

# Feds foiled former hostage on book research

By Sue Buck  
STAFF WRITER

When ex-hostage and former Associated Press editor Terry Anderson last year began researching his newly-released book, "Den of Lions," the FBI denied access to the files concerning nine terrorists he cited by name.

"I received a letter stating that I could not have the files, unless I received a notarized statement from each of these gentlemen giving me permission to have their files, otherwise it will be a violation of the Privacy Act," Anderson, 46, a former Westland resident, told a crowd of almost 1,000 recently at the Royal House in Warren. "God save us from violat-

ing the privacy of terrorists." Anderson said that he is still "looking for one interesting, useful fact" in the mounds of blacked-out documents he received from government agencies.

He added that he's not going to quit his records search now that the book is out. "I'm happy to say that the Clinton Administration is issuing new guidelines for the Freedom of Information Act," Anderson said. "The presumption, now, is towards release, unless you can show that demonstrable harm would be done. That's a remarkable about-face. At least we won something."

Clinton's cabinet members are passing the order down to observe the FOIA, in spirit as well as letter, he said. "The (Clinton) released a memo Oct. 4 which states in effect, 'the FOIA is important to me, comply with it,'" said Lucy Dalglish, National FOI Chair for the Society of Professional Journalists. "Attorney General Janet Reno also issued a four-page memo that reprimanded President Ronald Reagan's 1987 memo which closed records. To me, that says,

they damn well better comply." Anderson calls his research his "adventures with the Freedom of Information Act."

"I discovered, as many people have, that the FOI Act is a type of a game these days, where the other side — which is bureaucrats — loses if you get any information out of them," he said.

Responses mailed back to Anderson invariably stated that "they are not going to be able to answer within the deadline of 10 days."

"So what they are telling me is that I don't care what the law says, we are not going to do it anyway." In one package containing some 60-plus pages, 47 pages were completely blacked out. "Boxes and boxes of news stories, some from the AP, which were stuck in (government files) became classified, then had to be declassified, even though several hundred million people had already seen them," he said.

Anderson's book tour continues until Nov. 10. At each stop he relives his 2,455 days of captivity and the 15-20 prison cells he endured during his captivity. He

was abducted March 16, 1985 by the Islamic Jihad, a terrorist group.

Anderson plans to become involved with political reform in New York.

"But I'm not running for any office," he said.

For the first seven years of his life, Anderson could not see his newborn daughter Solome grow up.

He spent months chained to chairs, without bathing.

Anderson's book shows fiancee Madeleine Bassil's pain and how she became as much a hostage as he did. Bassil, who is now married to Anderson, refused interviews during his captivity. How-

ever, she did send videos to Lebanese television stations on Solome and Anderson's birthdays.

She wrote several chapters in the book.

Bassil wrote about grappling with her unplanned pregnancy, raising a child alone for seven years, briefly contemplating suicide, struggling to remain sexually faithful, even though she wasn't married and neglecting her physical appearance.

Although Anderson doesn't like to be called a hero, he considers his wife one. "Heroes are people like Jimmy Carter, Nelson Mandela and people like my wife," Anderson said. "Heroism

involves choices. I didn't have any."

Anderson also remembered his Detroit roots. "This is not my first time in Detroit," Anderson said. "I lived here, some considerable time ago."

He joined the Associated Press Detroit bureau in 1976, but was laid off after six months. He then went to work for the Ypsilanti Press.

"I learned just what it means to put out a daily newspaper, even a small one and how difficult it is," he said. About a month before he was laid off from the Associated Press, he purchased a house in Westland.

## OCC offers seminars

Oakland Community College is offering five-session transition seminars designed to give guidance to adults thinking about their futures.

Admission is free. Advanced registration is required. Call 340-6802. The first sessions of each seminar are as follows:

- 9:30 a.m. to noon Monday, Oct. 25, at the Auburn Hills campus, building D, room 112.
- 9:30 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Oct. 27, at the Waterford campus, Highland Hall, room 207.
- 5:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 26, at the Farmington Hills campus, building B, room 112.
- 9:30 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Oct. 27, at the Southfield campus, room 113.

## Volunteers sought for First Night

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