

Profile

Drawing from over 22 years of experience at the FBI and a PhD in organic chemistry, I bring one-of-a-kind expertise directly relevant to investigating radiological and nuclear threats. As Supervisory Special Agent in the FBI's CBRN Sciences Unit, I managed a team of PhD scientists with an \$11M budget, oversaw multiple radiological laboratories nationwide, and coordinated with domestic and international partners on WMD threat response such as DOD, DOE NNSA (NA-45) and the White House. My extensive HAZMAT team training and experience in CBRN investigations has given me deep expertise in identifying dual-use technologies and preventing their weaponization. I've consistently applied technical skills with SQL, large language models, and data visualization tools to analyze complex datasets and identify sophisticated threat patterns. My scientific background enables me to understand the technical nuances of radiological and nuclear threats while my investigative experience allows me to identify adversarial actors operating in ambiguous environments. This unique combination of scientific expertise, technical investigation capabilities, and proven leadership in high-stakes cases positions me to have a 360° understanding of the global CBRN WMD threat.

Experience

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION | SPECIAL AGENT | CRIMINAL DIV | 2011-PRESENT

- Focused on investigating white collar crime, health care fraud and drug distribution.
- Built a dark web narcotics program investigating illicit prescription opioid trafficking.
- Utilized large language models, ML, SQL, Python, and Tableau to process, analyze and visualize complicated and large data sets to investigate complex financial conspiracies.
- Built rapport and navigated complex interactions with stakeholders at all levels, adapting my communication approach appropriately whether addressing defendants or briefing FBI executive leadership.
- Trained/mentored new agents, provided specialized technological expertise and support to address FBI operational needs; served in a leadership role as an FBI Primary Relief Supervisor.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION | SUPERVISORY SPECIAL AGENT | FBI LAB | 2009 - 2011

- Radiological and nuclear chemistry program manager and a technical expert; led a team of Ph.D. scientists in CBRN Sciences Unit, with a total program budget of over \$11M/year; managed eight contract nuclear and radiological laboratories around the US, operating with DOE national laboratories.
- Designed and supervised the construction of a \$3M FBI rad/nuke facility in the Nevada desert for attribution and analysis; led the FBI laboratory team in charge of pre- and post-detonation attribution.
- Created policy regarding QA/QC, training, analysis and crisis management.
- Was responsible for all radiological or nuclear investigations across the US.
- Closely coordinated with DOE NNSA NA-45 on matters of nuclear security.
- Coordinated with Department of State to provide technical expertise on a program to provide nuclear forensic equipment and SME assistance to foreign countries in order to prosecute SNM smuggling.
- Routinely coordinated with the IC on various classified projects, including undercover operations.
- Served as FBI detailee for nuclear forensics to National Security Council.
- Served as FBI representative at Toyko Nuclear Security Summit.
- Co-chair of the DHS Domestic Nuclear Detection Office Committee for Research and Development.
- Served as FBI on-scene commander for nuclear pre- and post-detention exercises.
- Briefed senior government officials on technical radiological and nuclear matters, translating complex scientific concepts into actionable intelligence.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION | SPECIAL AGENT | COUNTERTERRORISM DIV | 2003-2009

- In post-9/11 Washington DC, investigated official and non-official foreign nationals from a sensitive country related to the Sept 11 attacks; arrested individuals aiding and funding Foreign Terrorist Organizations.
- Gathered and analyzed intelligence on nations believed to be developing nuclear programs.

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA | CHEMISTRY RESEARCH ASSISTANT | 1997-2002

- Research in bio-organic chemical synthesis, created novel glycopeptide opioid analgesics.
- Created one compound which was 50x more potent than morphine with far fewer side effects, which also shows anti-Parkinson activity. As a graduate student, was the author of 10 peer-reviewed publications.
- Taught undergraduate chemistry lectures and laboratory sections.

Auxiliary Duties/Details at FBI

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION | HAZMAT TEAM | 2004-2009

- Responded to emergency situations involving CBRN materials and the associated WMD threats.
- Coordinated with senior FBI officials to develop strategies and tactics in emergency situations.
- Developed expertise in identifying 'red flags' that might indicate malicious intent in dual-use research areas.
- Certified FBI HAZMAT technician after a 2-year training course (see below)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION | SPECIAL AGENT | WMD OPS UNIT | 2003

- Assisted in drafting intelligence and threat assessment reports, participated in briefings of senior FBI officials; utilized my education to assist analysts and supervisors in developing new policy.

Education

- **PHD - BIOORGANIC CHEMISTRY**, UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA, GRADUATED JUN 2002
- **MS - ORGANIC CHEMISTRY**, UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA, GRADUATED JAN 2000. GPA 3.9
- **BS- CHEMISTRY**, BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY, GRADUATED MAY 1997. GPA 3.5

Selected Peer Reviewed Publications

- Palian, Michael & Polt, Robin. "Lipo α -Amino- β -hydroxy Acids and O-Linked Glycosides: Building Blocks for Ceramyl and Glycosphingoyl Peptides". *Cheminform.* 33. 10.1002/chin.200210207. (2010)
- Dhanasekaran, Muthu & Palian, Michael & Polt, Robin et. al. "Glycopeptides Related to β -Endorphin Adopt Helical Amphipathic Conformations in the Presence of Lipid Bilayers." *Journal of the American Chemical Society.* 127. 5435-48. 10.1021/ja0432158. (2005)
- Palian, Michael & Boguslavsky, V & O'Brien, David & Polt, Robin. "Glycopeptide-Membrane Interactions: Glycosyl Enkephalin Analogues Adopt Turn Conformations by NMR and CD in Amphipathic Media." *Journal of the American Chemical Society.* 125. 5823-31. 10.1021/ja0268635. (2003)
- Egleton, Richard & Mitchell, Scott & Huber, Jason & Palian, M & Polt, Robin & Davis, Thomas. "Improved blood-brain barrier penetration and enhanced analgesia of an opioid peptide by glycosylation." *The Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics.* 299. 967-72. (2001)

Training

- **FBI HAZMAT and WMD training:** Instruction was one-week courses in each of the following: HAZMAT operations, advanced chemical HAZMAT and chemical WMDs, advanced biological HAZMAT, bioweapons and biosecurity. Advanced training in radiological and nuclear HAZMAT, nuclear weapons design, and nuclear weapons disassembly and analysis.
- **Reid School of Investigative Interviewing & Advanced Interrogation:** Instruction involved interview and interrogation preparation, factors affecting subject's behavior, and behavior symptom analysis.
- **FBI Digital Investigations Training:** Advanced training in exploiting digital resources, databases and OSINT, to further investigations and cybercrime attribution.
- **FBI Executive Management and Leadership Training:** Training in advanced strategic planning, crisis management, organizational leadership capabilities, high-level decision-making frameworks, cross-functional team leadership, and executive communication strategies.

Skills & Abilities

- **Technical:** Dual-use technologies; Nuclear/radiological chemistry and forensics; Weapons design; CBRN WMD technical expertise; Bioweapons and biosecurity; SQL; Python; Tableau; Quantitative analysis.
- **Investigative:** HAZMAT/WMD investigations; Complex problem solving; OSINT; Intelligence products and assessments.
- **Leadership and Collaboration:** Crisis management, Leadership, Strategic planning, Communication, Strategic Messaging, Interagency Coordination, International negotiations and training
- **Security:** Current Top Secret clearance with counterintelligence polygraph (June 2025). DOE Q clearance.

Selected Recent Performance Appraisal Feedback

- **2024:** “He serves as a leader and mentor to the squad, as well as valuable collaborator to the supervisor”
- **2023:** “He is the lead agent on the most significant portion of one of the largest cases in FBI history.”
- **2022:** “He is a highly respected member of the squad, frequently sought after for his expertise.”
- **2021:** “SA Palian has exemplified the character of a seasoned FBI Agent.”
- **2020:** “SA Palian is an excellent agent who eagerly volunteers to help others. “

Selected Major Achievements, Awards

- **DOJ, 2023:** Recipient of Attorney General Award for Distinguished Service (2nd highest award bestowed by US DOJ)
- **FBI, Career:** Recipient of 23 separate awards and commendations for outstanding service
- **University of Arizona, 2001:** Recipient of the Carl S. Marvel Award for most outstanding graduate research (Highest award in U of A Chemistry Dept)
- **Binghamton University, 1997:** Recipient of the C. Max Hull Award for the most outstanding undergraduate chemistry major (Highest award in the Binghamton University Chemistry Department)