

# Former Recruiter for Racism Helps Military Confront Hate

## Onetime Neo-Nazi Sounds a Warning From Experience

By DOUG JOHNSON  
Associated Press

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo.—T.J. Leyden, a hulking man with a closely shaved head and tattoos covering half his body, struts back and forth in front of an auditorium packed wall-to-wall with soldiers.

The faces staring back at him reflect many races and ethnic groups, but that doesn't stop Leyden from blurring slurs. His words—shocking epithets that cause the crowd to shift uncomfortably—identify those he routinely assaulted and ridiculed as a neo-Nazi in the military.

Leyden, 34, explains how he was a leading skinhead recruiter and organizer for 15 years, and how he did some of his most successful recruiting on U.S. military bases.

"I looked for the young, scared white kids who just wanted a group to fit in with," he said. "We warned them of a New World Order and offered them the chance to get aboard."

Now, Leyden uses his unique brand of bluntness to spread a different kind of warning to the military bases he once targeted.

"The U.S. military is the best trained group of people in the world. And that's why the racist groups send their people here—to get trained," he told the soldiers at Fort Leonard Wood, an Army base in central Missouri. "If you don't think it's happening here, you need to wake up."

The former Marine is waging a war against the hate groups he once embraced. As a full-time consultant for the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Task Force Against Hate, Leyden travels the country speaking to thousands of military personnel and law enforcement officials about his experiences in the white supremacy movement and the recruitment methods he used.

"When I joined the Marines, I brought my racism and bigotry with me. I had a swastika tattoo two inches high on my neck and hung Nazi flags on my barracks walls. There was no way the Marines could have denied I was a racist," he said. "Yet, as long as my commanding officers thought I was a passive Nazi, it was okay with them."

The U.S. military is aware of the presence of racism in its ranks. A 1994 House Armed Services Committee report found that overt cases of racism and subtle forms of discrimination existed at some military facilities.

Four years ago, the secretary of the Army created a Task Force on Extremist Activities after the slaying of a black couple in what prosecutors said was a skinhead initiation rite in Fayetteville, N.C.

Three white soldiers from nearby Fort Bragg were charged in the case. Follow-up investigations led to the discharge of 19 other soldiers who allegedly followed some type of skinhead ideology.

The Army has taken steps since then to flush out extremists.

"The task force is gone, but its legacy continues," said Maj. Ryan Yantis, an Army spokesman.

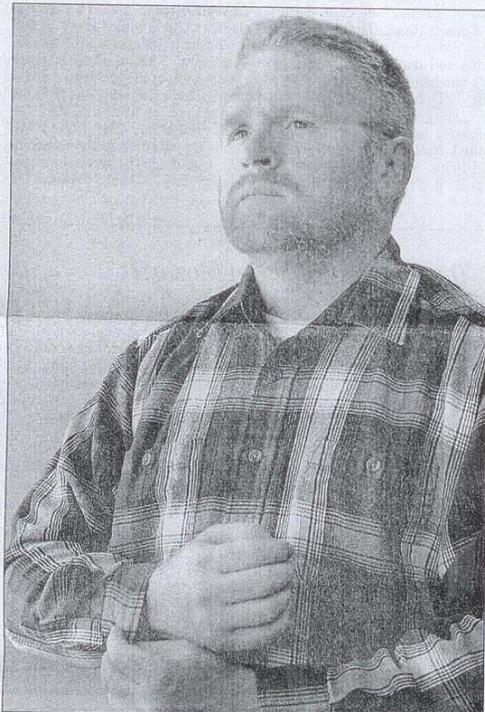


PHOTO BY DAMIAN DOVARGANES—ASSOCIATED PRESS



Former Marine T.J. Leyden, 34, above, was once a leading skinhead recruiter in the military. He hung Nazi flags in his barracks and displayed tattoos, such as one depicting a Nazi soldier, left. Now a full-time consultant for a task force against hate, Leyden speaks to thousands of military and law enforcement personnel about his experiences in the white supremacy movement.

New rules require Army personnel to "reject participation in extremist organizations and activities." Army recruiters can also reject people who display racist tattoos.

Still, groups do slip through the cracks. Nine Marines were released from a base in San Diego last year because of racist activity, Leyden said.

When he was a Marine, Leyden said, he did most of his recruiting for the neo-Nazis at bars, inciting racially motivated fights between Marines and then backing his "new

white buddies" in the scuffle.

Change for Leyden came about four years ago, after watching his 3-year-old son recoil at seeing blacks on television. At first, he was proud of his son's revulsion. But a slow, steady transformation changed his mind, he said. Pressure built from his family including his brother, a police officer, to leave the group "Hammerskins."

"I am always shocked by the number of people I talk to that don't know diddly about these groups," he said. "There are people who still think racism doesn't exist."

## Back Channels

The Intelligence Community

# NSA Hopes to Stave Off High-Tech Deafness

By VERNON LOEB  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Fresh from a session with management guru Peter Senge, Lt. Gen. Michael V. Hayden spent a day last week telling several hundred retired National Security Agency officials about his rather dramatic reengineering of the spy agency they knew and loved during the Cold War.

"You are part of our family," Hayden told a packed house in the auditorium at the agency's research and engineering building. "And we have been doing some stuff to our family homestead that we wanted you to know about."

Now in his 17th month as the NSA's director, Hayden described his mission: Create a signals intelligence (SIGINT) system that works against cell phones, the Internet and other global communications networks, as opposed to Soviet military radios in the Ukraine.

And this time around, said Hayden, the NSA isn't matched against "an oligarchic, resource-poor, technologically inferior nation state," but a global communications industry spending \$3 trillion a year.

Since his talk was unclassified, Hayden didn't go into much detail about "Project Trailblazer," his initiative to develop a 21st century SIGINT system to keep the agency from going deaf in the face of spreading encryption software, hard-to-tap fiber optic cables and increasing cell phone traffic now literally drowning analysts in 1's and 0's.

But he spent a lot of time talking about "Project Groundbreaker," a \$5 billion, 10-year plan now in the works to turn over development and management of nonclassified information technology to the private sector so NSA can focus on "mission-critical"—i.e. classified—technology.

Hayden also made it clear that one of his major obstacles is an appropriations culture in Washington that isn't accustomed to converting overhead efficiencies into technology investments.

Given such reluctance, Hayden said he has decided to open up the supersecret agency and make a public case in the media for maintaining a robust SIGINT capability so that he can secure the funds needed to make that happen.

The NSA can't compete for funds and scientists, he said, as nothing more than a "blur of chrome and steel" on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway defined for many Americans by the Will Smith

movie, "Enemy of the State."

**WILEY'S NEW POST:** Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet announced earlier this month that he had appointed Winston P. W. Wiley, deputy director for intelligence (DDI), to succeed John E. McLaughlin, who was named acting deputy director of central intelligence in June.

Wiley, 53, a Near East analyst, became McLaughlin's deputy in the Directorate of Intelligence after serving as chief of the Persian Gulf Task Force during Desert Storm, and then as deputy director and director of the Counterterrorism Center.

Melvin A. Goodman, a CIA critic who worked for years as a CIA analyst and led the charge against Robert M. Gates's confirmation as CIA

director in 1991, questioned whether Wiley would be seen as a Gates protégé.

"It will be perceived as business as usual," said Goodman, now a National War College professor.

Stanley S. Bedlington, a former senior analyst who worked for Wiley in the Counterterrorism Center, called Wiley "a very popular choice. This is a well-deserved appointment which will certainly be conducive to strengthening morale. He's a wicked sense of humor, he's

very good manager, and he's strong in substance." Wiley will be succeeded as associate DDI by Michael Miscik, 42, director of the DDI's Office of Transnational Issues.

Tenet also announced that Martin C. Peters, 53, the DDI's director of strategic programs, will be newly created position of associate deputy director of intelligence for strategic planning and programs.

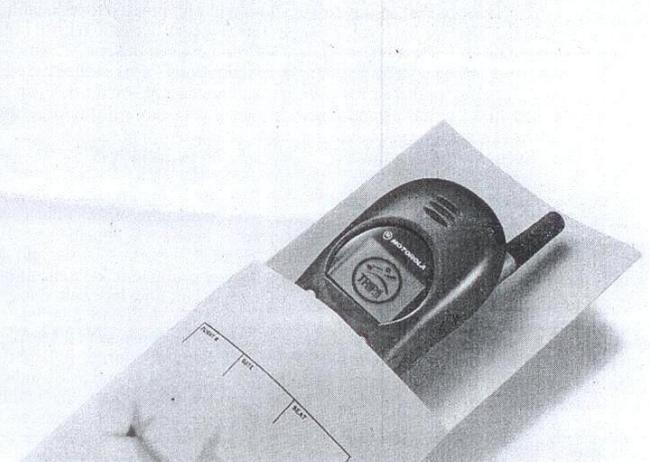
Miscik handled intelligence issues on assignment at the National Security Council, where he worked with Tenet before he moved to Langley. Miscik later served as his executive assistant.

"Independence underpins integrity," Peters and CIA spokesman Kent Harrington wrote in an article on intelligence reform for the Washington Times in 1994.

"Beware criticism of the CIA that mixes value judgments about what policy should be with proposals about how intelligence should be shaped. More than once in our careers, we've been messengers bearing bad news who have been encouraged to 'get on the team.' To us, one lesson is clear: For intelligence to work, it requires an organization that is independent of policy agencies."



**AvantGo**  
YOU'RE ALWAYS WITH IT™



# LIFE IS DRAINING

Waging workshop wars against Botswana's invisible enemy

by Douglas Johnson



**SOUTH AFRICA** Once a month his brother pushes Nhlakanipho Thabede, 22, to the AIDS outpatient clinic at the Nguelezana Hospital in Nseleni Township.

IN THE FAR NORTHEAST corner of Botswana where four African countries meet, the Chobe River breathes life into this pocket of the world. Fishermen in wooden *mekoros* cast their nets between the floating mats of papyrus and reeds. Along the banks, fish eagles nest in the jackalberry trees and just before sunset large herds of elephants and buffalo troop to the river's edge for the last drink of the day. The Chobe draws tourists from around the world wanting to get a glimpse of this natural wonderland. Behind the beauty there is a less visible force sucking the life out: The region is one of the epicenters of the global AIDS pandemic. In this southern African nation more than one in three adults are infected with the virus, according to U.N. estimates. In some regions of the country, including the tourist-popular

*The author is serving his second year as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kasane and plans to extend for another year. He spent five years working for the Associated Press in the United States.*

Chobe District, the HIV prevalence rates among pregnant women soar as high as 50 percent.

My neighbors could have lived to the average of 79. But with the AIDS pandemic, life expectancy has now dropped to 39. In places like Kasane, illness and death among old and young alike has become routine.

"Our people are dying," says Seithobogi Nfila, a 39-year-old former secretary who is HIV-positive and has lost her older sister, twin brother and nephew to the disease. So far, two nieces and two nephews have tested HIV-positive, and one of them has an HIV-positive baby. "This is just how life is here. It's not a shock to hear when someone goes."

This mostly rural country of 1.7 million people was one of Africa's success stories. Rich in diamonds and short on government corruption and war, Botswana went from being the poorest country in Africa at independence in 1966 to the second-richest. But with more than a third of

Botswana's population facing severe illness and death within the decade, President Festus Mogae himself has declared that his people are "threatened with extinction."

The frustration of working here as a Peace Corps volunteer is knowing that you are waging a battle against a nearly invisible enemy. In Kasane, where tourists come to sleep in five-star lodges and go on up-market safaris, the only indications of an epidemic are the billboards targeting pregnant women and the 24-hour funeral parlor. Discussion of AIDS or sex are still taboo in some rural areas of the country. And most people living with the virus probably don't even know that they have it, or don't want to know. I asked a friend why he has never tested for HIV. The answer, he said, is simple: "If I find out I'm positive, it's more like a death sentence. I know I'm going to die eventually, I would rather live my life without that hanging over my head."

The seriousness of the situation wasn't lost on the first group of Peace Corps volunteers who entered Botswana in 2003 to work solely on HIV/AIDS-related programs. As our plane landed on a rain-slicked runway at the Sir Seretse Khama Airport on March 21—the same day CNN began broadcasting live images of U.S. 7th Calvary moving across an Iraq desert—it was clear to us we had been recruited to fight in a different and less-reported war.

**SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA** is the vortex of the AIDS pandemic, home to 29 million people with HIV—nearly three-quarters of the world's infected—and Botswana's campaign against AIDS has become one of the region's most vigorous. In the last few years, it has reported an annual budget of \$110 million to the United Nations. Free



## Understanding How the World Works

Masters and Doctoral Programs  
[www.yale.edu/environment](http://www.yale.edu/environment)

EnvironmentYale

Want to be a doctor?  
Make it a reality.



### Post-Baccalaureate Premedical Program

The Post-Baccalaureate Premedical Program at Goucher College is a one-year curriculum of courses required for medical school admission.

- Acceptance rate into medical schools of 100%
- Classes separate from undergraduates
- Comprehensive advising and support
- Linkage agreements with seven medical schools

For more information,  
go to [goucher.edu/postbac](http://goucher.edu/postbac)  
or call 1-800-414-3437

GOUCHER COLLEGE  
Education without boundaries.

condoms are everywhere and in most major villages there are voluntary testing centers where clients get same-day results. Last year, the government ordered "routine testing" of everyone who comes into a hospital or clinic, unless the patient objects.

Botswana was also the first African country to offer free anti-retroviral drugs to any citizen who qualifies for treatment. With help from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Merck & Co. Inc., about 25,000 Botswana are currently enrolled in the anti-retroviral therapy program.

All eyes are now on Botswana to see if it can succeed in turning the tide, says Dr. Elisha

Chipandwe, the Public Health Specialist working in Serowe. "If we do it here, we will be a model for how other African countries should respond."

But health care professionals are already expressing concern about their capacity to handle the growing number of patients enrolling in the treatment programs.

A shortage of trained doctors and professional counselors in most areas of the country is only the first stumbling block. Tracking and management, including follow-ups and adherence counseling, may pose the biggest challenge.

"I had so many clients coming for adherence counseling this morning that I had to start taking them together for group counseling," Dikeme Masisi, a social worker at Kasane Primary Hospital, said recently. Many of his clients were related, which made the grouping easier. "I grouped a pregnant mother on ARVs with her son, who was in for TB treatment, and the husband, who was also on ARVs. The families here are hit very hard."

The government of Botswana knows that drug treatment alone is not the answer. With the majority of citizens still testing negative, an emphasis is being placed on prevention and behavior change. But waking up the

population to the crisis is not an easy task. Many of the practices that led Botswana to its current state still exist, such as the relaxed attitude towards taking multiple sex partners outside of marriage. Even members of Parliament have been quoted supporting the idea of men taking "small houses."

Another challenge is having 50 times more traditional healers than medical doctors in the country. Medical professionals usually look to healers with caution, worrying that bone throwing and herbal remedies aren't the answers to serious problems like AIDS. It's even possible, they say, that some remedies used could react badly with powerful ARV drugs.

Still, a recent advertisement carried in *Mmegi*, a local newspaper, demonstrates the force traditional medicine holds on society. Dr. J.A. Chiwaula advertised that he holds "a diploma in traditional healing with 17 years experience." He recruits clients for a range of services including vaginal infections, penis

enlargement, for getting married or finding a lover, encouraging fidelity, "protect your house, cattle, car from thieves, accidents and other misfortunes; HIV/AIDS symptoms and other diseases."

I once asked a nurse friend of mine about the legitimacy of the claim that a majority of Botswana, as people are called here, visit traditional healers. "People come into the hospital all the time after drinking these strange concoctions, or they only come after their family's healer fails," she said. "We have a belief that not everything can be solved by modern medicine. It's just the way we were raised."

**I'M NOT SURE WHAT** I was expecting when our group of volunteers walked off the runway and into Gaborone two years ago. Perhaps I imagined sick people lining the streets, or the smell of death in the air. None of that proved true. In fact, the thing that

**"If I find out I'm positive, it's more like a death sentence. I know I'm going to die eventually, I would rather live my life without that hanging over my head."**

strikes you when you first leave the airport is how normal everything seems. People go about their business every day in a very Western-looking city with traffic jams at rush hour, high-rise buildings and shopping malls.

Outside the capital city, the real beauty of the country—it's emptiness—takes hold. The landscape is consumed by open space. The few towns that exist are separated by miles of tarred road. The tranquil Kalahari desert spills over from Namibia in the southwest, the enormous Okavango Delta flows from the Angola highlands through the northwest, and a vast expanse of salt pans and protected woodland teeming with wildlife get their share of space to the northeast. Between the largesse of the capital city and the wide-open spaces exist the local administrative districts into which our group of volunteers first came to work.

I was sent to Kasane in the far northeast corner where Botswana borders Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, just an hour drive from Victoria Falls. In addition to being a mecca for tourists and young Batswana looking for jobs, the area is also a main trucking route between South Africa and destinations to the north. All of this has contributed to the Chobe District attaining one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the country, if not the world. Forty-seven percent.

The aim wasn't to work directly with AIDS patients, but to help the local districts respond to the epidemic in a more coordinated fashion between government, non-government organizations and the private industry. In honesty, it was unclear exactly what we would be doing over the next two years.

One thing was certain from the start: this wasn't your typical Peace Corps job I imagined as a kid watching those thrilling "roughest job you'll ever love" commercials. Instead of gritty days in the mud planting crops or building bridges, we were sent to air-conditioned office buildings where we were expected to wear dress slacks and shined shoes. Instead of hammers and nails, we had computers and copy machines. The atmosphere was more

Dilbert than Survivor.

I was attached to the Ministry of Local Government to work directly with the District AIDS Coordinator. The DAC for the MLG. I discovered that this war on AIDS is being waged by an army of acronyms: ACHAP, ACU, BOCAIP, BONASO, BONELA, BONEPWA, BOTUSA, BOCONGO, BHRIMS, DMSAC, KAPB, KITSO, NACA, OC, PMTCT, PLWA, VMSAC, to name a few. It's my third language.

The job of Peace Corps volunteers was to help coordinate the activities of these various acronyms, as well as monitor and evaluate their work in the districts. We helped plan district-wide activities like

AIDS fairs and World AIDS Day commemorations. We helped various groups write proposals to fund HIV/AIDS programs. We compiled and implemented annual district activity plans. Outside of the office, we started mentoring programs for

orphans. In short, what we attempted to do was make HIV/AIDS a part of everyday thinking and planning.

Another discovery was that we were entering a world of workshops. Government employees insist that they can't fight AIDS without first getting trained in basic facts, peer education, strategic planning and more. At the very core it's education, which is a good thing. But you start to question the process when every workshop ends with a lengthy discussion of the quality of the food served for lunch.

The workshops are always an education for me, too. One conducted deep inside Chobe National Park with a group of wildlife officers on a sunny morning at the Savuti campsite, where the biggest concern is baboons stealing from campers. Several officers discussed how the government is at fault for the AIDS epidemic because they transfer employees far away from their

families, sometimes for years at a time. The officers complain that it's a practice that encourages infidelity.

"I am living 900 kilometers from my wife and won't see her for months at a time. What can I do?" asked one wildlife officer. "I am a man and this is what's natural."

What is encouraging over the last two years has been witnessing the increasing number of people who are open about their HIV status. Stigma and fear have led to much secrecy about the disease, but people like 40-year-old Tshepiso Makondo are striving in small ways to break down those walls. Makondo, who works for the

District Administration offices, doesn't hide in the bathroom when she takes her ARVs. Instead, she takes the opportunity to teach co-workers about the drugs and their effects on her.

Mpho Sibanda is another open book. Mpho means "gift" in Setswana, and this 36-year-old man has given. His legs were amputated a few years ago after a struggle with the AIDS-related Kaposi's sarcoma. He has been on a roller-coaster ride of health

problems since then but ARVs have kept him alive. His wheelchair hasn't slowed him down. Sibanda is the founder of the first support group for people living with AIDS in the Chobe District, and when he's not counseling people at the hospital about ARVs, he's speaking at workshops and other gatherings about positive life with AIDS.

"This thing can be a real *mathatha*," said Sibanda. The word *mathatha* means problem. We sat in his house and he talked about having a bad day: the sores in his mouth were worse than usual. With his shirt off, he revealed the lean and muscular frame of a very tall man who commanded attention before disease took away his legs.

These days he struggles, but his high spirits haven't left him. "I tell people that the soul is the source of life, and the soul does not live in our physical being," Sibanda said. "The physical can rot but the soul will live on." ■

**"I grouped a pregnant mother on ARVs with her son, who was in for TB treatment, and the husband, who was also on ARVs. The families here are hit very hard."**