" roundtable with Putnam County, NY Sheriff Donald Smith and FAIR's Law Enforcement Relations Manager, Robert Najmowski. Half an hour later, FAIR Media Director Ira Mehlman gave a talk entitled "Soros Hacked: The Truth Behind His Big Money Network to Destroy U.S. Borders." [\[link\]](#) Some of the National Board members include:

Lou Barletta, former mayor of Hazelton, PA who signed anti-immigration legislation in 2006 that was declared illegal a year later; [\[link\]](#) **Sharon Barnes**, clearly no DACA lover, who wrote: "It is our country. They and their parents need to be kicked out [...] strengthen our laws and get rid of the locusts;" [\[link\]](#) **Gerda Bikales**, who regards Spanish as a ghetto language: "I don't think Yiddish or Italian represented a threat to the union. But we are now setting ourselves up for an entrenched language ghetto;" [\[link\]](#) **William Chip**, who wants to repeal the 14th Amendment; [\[link\]](#) **Donald A. Collins**, who contributes to the white nationalist journal VDARE; [\[link\]](#) **Dino Drudi**, another Massachusetts zealot who has written for VDARE; [\[link\]](#) **Don Feder**, a Muslim-basher who thinks US troops should have "shoot-to-kill" orders on the Southern border; [\[link\]](#) **Robert Gillespie**, a proponent of population control — not for white Christians but in developing countries; [\[link\]](#) **Joseph Guzzardi**, a member of VDARE's "editorial collective;" [\[link\]](#) **Carol Joyal**, who wrote a review of The Camp of the Saints calling it a "prophecy" of Third World destruction of the West [\[link\]](#) while everyone else just called it racist; [\[link\]](#) **Richard Lamm**, former Colorado governor who said that "new cultures" in the U.S. are "diluting what we are and who we are;" [\[link\]](#) **K.C. McAlpin**, an Islamophobe who wants to ban Muslims for ideological reasons: "Congress has used that power in the past to ban the immigration of Communist Party and National Socialist (Nazi) party members who were deemed to be threats to our national security. This case is no different;" [\[link\]](#) **Scott McConnell**, another VDARE author, [\[link\]](#) Executive Director at Lifeway Research ("be ready when homosexuality devastates"), [\[link\]](#) and a member of the Family Research Council; [\[link\]](#) **Paul Nachman**, a Montana white supremacist who writes for VDARE [\[link\]](#) who calls refugees "good liars" and questions the existence of "moderate Muslims;" [\[link\]](#) **Robert D. Park**, founder of the "Article IV - Section 4 Foundation," a group which maintains that government has abdicated its responsibility to uphold a Constitutional clause [\[link\]](#) requiring it to defend the U.S. from "invasion;" [\[link\]](#) **Randy Pullen**, former chairman of the Arizona GOP and self-appointed expert on black crime: "Yes black lives matter.

The best way to end the slaughter of young black men is to take guns away from blacks as they are the main killers;" [\[link\]](#) **John Philip Sousa IV**, great grandson of the famous Sousa, a Birther, and friend of Joe Arpaio; [\[link\]](#) **Alan N. Weeden**, whose family owns the Weeden Foundation, major donor to white supremacist initiatives, and proponent of Secure ID. [\[link\]](#)

Hodgson sure knows a lot of Muslim-bashers

Although Hodgson swims with racists, Birthers, and anti-Semites, If there is one group to which Hodgson has more connections than any other, it is Islamophobes.

In 1998 Hodgson was among the first group of municipal public safety officials to attend a four-day conference in Leesburg, Virginia on *Strengthening the Public Safety Response to Terrorism*. The conference was organized by the International Association of Fire Chiefs in conjunction with the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance and brought together police and fire chiefs from most metropolitan areas of the United States. [\[link\]](#)

"We were down there for four days to learn about this new thing that was coming onto our doorstep if we — Actually we were far behind in law enforcement. Because there [were] already people, terrorist activity long going on before that. In fact, if you look at 'American Jihad' which will be worth your watching, you will see people — Muslims raising their — terrorists rising their rifles, dancing in the hall above stores in New York, saying, kill the infidels, kill the infidels. It's all on tape. But anyway, so my training down there, I'm thinking, OK, you know what? This is good training, it's good to be aware. The bag they gave us to carry our materials had a stencil on the front of it with the New York skyline with a target on one of the World Trade Center."

Emerson's [\[link\]](#) account of American Muslim rooftop celebrations of 9/11 in New Jersey, and Donald Trump's [\[link\]](#) personal recollections of them have both been discredited. But Sheriff Hodgson still harbors a fondness for self-anointed terrorism and Islam "experts."

In 2015 Hodgson appeared with Dennis Michael Lynch at Ahavath Torah Congregation in Stoughton, Massachusetts, a synagogue run by Rabbi Jonathan Hausman. [\[link\]](#) Hausman's temple previously hosted Dutch neo-fascist Geert Wilders. [\[link\]](#) Over 100 members of the clergy, including other rabbis, protested a similar event the following year featuring Frank Gaffney and Jerry Boykin. [\[link\]](#)

Lynch's film, "They Come to America," was reviewed by the Anti-Defamation League. "In the documentary, Lynch travels the country interviewing people about undocumented immigration. Lynch talks to figures from anti-immigrant groups such as NumbersUSA and the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). Lynch also interviews Glenn Spencer of the anti-Hispanic hate group American Border Patrol." [\[link\]](#)

When asked about his talk, Hodgson said he was just there doing his duty to inform the public about terrorism: "They asked me to come speak about terrorism. That's what they asked me to do. So I was I was to speak with them. [...] I was asked — I was invited to go there to speak. That's why I was there, because of my my involvement with the terrorism task force." [\[link\]](#)

Like Hodgson, Lynch is a supporter of the Constitutional Sheriff Movement and of sovereign citizen Cliven Bundy, about whom Lynch made another film. [\[link\]](#) Lynch, who ran for president in 2016, [\[link\]](#) regularly inflates the number of undocumented immigrants living in the United States, [\[link\]](#) claims that the Chinese are sneaking across the Mexican border in order to inflict a "cyber 911" on the U.S., [\[link\]](#) and that ISIS uses the same route to bring terrorists into the U.S. [\[link\]](#)

Which is what we hear from Hodgson.

In 2018, Hodgson appeared on FOX News with Bernard Kerik, claiming that in 2015 MS-13 had ordered its members to expand the gang's presence on Nantucket, and also claiming that MS-13 was recruiting in high schools. [\[link\]](#) The supposed metastasis of MS-13 in New England is one of Hodgson's (and Trump's) favorite themes.

Yet, as violent and grisly as the gang's handiwork is, MS-13 membership is down dramatically. In Washington, MS-13 killings were down to seven in 2018. On Long Island, there was only one killing in 2018. In 2018 the U.S. Attorney for Massachusetts, Andrew Lelling, said that "we have all but eradicated MS-13 in the Greater Boston area. We're running out of MS-13 targets." [\[link\]](#)

Established by Salvadoran refugees in Los Angeles in the 1970's, Bill Clinton's deportation of thousands of gang members to Central America only enlarged the gang and helped destabilize the countries to which they were deported. [\[link\]](#) Tom Hodgson's solution to eradicating gangs is the same as Clinton's failed strategy.

Bernard Kerik made his Muslim-bashing chops during 9/11 when he was Rudy Giuliani's police commissioner. In 2014 Kerik penned an editorial in TIME Magazine, claiming that there was a liberal war against America and its police. [\[link\]](#) In 2016 Kerik was still singing the same tune, writing that Liberals were hampering the fight against "radical Islam" because [Muslims] "know that most of our political leaders don't have the courage to use enhanced interrogation tactics if and when necessary, and/or authorize proactive and pre-emptive surveillance or profiling for intelligence gathering purposes." [\[link\]](#)

Known for instituting illegal blanket surveillance of Muslims after 9/11, Kerik was still posting Islamophobic Tweets from a federal corrections facility in Maryland in 2010, where he was serving time for tax fraud and lying to prosecutors. [\[link\]](#)

In 2018 Kerik emailed the American Legacy Center, a white nationalist group, writing that "We finally have the chance to secure our border, hold outlaw mayors of sanctuary cities accountable, and put an end to politically correct immigration policies like the diversity lottery which are being exploited by terrorists to kill and injure Americans. If the looming immigration deal doesn't definitively solve most of these issues, it should be defeated." [\[link\]](#)

Another Islamophobic group Hodgson is connected to, ACT for America, was founded in 2007 by Brigitte Gabriel. It has more than 1,000 chapters around the country, and espouses the crudest sort of anti-Muslim hate. Both the Anti-Defamation League [\[link\]](#) and the Southern Poverty Law Center have documented ACT's many links with anti-semitic, neo-Nazi, Christian right, Identitarian, and white supremacist groups. [\[link\]](#) ACT for America sponsors anti-Muslim legislation [\[link\]](#) and organizes anti-Muslim events with neo-Nazis [\[link\]](#). ACT for America also organizes around the claim that Christianity and Judaism are under attack by Islam. Pastor Jack Hibbs and Stoughton Rabbi Jon Hausman, Geert Wilders' friend, were both speakers at ACT's 2016 "Religious Persecution" conference in Washington, DC. [\[link\]](#)

In July 2007 Gabriel spoke at the Annual Convention of Pastor John Hagee's Christians United for Israel (CUFI): "The difference, my friends, between Israel and the Arabic world is quite simply the difference between civilization and barbarism. It's the difference between good and evil and this is what we're witnessing in the Arab and Islamic world. I am angry. They have no soul! They are dead set on killing and destruction." [\[link\]](#)

Perhaps because of its far-too-frequent neo-Nazi connections, ACT for America has become too toxic even for Donald Trump. Following an article in the Miami Herald, [\[link\]](#) the group's 2019 November 7th gala, whose keynote speaker was to be Michelle Malkin (another friend of Hodgson's), "will absolutely not be taking place at Mar-a-Lago," according to a spokeswoman for the Trump Organization. [\[link\]](#)

ACT may be too toxic for Trump — but not for Hodgson and his friends from FAIR and CIS. In September 2016 the sheriff appeared at a Republican unity rally in Norfolk county attended by his old friend Jessica Vaughan of the Center for Immigration Studies, and by ACT for America's Ray Hannah. [\[link\]](#)

In 2018 Hodgson and Brigitte Gabriel appeared at FAIR's "Hold their Feet to the Fire" event in Washington DC. [\[link\]](#) And on September 26th both Hodgson and Gabriel attended FAIR's 2019 "Hold their Feet to the Fire" event. [\[link\]](#)

American Border Foundation

Hodgson watchers took note when the sheriff announced with great fanfare that the National Sheriff's Association (NSA) would be crowdfunding Trump's wall. [\[link\]](#) But Hodgson's project folded after raising less than \$100K in three months — despite his dubious claims that network traffic had crashed the site. Hodgson's old NSA site now redirects donors to a group called the American Border Foundation.

The new crowdfunding effort, now run by the American Border Foundation,[\[link\]](#) is not even close to its \$450 million goal. Its less-than 4,000 donors have raised barely over \$200K. The founder, Gary Dolan, [\[link\]](#) once tried wall-building with a FundRazr campaign [\[link\]](#) that raised only \$12K. The fund's managing director, Quentin Kramer has appeared on the Christian Nationalist show Southern Sense [\[link\]](#) and on a talk show [\[link\]](#) which often invokes Article IV, Sec. 4, Clause 2 of the Constitution ("the United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion...").

"Invasion" is a central theme of both the Trump administration and the Constitutional Sheriff's and Police Officer's Association, an extremist group of lawmen who claim to know the proper interpretation of the U.S. Constitution [\[link\]](#) and which Hodgson joined on November 3, 2014. [\[link\]](#) The Director of Communications for the American Border Foundation is Jeremy Messina, [\[link\]](#) who identified himself at one time with the Identitarian movement. [\[link\]](#)

When asked about his white supremacist associations and whether they might represent poor judgment personally and collectively, Hodgson denied the central role he personally played in establishing the crowdfunding effort as well as the National Sheriff's Association's involvement.

It was all a business decision, mostly involving Western sheriffs, he said. It was entirely out of his hands and he resented the question. "You don't want to know the truth. Here's the facts. OK? I'll tell you the facts. The fact is that the National Sheriffs Association was collecting money for the Western sheriffs who wanted to do more with with technologies, things on the border, because it was so much a problem. So they began a page. We, as the national sheriffs, we started pushing out to sheriffs buildthewall.com, which the executive director agreed we should do. But then some of the members of the board said, no, they didn't want to do it because, like any board, there's Democrats, there's Republicans. Why are we doing this? Because of a difference of opinions. So they decided what to do with the page. I think it should have stayed right where it was. They decided to push it over to some other organization that said that they could manage it with their infrastructure, whatever else. And that was what they did." [\[link\]](#)

The Religious Right

In 2015 Hodgson joined American Family Association's governmental affairs director and FOX News contributor Sandy Rios on her radio show at the U.S. Capitol. Rios has pushed the conspiracy theory that Jews like George Soros want to "re-engineer the demographics" of America, [\[link\]](#) that secular Jews have been the worst enemy of the country, [\[link\]](#) and that singer Beonce's "black racism" is paving the way for the Anti-Christ. [\[link\]](#)

On Rios' show Hodgson defended Maricopa County (Arizona) Sheriff Joe Arpaio's racial profiling and civil rights abuses, blaming it on vilification by the Obama administration. "It's a trend we've seen, actually, from this administration with regards to all law enforcement," Hodgson said. "It seems that the people that are doing their job, who are standing up for what's right are vilified, they're attacked.

We've seen it with the IRS scandal, we've seen it with all kinds of scandals where the administration was sort of trying to direct attention away from what they were doing and vilifying the people who were coming forward and telling the truth to the American people." [\[link\]](#)

In 2017 Hodgson appeared again with Rios, Michelle Malkin and FAIR's Dan Stein at a "Hold their Feet to the Fire" event. Her interviews were broadcast on the Christian broadcast network, American Family Radio, [\[link\]](#) which also hosts programs by James Dobson and Brian Fischer. Among other members of the far right in attendance were Michelle Malkin, Tom Roten, Congressman Steve King, Robert Spencer, and Sebastian Gorka. Among her other gems, Rios told listeners that immigrants "don't know basic hygiene." [\[link\]](#)

On February 10, 2019 Hodgson appeared on the American Family Council's "Washington Watch" program with Tony Perkins. [\[link\]](#) The common theme with Perkins' other guests, Missouri Senator Josh Hawley and Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry was Democratic Party "lawlessness." Hodgson warned Democrats to not even think about cutting ICE funding. "They put our people at risk just to take care of their political agenda." [\[link\]](#)

Perkins, who says that teaching evolution to children contributes to mass shootings, [\[link\]](#) and who would deny Muslims equal rights to religious freedom and ban mosques, [\[link\]](#) has played a central role in the Pompeo State Department's Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, a transparent campaign to privilege Christianity. [\[link\]](#) Perkins' Family Research Council fabricates numerous false claims about the LGBTQ community [\[link\]](#) and is considered a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. [\[link\]](#)

In 2001 Stephen Steinlight wrote a long report in the Center for Immigration Studies entitled "The Jewish State in America's Changing Demography." Steinlight castigated secular Jews for their historical support for liberal immigration policies, arguing that Mexicans would soon erode Jewish political power. Steinlight offered himself as a hopeful example, saying that his own views had been changed though dialog with CIS Executive Director Mark Krikorian. [\[link\]](#)

For FAIR and CIS, the war against the Jewish embrace of multiculturalism has not been easily won, and secular Jews like George Soros who still advocate for liberal immigration have become the enemy, as seen in Media Director Ira Mehlman's 2016 talk following Hodgson's. In 2004 Steinlight ratcheted up the urgency to Defcon-1 with an essay, "High Noon to Midnight: Why Current Immigration Policy Dooms American Jewry," yet he still wasn't making progress with secular Jews. [\[link\]](#) By 2010 Steinlight was frustrated and angry at his co-religionists, accusing a variety of Jewish organizations of censorship and repression. [\[link\]](#)

ALPAC, which bills itself as "America's Pro-Israel Lobby," is one of the most powerful lobbies in the United States. [\[link\]](#) While Democrats (and this includes most American Jews [\[link\]](#)) have increasingly distanced themselves from Israel's hard-line policies, [\[link\]](#) Trump's ambassador to Israel is intimately connected with West Bank settlements [\[link\]](#) and Republicans have doubled-down on support for

Israel's annexation of the West Bank. [\[link\]](#)

For FAIR and CIS, Israel is regarded as a model of nationalism in which border security and immigration are handled properly. In 2019 Mehlman penned an article in the Daily Caller praising Israel's "separation wall." [\[link\]](#) Hodgson has also cited Israel's wall as a model for the U.S. [\[link\]](#)

In 2014 Hodgson rubbed elbows with Democratic Senators Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey at AIPAC's New England Leadership Dinner. The *Jewish Insider* reported that the sheriff shared his personal connection to the state of Israel: "My parents are buried in Israel, buried in the Pater Noster Church on the Mount of Olives. You know what? That's a sacred place for me. And I don't apologize because my parents are there. My my father was a British soldier. My mother was a U.S. Army Lieutenant in the Nursing Corps, OK? Who met in Israel. And that's a special place for us. And you know what? I'm not Jewish and I don't hate Muslims. My father worked with Palestinians and worked with those groups all his life." [\[link\]](#)

In March 2017 Hodgson attended the AIPAC policy conference in Washington, also on the public dime. [\[link\]](#)

The Lunatic Fringe

If anyone is the poster boy for Tom Hodgson's promiscuous associations with the lunatic fringe, it's Rick Wiles.

In November 2014 Hodgson appeared on TruNews [\[link\]](#) — the "End Times Newscast" with Rick Wiles, a like-minded individual who advocates locking up those whose politics he disagrees with. [\[link\]](#) Wiles devoted "the first half of the program to recount several profound prophetic dreams his family received years ago," and in the second half Wiles interviewed the Sheriff.

Hodgson plugged many of FAIR's talking points, saying that Mexico pays \$300 per child to come into the United States, that 30,000 Americans have been murdered by illegal immigrants since 9/11, and that undocumented immigrants receive better treatment than citizens. Apparently the more unhinged the radio host, the more unhinged Hodgson's claims.

Wiles was interested in the "historical role of the Constitutional sheriff," giving Hodgson an opportunity to vent about Massachusetts mayors and those who support Safe Communities. The show ended with Wiles appealing to his audience to raise funds for sheriffs to attend a FAIR-sponsored event. Hodgson, who in 2014 was already sticking taxpayers for his FAIR-related travel, never bothered to correct Wiles.

Among Wiles' more recent public statements: he says Obama is inspired by Lucifer, [\[link\]](#) that Obama killed Supreme Court Justice Scalia as a pagan human sacrifice, [\[link\]](#) that the Irgun has kill teams in America, [\[link\]](#) and that Jews will use gun control laws to kill Christians. [\[link\]](#)

Hodgson's friend has gone on the air warning that any opposition to Donald Trump's plan to build a border wall will result in the US military rounding up godless subversives and *smiting* them: "They'd better wise up and stop what they're doing because they're pushing the republic to the brink of breaking," Wiles warned. "The American people want law and order in this country and the Democrats are a party of rebellion, of lawlessness. They better count the cost before they do something crazy because there's a limit to how much patience the American people are going to show them." [\[link\]](#)

Once upon a time

In 1995, the Oklahoma City bombing was first thought to be the work of foreign terrorists and not white supremacists. In the wake of the bombing, Congress passed the 1996 IIRIRA bill — the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 — and Bill Clinton signed it into law. IIRIRA introduced many of the horrors we have today — deportation of legal residents for retroactively discovered crimes, 287(g) agreements with ICE, border fortification, definitions of new crimes, and much more.

Suddenly there were reports, echoed in the Massachusetts Portuguese community, of mystery "homeless Americans" who had been quietly deported and dumped in Portugal. This led to local pressure to repatriate deportees more humanely. Two Portuguese foundations gave the Bristol County District Attorney funds for an "Accelerated Deportation" program. The Portuguese government also demanded notification before the US simply dropped off one of their citizens at the airport.

As a brand-new sheriff, Thomas Hodgson was involved in some of these discussions and in 1998 he signed an accord with the Azorean president.

"When we did this, we had people here already that were prior to me being here. The former sheriff had some people inside — not a lot — people who were potentially going to be deported. So the president came, we signed this memorandum of agreement. We agreed to do that. Then I invited all their social workers to come here so that they could learn how to transition people into their society. [...] Our people trained them on how to be social workers, how to work with these individuals that are going to be coming there. And then, over the course of time, we continued working with the government in the Azores. And then we developed three transition houses in San Miguel, which I visited and spoke to them. We've sent books over in English for them to help them transition. [...] And so if I were anti-immigrant or I was somebody who didn't like immigrants — and that's sort of the impression that's been given out there — why would I bother with that?" [\[link\]](#)

Nationally, there was fear that IIRIRA had gone too far. Reformers were calling for moderation of some of the more draconian provisions. Hodgson was sympathetic and part of the story appears in a 2000 episode of "This American Life" called "170: Immigration." [\[link\]](#) The injustices were apparently brought to Hodgson's attention by a guard, Carlos Carreiro, for whom Hodgson's immigration unit is named.

In 1999 Bill McCollum, one of the original sponsors of the IIRAIRA of 1996, sponsored H.R.2999, the Fairness for Permanent Residents Act. [\[link\]](#) Five of the bill's nine sponsors were Republicans. *America*, a Jesuit magazine, described the draconian effects of IIRA96 and several efforts to fix it. [\[link\]](#) The Chicago Tribune provided human faces to some of the low-level offenses that could result in revocation of long-term permanent residency. [\[link\]](#) It was a different time, and bipartisan human solutions seemed possible.

According to Barney Frank, he and Hodgson were "joined at the hip" in supporting the reforms. Frank described Hodgson as "quite a Liberal" on reform and praised Hodgson for mobilizing fellow Republicans. When asked what happened to the legislation, Frank said, "911 broke it." [\[link\]](#)

Following the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, the establishment of Fusion Centers and partnerships between federal law enforcement and their state and municipal counterparts, it soon became clear there would be significant federal money, increased coordination with Washington, and a growing preoccupation with immigration.

Hodgson hopped on board the new gravy train without thinking twice.

The R Word

It's hard to believe that the avuncular fellow who sends Thanksgiving turkeys to deportees in the Azores could harbor such horrific views as his political bedfellows. But whatever sympathies Hodgson has for the local Portuguese community, it does not translate into Spanish.

Adrian Ventura heads up the Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores (CCT) in New Bedford, which provides services to the city's Guatemalan community. Contrary to the image Hodgson paints of lawless MS-13 members taking over the city, Ventura says most Guatemalans came to the city fleeing violence, starvation, and dispossession from the land: "People fleeing drugs, government exclusion policies, people reduced to nothing, lots of people suffering starvation, eating once, sometimes twice a day, no source of work. The government only invests in the military. Young people go to university but there is no employment."

Ventura says Hodgson attacks New Bedford's Guatemalan community with reckless lies about its supposed criminality. "I'll give you an example from a page of SouthCoast Today. [...] All the time you see in this newspaper, like yesterday, you see someone sentenced to three years, six years for drugs, it's the [white people] who are consuming and selling drugs. committing murders, things like that. Hodgson doesn't talk about that. All he does is demonize the immigrant community. Not every immigrant is a saint. [...] So, yes, no one can say all immigrants are good people. There is a small percent that are murderers and rapists and drug dealers. Of course there are! But he doesn't seem to know how to distinguish them and he accuses everyone [of criminal behavior]." [\[link\]](#)

In 2017 Standard-Times reporter Jennette Barnes asked Hodgson about his relationship with FAIR. The sheriff told the reporter he has never encountered racism while interacting with FAIR officials. Yet a quote from FAIR's Executive Director Bob Dane in the very same article contradicted Hodgson. Dane pointedly refused to disavow the goal of maintaining or expanding a country's white majority when asked directly. In fact, Dane sympathized with white nationalists and other extremists who view immigration as an existential threat. "For many, the question of whether a country loses its majority status is a fair question," Dane said. "It's a legitimate policy question for a lot of folks." [\[link\]](#)

We recently sat down with Hodgson and asked him about his work with FAIR and Dan Stein's scheduling of events for him to attend. "I've never coordinated with Dan Stein, ever. I've never coordinated an event with Dan Stein. I've met Dan Stein one time and it was, Hi, How are you doing?"

When reminded of FOIA materials documenting Hodgson's relationship with FAIR and numerous events coordinated by Stein and others, Hodgson backtracked, claiming the relationship with FAIR was strictly *educational*, to learn about border issues. "Let me back up. I thought you said Mark Steyn. You said Dan Stein, who is the president of FAIR. OK, so, I've met sheriffs all over the country [who] have gone to border school to learn about border issues. We've gone up and down the Rio Grande with Border Customs Patrol. But that's all public safety issues that are affecting all our communities. And we need to know. [...] So my point is, is there something wrong with law enforcement being able to access the education to know where the problem is that's impacting their communities across the country?" [\[link\]](#)

Hodgson absolutely bristles at even the insinuation that he's a racist. "You don't know me. You don't know anything about my history. You don't know anything about my family. [...] Number one, I'm the son of an immigrant. That's number one. My father's an immigrant. Number two, my oldest grandson is half Cape Verdean. My youngest grandson is half Puerto Rican."

If anything, Hodgson says, going on the offense again, the real racists are liberals who don't treat black-on-black crime with enough gravity: "Where have you been all these years on all the kids in Chicago? Why don't you care about them? You know, I won't ask you to answer that question, I have to say it. Where are you people that are so worried about everybody else across the border, and the ones that are being impacted that have to defend the people, their communities and protect them? Where are you for those kids in Chicago? Where do they run to? Mexico? I don't hear anybody around here yelling and screaming for them and find a ways to get them this safer places." [\[link\]](#)

The model immigrant

Tom Hodgson frequently mentions his upbringing in a stable, loving home with 13 children in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and he often cites his father as a model "Anglo-Saxon" immigrant who came to the U.S. "the right way." So I set out to see if Hodgson's father truly *was* a model immigrant.

His mother, Anne-Marie (Allen) Hodgson (1920-2000), received her nursing certificate in 1940 from Saint Luke's Hospital in New Bedford. During World War II she served in the Army Medical Corp. She was a lector at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church in Kensington, Maryland, and a eucharistic minister at Kensington Gardens Nursing Home. Hodgson's care for senior citizens may have a less cynical motivation than I usually ascribe, and his hyper-Catholicism now makes perfect sense. [\[link\]](#)

Anne-Marie Allen's father was born in Massachusetts and her mother in Britain. [\[link\]](#) Through his mother Tom Hodgson is related to the New Bedford Markey clan (including former mayor "Jack" Allen Markey, though the relation is not entirely clear. [\[link\]](#)

Tom Hodgson and many of his siblings — Christine Hodgson, John G. Hodgson Jr, Anne Marie Griffin, Mary Margaret Tull, Joseph Hodgson, James Hodgson, Thomas Hodgson, Catherine Harrington, Marie Therese Gehringer, Bernadette Hamilton, Peter Hodgson, Rosemary Riddle, and Elizabeth Grinder [\[link\]](#) — cycled through Chevy Chase's Blessed Sacrament Parish School. [\[link\]](#)

Hodgson's father, John Gerard Hodgson (1922-2005), was a travel agent, founder of the U.S. National Rosary Pilgrimage, and the President of the Catholic Travel Office, eventually run by daughter Elizabeth Grinder. He too was an ultra-conservative Catholic. [\[link\]](#) John G. Hodgson was actually knighted by the Pope as a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre and insisted upon being called "Sir John." [\[link\]](#)

In 1981 Chamis Tahan, an Israeli travel agent who provided local travel services for "Sir John's" Catholic Travel Office, sued Hodgson in an Israeli court for \$54,114 that the elder Hodgson refused to pay him. "Sir John" still refused to pay and appealed to a U.S. court, which initially ruled in his favor but on appeal was overturned. [\[link\]](#) Sound familiar?

A bit more digging into "Sir John" turns up a memoir by an actress, Tina Alexis Allen. [\[link\]](#) Her father, "Sir John," was a travel agent with 13 children in Chevy Chase, Maryland. It is clear that the actress is the same "Christine Hodgson of Los Angeles" named in her mother's obituary. [\[link\]](#)

In her book "Hiding Out: A memoir of drugs, deception, and double lives" Allen describes her father's fondness for sex with Arab men, his oversized ego and his violent, authoritarian personality. Her account puts her brother the sheriff's homophobia and Islamophobia — and a lot more — into perspective. Most importantly, Allen's book solves the mystery of Hodgson's father's "model immigrant" journey. [\[link\]](#)

We learn that "Sir John," born in 1922, had a desperate childhood in London. Conceived outside of marriage in Alberta, Canada, Sir John's mother had had an affair with a horse trainer — a fact he only discovers at age 30 from his mother's estranged husband, whose name he nevertheless bears. But it gets worse. John is abandoned by his mother and left with a grandmother who already has 13 children of her own. A few years later he is retrieved to live with a Mr Hall, his mother's new husband, who beats him and his mother. Sir John leaves home as soon as he can, lying about his age and enlisting in the British Merchant Navy at age 16. In 1944, denied a vocation as priest, the boy is now in the British Army in Palestine, where he meets New Bedford native and US Army nurse Anne-Marie Allen. Their

first date is recorded in a family photo of the two of them walking the Via Dolorosa in their uniforms. (p 19-20)

"My mother has always been very patriotic, enlisting in World War II not because she has an aggressive bone in her body but because she felt it was her duty..." (p 20) She tears up as she sings "God Bless America." Allen describes her mother's mother, "Nana," who was so poor she would wait until the children returned from school to light the coal stove. Her father was "an Irish bar owner, who I'm pretty sure served himself a drink as often as he served his customers. Little is known of him except that her Nana would say, 'Little girls shouldn't sit on their father's lap.'"

"Sir John" and Anne courted via letters until John requested a transfer from the London War Office to the Washington DC War Office and married his American fiancée. (p. 21) His son Thomas, Tina Allen's brother and a spokesman for several anti-immigrant groups, in 2015 testified in the Senate against "amnesty" for immigrants, mentioning a father who got in line and emigrated the "right way." Thanks to Tina Allen's memoir, we know this is not really the truth.

The Hodgson children grew up in luxury, a comfortable walk to both school and church. The Blessed Sacrament Church — Brett Kavanaugh's parish — was a stone's throw away and most of the 13 children cycled through the parish school. (p 23) Their old house, with 6 bedrooms and 4.5 baths and a backyard pool, is now worth \$1.8 million.

The children named in the memoir seemed to be ordered thus: Philip; Helen; Gloria; Luke; Margaret; Simon; Matthew; Kate; Frances; Magdalene; Paul; Rebecca; Christine. (p 23) Their actual names can be easily correlated with Allen's sequence.

Allen describes a childhood of privilege and luxury:

"There had always been money for private schools, frequent trips on the Cunard ocean liners, summer beach house rentals, and expensive dinners at D.C.'s finest restaurants, although Mom still cut coupons from the Sunday paper. Over the years we had a few panic-inducing conversations around the dinner table when Mom announced that Holy Pilgrimages might go bankrupt. Like most dramas in our family, it was a huge deal at the time, and then it just seemed to disappear. Before we knew it, Mom was off on another trip to Paris, or somebody was going to visit the Greek islands, or Dad decided to put in a swimming pool. I can't ever recall a time when Dad's wallet wasn't packed with fresh hundreds, and our trip to Italy that year was no exception. [...] Throughout Rome, Dad seemed to have access to everything and everyone — even Pope Paul VI, whom we had an audience with. One of the most powerful Catholics at the Vatican — the papal nuncio of Italy, Archbishop Magni — celebrated a private mass for our family. [...] Everything was lush: We were treated to a lavish dinner hosted by the head of Al Italia airlines; took over a small hotel on the island of Ischia; toured the Vatican, the basilicas, the catacombs, and Naples, all courtesy of Dad, including lots of wine. [...] The lobby of our five-star hotel in Rome was coated in gold leaf, with a giant marble stair case and grand pillars throughout." (p 25)

Finally, we learn that "Sir John" was a Vatican bag man carrying US, British, Vatican, and Jordanian passports, and often had two briefcases filled with cash. Allen has promised a second memoir.

You can't make this stuff up.