

## JIHADIS IN THE 'HOOD

The poor East End suburb where two of the London Bridge attackers lived is a hotbed of radical Islamists and white nationalists

**THE ELIZABETH FRY** apartments look like any other public housing complex in suburban London. The drab gray buildings overlook a quiet tree-lined street, where residents carry groceries or walk their children home from school.

Yet these flats in Barking, a blue-collar neighborhood in London's East End, were home to a dangerous member of an Islamist death cult: Khuram Shazad Butt. The 27-year-old British national of Pakistani descent led the three-man jihadi cell that killed eight people in the June 3 ramming and knife attacks at London Bridge and Borough Market. Police shot Butt and his two accomplices dead outside a pub, and a day later, the Islamic State militant group (ISIS) took responsibility for the assault.

We still don't know how the men planned the attack, but we do know they shared a desire to kill and maim innocent people in the name of their warped version of Islam. We also know that two of them, Butt and Rachid Redouane, a 30-year-old Moroccan-Libyan, came from Barking—a suburb of 76,000 people that has come under intense focus in the aftermath of the attacks. (The third attacker, Youssef Zaghba, a 22-year-old Moroccan-Italian, worked in the area.)

While previous assaults in France and Belgium have cast a spotlight on Muslim ghettos—such as Molenbeek in Brussels or L'Ariane

outside of Nice, France—Barking is a diverse neighborhood. Walk along its main street and you're hit with the smell of fried chicken and Middle Eastern kebabs. Turn a corner and you might pass a halal butcher or a Lithuanian supermarket. Muslim women in niqabs, Islamic full-face veils, walk alongside women in West Ham United Football Club jackets.

Barking is "a mixture of cultures," says private security guard Raza Sheikh, 32, a neighbor of Butt's who is "furious" that the London Bridge attack may have been plotted on his street. "You can find any community here. English, Asian, Eastern European, African."

The neighborhood wasn't always this way. Barking has undergone one of the most rapid ethnic transformations in London's recent history—or, as the British press calls it, "white flight." Census data from 2001 show that 80 percent of Barking and nearby suburb Dagenham identified as white British; a decade later, this figure had dropped to 49 percent.

The departure of traditionally white working-class "East Enders" has made the neighborhood a flash point for two kinds of violent extremism: far-right white nationalism and radical Islamism. The far-right British National Party and variations of radical Islamist preacher Anjem Choudary's now-banned Salafist network Al-Muhajiroun—of

BY  
**JACK MOORE**  
@jackfxmoore



**LONDON CALLING:** People watch as police raid a property in Barking, a London suburb, on June 4. The area has a haven for far-right white nationalism and radical Islamism.

which Butt was a known supporter—have jostled for influence on the fringes here. Both have held marches in town, and the core supporters of Choudary—who is serving five years in prison for supporting ISIS—reside in the area.

Security services say his network is responsible for the radicalization of hundreds of British Muslims, creating a flock of foreign fighters and inspiring several plots on British soil. The machete-wielding killers of British soldier Lee Rigby, murdered in 2013, had links to Choudary's gaggle of jihadis. Two years later, a British court imprisoned 18-year-old Kazi Islam, a Muhajiroun supporter, for grooming a teenager with Asperger's syndrome, whom he met in Barking, and goading him to hack a British soldier to death with a knife.

Part of what makes this area such a fertile recruitment ground for radicals is its poverty.

**WOMEN AT HIS MOSQUE, HE SAYS, HAVE BEEN SPIT ON AS THEY WALKED DOWN THE STREET.**

In London, the middle class has gentrified once blighted areas such as Hackney and Dalston. But there are few hipsters in Barking. The neighborhood is just 5 miles from the gleaming skyscrapers of Canary Wharf, one of London's financial centers, yet Barking has the highest level of unemployment in London. Along Barking's main street, shuttered stores daubed with graffiti sit alongside gambling parlors. Men drink beer out of open containers or collect social security checks from the job center, while the homeless panhandle outside barber shops and