

## The Politics of Hate Crime Statistics

by Joseph E. Fallon

The FBI's "Hate Crime Statistics"—preliminary figures for 1995 were released in November—are highly suspect because of the agency's flawed methodology. The problem is that, in recording and identifying the perpetrators of hate crimes, there are no strictly defined categories for thugs of "European-American," "Hispanic," or "Middle Eastern" descent. The term "Hispanic" has already been officially defined by Public Law 94-311 and Directive Number 15 of the Office of Management and Budget as "a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race." Employing the category "Middle Eastern" would probably be more convenient and less confusing than the heading currently used—"North Africa and Southwest Asia"—to identify anyone from that region of the world. And regarding the term "European-American," it has not been officially recognized by the federal government. It is essential that this last category be implemented and defined as "a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe—i.e., the British Isles, Iceland, and the European continent as bordered by the Pyrenees, the Caucasus, and the Ural mountains." This definition conforms to the standard already established by the federal government for defining Americans with origins in the Middle East and Asia, while avoiding the possibility of mistakenly including Hispanics in this category.

The FBI's current methodology for determining hate crimes is based on Public Law 101-275, the "Hate Crime Statistics Act" of 1990, which was enacted by Congress on April 23, 1990. This legislation mandated that the U.S. Attorney General establish guidelines and collect data "about crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, including where appropriate the crimes

time helper to take the physical work of fulfilling orders off his shoulders. Then, too, when Arkham's inventory ran out of space in his basement and attic, he borrowed from the bank to build a climate-controlled warehouse.

In addition to extracting a physical toll on his health, the demands of running Arkham House affected Derleth's writing career during the last 20 years of his life. Instead of devoting time to his creative writing and his Sac Prairie Saga, he ground out a lot of commercial work for his New York publishers—histories, contract biographies, historical novels he cared little about writing, junior mysteries. To gain some measure of creative satisfaction he self-published books of poetry and spent odd hours writing mystery stories and working on such monumental works as *Walden West* and *Return to Walden West*, the latter published only a year before his death in 1971.

Another little-known fact is that Derleth sponsored the books of many young writers like Ramsey Campbell, among others, who have mined Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos and expanded it into new and interesting dimensions. He believed Lovecraft would have approved,

because during the decade that the two men corresponded, Lovecraft encouraged the younger writer to experiment with the mythos, as he did with others in his inner circle. And when Derleth and Donald Wandrei began collecting as many of Lovecraft's letters as they could in the late 1930's, they set in motion a whole cottage industry of scholars who today continue to analyze and write about Lovecraft as minutely as a forensic scientist.

Today, Arkham House has a number of rivals who are determined to carve out a share of the market that Derleth spent a lifetime cultivating. That was to be expected. But it is harder now to make a go of it because of the distribution dynamics within the publishing industry. Derleth saw that happening long before his death, and he fully expected Arkham House to perish soon after him. He didn't realize how much momentum he had created with his unique editorial policy, or that Arkham House had developed a life of its own. Even legal and editorial bungling in later years could not derail the enterprise. In the past year, his daughter April has taken over the editorial as well as the business responsibilities of Arkham House with a fresh viewpoint and enthusiasm that I expect will move the publishing house into the next century.

While Derleth's regional writing has been plowed under the avalanche of time, it too is on the verge of a renaissance through a serious publishing effort that is reprinting his major books and bringing out many recently discovered manuscripts including many novels, short stories, poetry, journals, literary criticism, and miscellaneous nonfiction. In this group will be new collections of fantasy and mystery stories, some featuring his detective Solar Pons, a pastiche-series of Sherlock Holmes that ran to more than 70 stories.

Whatever history doles out for August Derleth, most historians and critics of the science fiction and fantasy genre will no doubt recognize his enormous contribution in legitimizing and preserving some of the best stories and writers of his time. Few writers have had such a strong sense of loyalty to their mentors and to a literary genre.

*Peter Ruber was one of August Derleth's last publishers and will be editing the two dozen manuscripts recently discovered at Derleth's home in Sauk City, Wisconsin.*

### LU/ENGLISH NEWSLETTER

All the latest news from  
*Lagado University*  
Annual Subscription \$5.00

Four issues per year.  
LU/English Newsletter  
11 Llewellyn Place  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

of murder, non-negligent manslaughter; forcible rape; aggravated assault, simple assault, intimidation; arson; and destruction, damage, or vandalism of property.” After the Attorney General delegated this responsibility to the director of the FBI, “the task of developing the procedures for, and managing the implementation of, the collection of hate crime data” was assigned to the Uniform Crime Reports Section of the FBI. Because of the time which elapsed before that FBI section received this assignment, 1991 was the first year for which hate crime statistics could be compiled. Since then, the specific types of hate crimes reported by the FBI have been: “Racial—anti-white, anti-black, anti-American Indian/Alaskan Native, anti-Asian/Pacific Islander, anti-multiracial group”; “Ethnicity/National Origin: anti-Hispanic, anti-other ethnicity/national origin”; “Religious: anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic, anti-Protestant, anti-Islamic, anti-other religious group, anti-multireligious group, anti-atheism/agnosticism/etc.”; “Sexual Orientation: anti-male homosexual, anti-female homosexual, anti-homosexual, anti-heterosexual, anti-bisexual.”

As the above listing makes clear, the FBI does identify *victims* of hate crimes by race, ethnicity/national origin, religion, or sexual orientation, in conformity with congressional intent. The FBI does not, however, apply the same standards to *perpetrators* of hate crimes. Instead, perpetrators are identified only by race: white, black, American Indian/Alaskan native, Asian/Pacific Islander, multiracial group, or unknown. The problem is that, according to this methodology, Hispanics are recognized as victims, but not as perpetrators. Since most Hispanics are often officially classified as “white”—the Department of Health and Human Services, for example, in its June 1996 report on illegitimacy rates in the United States for 1994, counted 91 percent of all unwed Hispanic women who gave birth as “white” in order to arrive at a 25 percent illegitimacy rate for “whites”—and since perpetrators of hate crimes are only recognized by race, Hispanics committing hate crimes are often classified as “white.” The Department of Justice reports that for the federal prison system alone in 1991, the most recent year for which this statistic is available, Hispanics represented 28 percent of the total prison population, which then numbered 54,006. How many of these

Hispanic convicts had committed hate crimes? Under the FBI’s methodology, it is impossible to say.

Moreover, not only is it highly likely that a Hispanic’s attack on an Asian, a black, or a Jew will be classified as a “white” hate crime, but apparently if one Hispanic attacks another Hispanic—for instance, if a Mexican attacks a Cuban—that too will be listed as a “white” hate crime. An additional problem, one making the Census Bureau’s more restricted term of “White Not of Hispanic Origin” equally inappropriate, is that everyone from the Middle East, which is officially identified as North Africa and Southwest Asia (i.e., Arabs, Berbers, Baluchis, Kurds, Persians, Turks, etc.), is classified as “white.” Any attacks or acts of intimidation or vandalism against Asians, blacks, or Jews by members of these communities would therefore also be classified as “white” hate crimes. Again, the FBI’s methodology makes it impossible to ascertain how many “white” hate crimes are really perpetrated by North Africans and Southwest Asians.

Members of these same communities, however, when they are the *victims* of hate crimes, are *not* classified as “white” but rather by their “ethnicity/national origin” or “religion.” Therefore, according to the official records, North Africans and Southwest Asians, like Hispanics, can only be *victims*, not perpetrators, of hate crimes.

For the five years for which hate crime statistics have been compiled, the FBI reports that the percentage of all hate crimes perpetrated by “whites” has been: 65 percent in 1991, 64 percent in 1992, 51 percent in 1993, 57 percent in 1994, and 59 percent in 1995. And because of its flawed methodology, the public is misled into believing that European-Americans are the principal perpetrators of the hate crimes against Hispanics, North Africans, and Southwest Asians. For people to assume that “white” is synonymous with “European-Americans” is understandable. After all, according to the 1990 Census, more than 93 percent of all “whites” are European-Americans. This fact does not mean, however, that over 93 percent of the “white-perpetrated hate crimes” are committed by European-Americans.

The meaninglessness of this “white” category can be seen in how the federal government treats the former Soviet Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kirgystan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan,

and Uzbekistan. While the United Nations officially identifies these states as Asian—they are, after all, located in Asia and, with a few exceptions, are populated primarily by groups that are racially Asian—the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service all classify the five Central Asian republics as “European.”

The current methodology employed by the FBI in compiling hate crime statistics is clearly inaccurate and misleading. If the FBI would employ the terms “European-American,” “Hispanic,” and “Middle Eastern” when identifying the perpetrators of such crimes, it could correct this problem and introduce some much-needed rationality to its operations. The true victims and perpetrators of these crimes could then be known and dealt with accordingly.

*Joseph E. Fallon writes from Rye, New York.*

## MILITARY

### Sex Scandal du Jour by Brian Mitchell

Remember Gwen Dreyer? No, of course not. She was the poor, unfortunate midshipman who was “chained to a urinal” at the United States Naval Academy in the winter of 1990. The incident came at the end of a long day of snowball fights and practical jokes, in which Ms. Dreyer had willingly taken part. Sometime later, Dreyer left the academy and used her humiliation in the men’s room to explain to her father why she had left. Her father complained to the academy, which investigated and reprimanded the midshipmen involved.

It did not end there, of course. The local papers heard about the urinal, and what began with a snowball fight quickly snowballed into a national scandal. Before long the academy was facing two internal and two congressional investigations into the incident. Nine months later, *l’affaire Dreyer* culminated with a press conference on Capitol Hill, at