

DR. JACK LEVIN ON “THE VIOLENCE OF HATE”

By: David Smith

A prolific author and criminology expert presented “Why We Hate,” at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Northeastern University professor Dr. Jack Levin discussed categories of; causes for; parties involved in; and suggested responses to hate crimes. “Why We Hate” was co-sponsored by ERAU’s Arts and Letters Committee and Diversity Initiative.

Dr. Linda Straubel, chair of the Arts and Letters Committee, introduced Dr. Levin as the “author of over 26...books on hate, and violent acts hate spawns.”

Levin began the evening with humor and said “one appearance on Oprah is worth a thousand journalism articles,” in reference to his resume as a television guest. Levin also poked fun at himself. Among the people whom he’s been told he looks like: “Albert Einstein...Mr. Monopoly, Mark Twain...Jerry Garcia without a beard...Don King with white skin...and Grandpa Joe from the old Willy Wonka film.”

When the laughter subsided, he stated that most hate crimes are perpetrated by dabblers, who “do it for a hobby.”

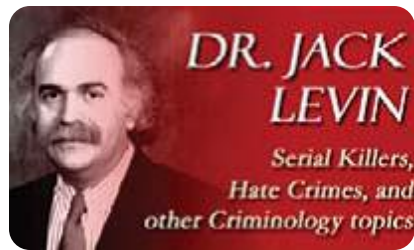
“Most hate crimes are offenses against individuals because they’re different,” Dr. Levin said. The differences depend on local norms and could be based on ethnicity, gender, handicap, or sexuality.

He said most perpetrators are protecting against perceived intrusion. “Most of what we see is defensive,” Levin said of one type of hate crime. The visual component of his presentation, a Power-point display, described that a rise in hate occurs when “an event is seen as threatening” a group’s economic, social, and other norms.

In reference to causes of U.S. hate crimes over the last seven years, Levin listed “Anti-Muslim Sentiment, New Anti-Semitism, Anti-Immigration Sentiment, Racism, and Traditional Prejudices,” as the chief motivations.

“The second kind of hate crimes are thrill hate crimes,” Levin said. He described it as a group of 3-5 people who victimize a lone person who likely resembles a source of hate.

Especially negative is evidence suggesting victims are likely to suffer lasting physical or psychological damage, and Levin said they often become vengeful.



Levin said “Organized Hate Groups” like the “White Aryan Resistance” are responsible for “5% of hate crimes in the U.S.”

“The most dangerous of all are Mission Hate Crimes,” Dr. Levin said. He provided visuals and an explanation of a man who committed murders in two locations and suicide.

Levin said other parties are involved too.

“All of this would not be possible without sympathizers who allow them to occur,” Levin said. He said in certain areas of Nazi Germany, concentration camp “guards would recount the day’s torture.”

There are also spectators. Dr. Levin recounted his youth in “Jim Crow Houston,” and compared his behavior with people who could, but don’t, help, and said that incredible courage is required to do so.

However, he offered a list of responses that may help.

Dr. Levin urged people to respond early to minor acts of hate, such as off-color jokes; structure opportunities of interdependence, such as cross-cultural events; reward respectful behavior; creative alternative sentencing for first offenders; and strong hate crime laws.

At the conclusion of “Why We Hate,” Dr. Levin answered various questions from the audience.

For more information about the Arts and Letters Committee Series schedule, visit <http://www.erau.edu/arts>.