



Michael Stapleton Associates



# **Times Square Bombing**

**Presented by MSA's Chief Operating Officer**

**Michael E. O'Neil**

**&**

**the MSA Intelligence Analysis/Research Team**

May 5, 2010

9 Murray Street  
New York, NY 10007

Boston • New York • Chicago • Los Angeles • Miami • D.C.



## MSA Briefing Team

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- Michael E. O'Neil, Chief Operating Officer
  - First Commanding Officer, NYPD Counterterrorism Division
- Hugh O'Rourke, Vice President of Operations
  - Air Force Office of Special Investigations (Lieutenant Colonel)
- Michael White, Director of Training
  - Former Commanding Officer, NYPD Bomb Squad
- Erin Eizenstat, Manager of Research and Intelligence Analysis
  - Former Intelligence Research Specialist, NYPD
- Kaitlin Kindbergh, Intelligence Analyst
  - Recently hired Intelligence Analyst, MSA



# Overview

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- Event Details
- Device Specifics
- Suspect Information – Faisal Shahzad
- Discussion on Tradecraft & Past Events
- Overview of Homegrown Extremism
- What to Look For
- Analysis
- Countermeasures for VBIEDs Analysis & Conclusion



## Event Details

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- On Saturday, 05.01.2010, at approximately 6:30 pm, an improvised, “crude” car bomb was discovered in Times Square in New York City
- No major explosion occurred, though firework devices found inside the car started to detonate
- Street vendor alerted police to the smoking car, which led to a prompt response by first responders who extinguished the fire and rendered the device safe
- Area was evacuated and closed for a number of hours



## Event Details

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- Car was a dark green Nissan S.U.V (Pathfinder)
  - Awkwardly parked with engine running and hazard lights on
  - Parked near a theater showing “The Lion King”





## Event Details

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- Car had mismatched license plates on it and vehicle identification number plate had been defaced with acid
- Car was traced to its previous owner in Connecticut, who told authorities that it had been sold within the last three weeks for \$1,300 cash
- This led to the arrest of the suspect, Faisal Shahzad, a naturalized US citizen of Pakistani-descent
- Shahzad was arrested on 05.03.10 on board an Emirates flight headed to Dubai



## Device

- The following was discovered inside the car:
  - Three canisters of propane
  - Two five-gallon cans of gasoline
  - Consumer fireworks
  - Two clocks with batteries
  - Metal rifle cabinet packed with fertilizer



- *Alarm clocks connected to the can of fireworks, meant to detonate gas cans and set propane tanks on fire, causing a “fireball” in the area*

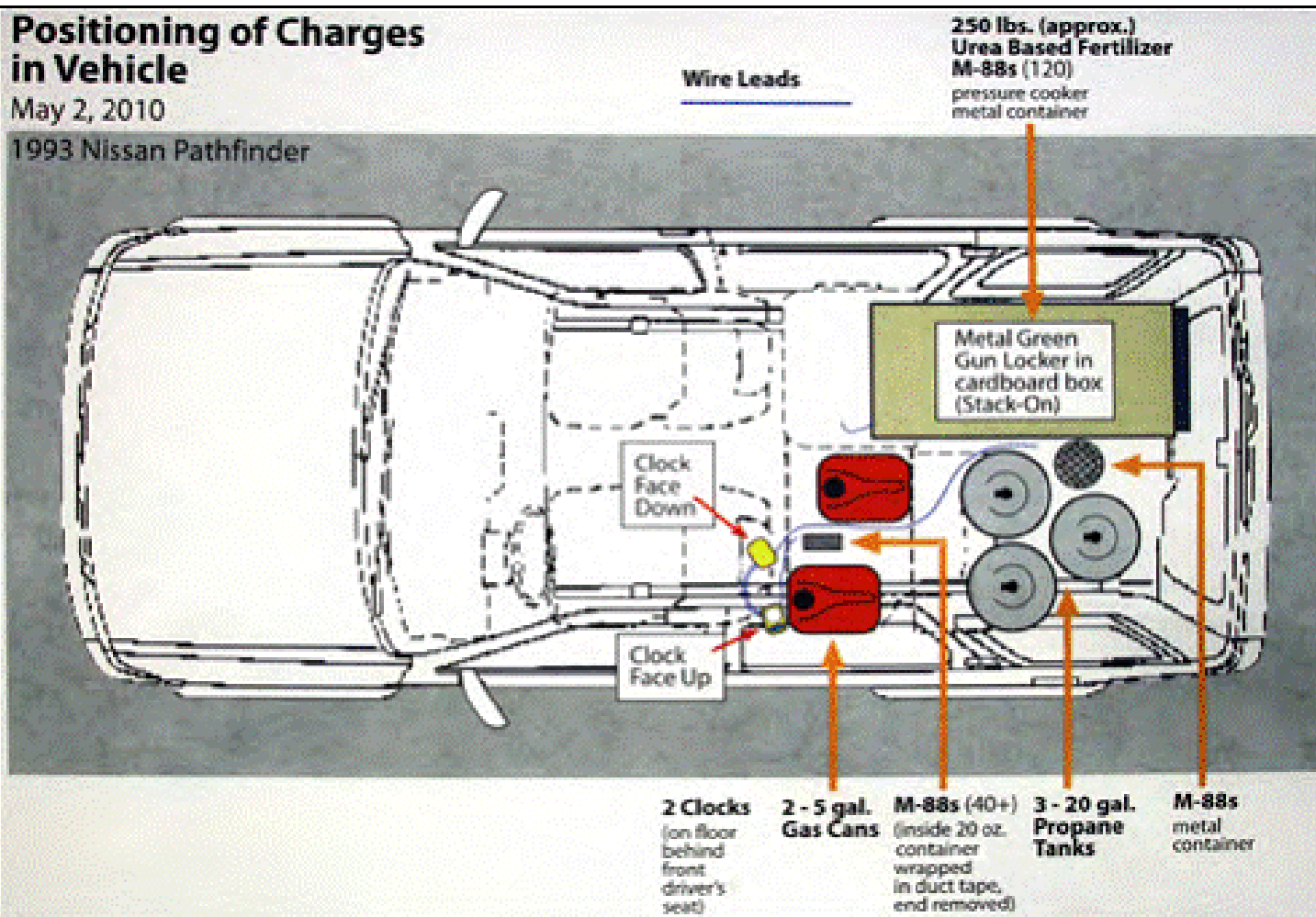


# Device

## Positioning of Charges in Vehicle

May 2, 2010

1993 Nissan Pathfinder





## Suspect Arrested - Faisal Shahzad

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- Faisal Shahzad
  - 30 years old
  - Naturalized US citizen from Pakistan, living in Connecticut
  - Earned a degree and master's degree
  - Had passed all criminal and national security background checks
  - Family is former Air Vice Marshal in Pakistan Air Force
  - Has a wife and two young children
  - Worked for a Connecticut financial marketing company
- Had recently moved in with a roommate in Connecticut while his wife went to Pakistan – had previously been in the same home for three years





# Travel

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- Shahzad had previously returned from Pakistan
  - Spent several months traveling back and forth to Pakistan, with his latest return to the US in February 2010
  - Has family links to Karachi
  - Said he received explosives training in western Pakistan
- Previous incidents have involved terrorist operatives traveling back and forth from Pakistan
  - Najibullah Zazi (2009 NYC subway plot)
  - Mohammad Sidique Khan and Shezhad Tanweer (07.07.05 London transport attack)
  - Muktar Said Ibrahim (07.21.05 London transport attack)



## Tradecraft

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- Information continues to unfold in this case, but to date, we know that “materials related to the homemade car bomb were found in Shahzad’s apartment, including the boxes that contained the alarm clocks”
- Similar tradecraft/type of bombs were used in other recent attacks



## London/Glasgow 2007

- Attack at Glasgow International Airport occurred on 06.30.07
  - Dark green Jeep Cherokee containing propane canisters was driven into the airport and set on fire
  - Driver had set himself on fire
- Attack followed the failed plot of two Mercedes car bombs containing fuel canisters, propane tanks, and nails parked near London's crowded theater district two days earlier
  - Two attackers (doctors) intended to remotely detonate the bombs
  - Phones were intended to be used as detonators but failed
  - Bollards prevented vehicle from entering terminal





# London Device





# Homegrown Extremism

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- There have been numerous cases of American citizens or residents supporting recent terrorist attempts in the United States
  - Najibullah Zazi (2009 NYC subway plot)
    - US legal resident and Afghani citizen who had received training in Pakistan
    - Targeted 1,2,3, and 6 subway lines in NYC with peroxide-based explosives
  - Nidal Hasan
    - US Army Major who killed 13 and injured 29 when he opened fire at the Fort Hood Army Base in central Texas
  - Muslim Convert Colleen LaRose – “Jihad Jane”
    - US citizen from Philadelphia who was accused of connecting with militants linked to AQ over the internet and plotting to murder a Swedish cartoonist
  - Uzair Paracha – NYC Business Man
    - Confesses to attempting to assist AQ operative Majid Khan re-enter the US to attack gas station underground storage tanks



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# Bulk Explosives & Connection (Det Cord)





# Commercial ANFO (note warning placards)





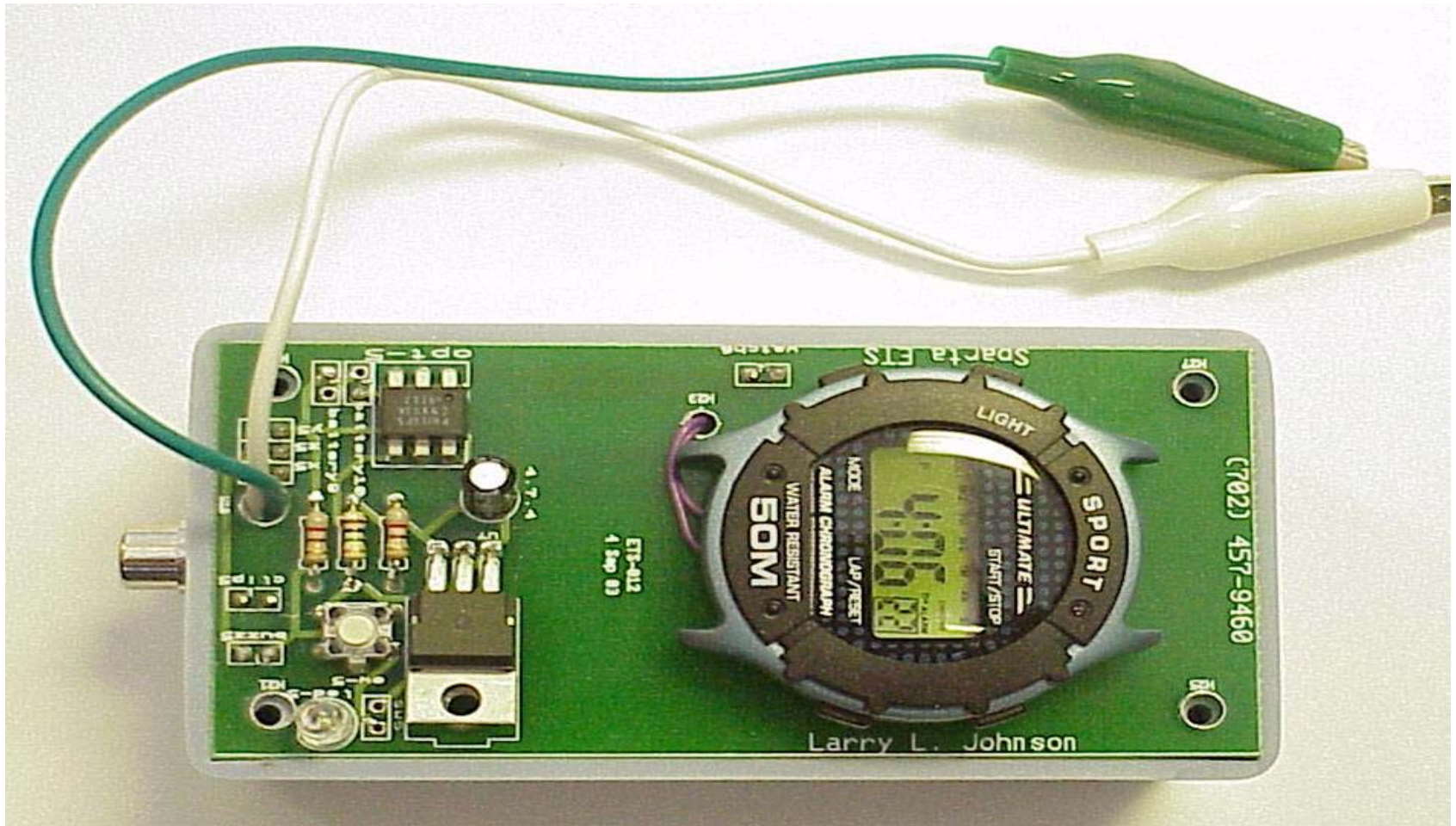
# Any Containers with Connectors & Boosters

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# Note Unusual Timing Components





## Attacks in City Centers can Devastate

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- Manchester bombing (IRA) – 06.15.96 (11:17 AM)
  - An PIRA operative called with 94 minutes warning
  - Quarter-mile radius cordon established
  - Device: 3,300 lbs mix of Semtex & ammonium nitrate
  - During explosion, glass & masonry thrown one-half mile
  - Damage to central Manchester exceeded \$2 Billion (US)
  - Affected 1/3 of city retail space
  - 212 people injured despite evacuation; no fatalities



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# Illegally Parked Box Truck (City Devastated)





# Analysis

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- Lack of device sophistication and haphazard execution may point to a lack of training by extremist groups
- Device, slightly modified, could have caused an explosion or fireball that could have been deadly
  - Resultant fear and economic impacts would have proved devastating to NYC
- Even a crude device, constructed by a lone actor, can be deadly with catastrophic consequences



## Counter VBIED Suggestions (derived from TRIPWIRE (DHS))

- Ensure a simple and consistent mechanism is in place to report suspicious items or activities
- Establish evacuation protocols for VBIED threats (e.g., fire drills, code words, etc.)
- Identify pre-designated vehicle screening points or marshaling areas to check identifications and manifests of approaching service vehicles, etc.
- Conduct random anti-terrorism measures (RAMS), stagger patrol times and patterns; conduct counter-surveillance
- If a suspicious device is located, be aware of the possibility of a secondary device which may be a VBIED



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## For More Information

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