

The narrative involving "Israeli art students" and the World Trade Center (WTC) before 9/11 is a complex and controversial subject that originated from US federal investigations and has since become a major component of various conspiracy theories.

Here is a breakdown of the key elements of this story:

## 1. The DEA and FBI Investigations

- **The "Art Students":** Beginning in 2000 and accelerating into 2001, US federal agencies, primarily the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and later the FBI, documented numerous cases of young Israeli citizens entering the U.S. on student visas, claiming to be art students selling artwork.
- **Suspicious Activity:** Investigators reported that these individuals were often found attempting to gain access to or conducting surveillance on sensitive U.S. government buildings, including DEA offices, FBI facilities, military bases, and government officials' homes.<sup>1</sup>
- **The Numbers:** According to a DEA internal report that was later leaked to the press, more than **100** Israeli individuals were detained or questioned in this operation.
- **Military/Intelligence Backgrounds:** Many of the "students" were found to have served in Israeli military intelligence, electronic surveillance, or explosive ordnance units.

## 2. The WTC Connection and "The High-Fivers"

The issue became directly linked to 9/11 due to two distinct, though sometimes conflated, events:

### A. The "Five Dancing Israelis" (Urban Moving Systems)

- **The Arrest:** On the afternoon of September 11, 2001, five Israeli men were seen in a van in a parking lot in Weehawken, New Jersey, apparently celebrating the attack on the World Trade Center. They were observed photographing and cheering as the towers burned.
- **Interrogation:** They were arrested and detained for 71 days. The van they were driving was linked to a company called **Urban Moving Systems** in New Jersey.

- **The Suspicions:** FBI interrogations and polygraph tests led some investigators to suspect they were intelligence operatives who had prior knowledge of the attacks. The owner of Urban Moving Systems, Dominick Suter, abruptly fled to Israel shortly after.
- **Conclusion:** The official reason given for their deportation was immigration violations (working illegally). One of the detainees later stated in an interview in Israel that their purpose was "to document the event."

## B. The "Art Residency" (Unrelated)

- Separately, an unrelated incident involved a European art collective called **Gelatin** who covertly installed a temporary, unauthorized balcony on the 91st floor of the World Trade Center in March 2000 as part of an art performance.<sup>2</sup> This was not an Israeli group, but the extreme nature of their breach of security is sometimes cited in conjunction with the "art students" narrative as evidence of WTC security vulnerabilities.

## 3. The Official Stance and Conspiracy Theories

- **Official Position:** US and Israeli officials maintained that the "art students" were involved in unauthorized intelligence gathering (spying on DEA operations, not the 9/11 plotters) or simply working illegally, and they were deported on visa charges. No official U.S. government investigation, including the 9/11 Commission, ever concluded that Israel or its agents were involved in the 9/11 attacks or had actionable advance knowledge.
- **Conspiracy Theory:** The story remains a persistent element of 9/11 conspiracy theories, which claim that the "art students" and the "dancing Israelis" were Mossad agents who were tracking the hijackers and either failed to warn the US, or had foreknowledge of the attacks and were ordered to stand down by higher authorities. These claims are frequently viewed as anti-Semitic in nature.

In summary, federal investigators did uncover an extensive network of young Israeli individuals posing as "art students" who were conducting surveillance on U.S. government facilities.<sup>3</sup> While this activity was considered espionage, no conclusive evidence linking them to the 9/11 attacks themselves has ever been officially released or substantiated by US investigative bodies.

Would you like to know more about the findings related to the company Urban Moving

Systems?