

The University Art Museum Presents
Job Security: Voices and Views from the American Security Industry

August 12 – December 9, 2024



Danny Goodwin, *Rosterfield Motel, Cityscape Simulator, State Preparedness Training Center, Oriskany, NY* (detail), 2019, archival pigment print, edition of 4, 44 x 55 inches, courtesy of the artist

ALBANY, NY (May 21, 2024) – The exhibition ***Job Security: Voices and Views from the American Security Industry***, on view at the University Art Museum (UAM) from August 12 through December 9, 2024, explores the contours of the ever-expanding American security industry—its people, places, and ideologies. The exhibition makes visible an eight-year collaborative research project by artist Danny Goodwin and writer Edward Schwarzschild and features Goodwin’s black-and-white portraits, large-scale color photographs, and new video installations, alongside framed facsimiles of Schwarzschild’s redacted notebooks and interview transcripts with security personnel. The personal impetus for their research was their experiences of growing up with fathers who worked in security. Drawing on elements from their forthcoming book, *Job/Security: A Composite Portrait of the Expanding American Security Industry* (MIT Press, 2024), the UAM exhibition takes the breadth of their research beyond the printed page in order to call into question what we mean when we speak of security—Security for whom and by whom? In an era defined by national and global conflicts, widening ideological divides, and increasing political polarization, *Job Security* seeks to ask these questions through an individualized, nuanced approach.

Job Security features more than 50 works installed across both floors of the museum. The first floor offers competing perspectives on the security industry by focusing on people interviewed in Goodwin and Schwarzschild’s book: workers and officials in government organizations and the private sector, targets of security operations, and critics of the

industry. Their voices are presented through portraits, video installations, and redacted interview excerpts. Diagrams of Schwarzschild's interview process make visible the project's research methods and show the labor required to uncover the many voices heard in the exhibition. The second floor engages with questions of concealment, deception, and constructed realities through Goodwin's large-scale color photographs of emergency simulation and security training facilities and photographs of his tabletop paper models of sites where access was digitally censored on Google Earth or physically restricted.

Exhibition Overview: *Job Security: Voices and Views from the American Security Industry*

Goodwin and Schwarzschild gained a rare level of trust in their research process and received clearance to photograph security training facilities and interview and photograph security personnel. But there remains a tacit layer of secrecy surrounding the duties and responsibilities of their subjects. Indeed, the *unknown* or *unseen* is a major theme in the exhibition and is informed by Goodwin's and Schwarzschild's own experiences growing up with fathers in the security industry. The secrecy that shrouded much of their fathers' lives has shaped the trajectories of Goodwin's and Schwarzschild's respective practices and careers in photography and fiction. Thus, the exhibition fittingly begins with their fathers' portraits. The rest of the exhibition radiates from this point, giving voice to the individual experiences of industry workers and offering opportunities for deep listening and prolonged looking while also encouraging critical, skeptical readings of the narratives presented.

The first floor expands on Goodwin and Schwarzschild's book. Portraits of interview subjects, redacted interview excerpts, and new immersive video installations offer audiences competing perspectives on security. In the video installations, we see and hear recordings of individual interview transcripts being read on pairs of vertical monitors that Goodwin has placed facing each other. Standing between two monitors, we hear two voices speaking at once. The viewer must move closer to one speaker or the other to hear each perspective clearly. The videos echo the black-and-white portraits by Goodwin hung on the walls in which shallow depth-of-field makes us focus on their faces as if we are in deep conversation with the subjects. Diagrammatic representations of Schwarzschild's interview process and framed pages of redacted interview transcripts, as well as 3D paper replicas of some of the objects used in the process—an audio recorder, notebooks, a glass of beer—make Schwarzschild and Goodwin's labor and research methods visible, but also show how even in seemingly candid interviews and photographs not everything is revealed.

The second floor engages directly with questions of concealment, deception, and constructed realities. The large-scale color photographs on view are the latest by Goodwin, who for more than three decades has worked on photographic projects that relate, by turns directly and obliquely, to the U.S. intelligence community and attendant issues, including surveillance, secrecy, and violence, often calling into question our assumptions about photographic "truth" and reality. Works such as the seven-foot-high *City Drugs, Cityscape Simulator, State Preparedness Training Center, Oriskany, NY* (2019) shot with a 4x5 view camera at the State Preparedness Training Center, Oriskany, NY, present vacant, generic American "Main Street" towns. But the courthouse, drug store, motel, and shops we see in these images are not real; rather, they are sites used to train security personnel for emergencies and disasters. Thus, the images call for us to question the veracity of what we see as we move throughout the exhibition.

Despite the unprecedented access Goodwin and Schwarzschild gained to people and places throughout their project, some sites were still off-limits and were even censored on Google Earth. To visualize the invisible, Goodwin has made photographs of his tabletop, paper models of these sites. For other works like *Meadowhaven*,

Dallas, TX (2020), Goodwin printed low-resolution landscape elements, such as pixelated trees culled from Google Earth, assembled them in a diorama, and photographed the resulting landscape. As we look at Goodwin's constructed studio pictures, and try to puzzle them out, we see through the fissures of taped and glued cardboard and are asked to think about ethics, history, and the complications of deciphering reality.

About the Artists

Danny Goodwin is Professor and Chair of the Department of Art and Art History at the University at Albany, SUNY. His photographic, video, and installation work has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions and published extensively in the United States and Europe.

Edward Schwarzschild is Professor and Director of Creative Writing in the English Department at the University at Albany, SUNY. He is the author of three works of fiction, *In Security*, *The Family Diamond*, and *Responsible Men*; and his writing has appeared in *The Guardian*, *The Believer*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and elsewhere.

Job Security: Voices and Views from the American Security Industry is organized by Corinna Ripps Schaming, Director/Chief Curator, and Robert R. Shane, Associate Curator at the University Art Museum.

Teaching and Learning with the University Art Museum

Centrally located on the University at Albany campus and welcoming to all, the UAM is a hub for experiential learning and cross-disciplinary dialogues unlike those found in conventional classrooms. As a university museum of contemporary art at a comprehensive, public research institution, we serve as both a traditional gallery space for students and visitors and as an active site for transforming interdisciplinary higher education. We offer students and our larger community opportunities to engage firsthand with internationally renowned artists and thinkers and offer context to the unique points of view that our exhibiting contemporary artists provide on the important social, cultural, and political issues of our day.

The exhibition *Job Security* includes participation by current undergraduate and graduate students in UAlbany's College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security, and Cybersecurity (CEHC), a first-in-the-nation program of its kind established in 2015. Representative of the next generation of security professionals, six students read the works of senior professionals from interview transcripts in the exhibition's new immersive video installations.

The museum will also host an interdisciplinary graduate course aimed to promote discourse and research across different points of view. The course will be led jointly in the museum by Goodwin and Schwarzschild (professors at UAlbany of studio art and English/creative writing, respectively), along with Robert P. Griffin, Dean of CEHC. This is Goodwin and Schwarzschild's fourth collaboration integrating museum-based learning into their pedagogical approaches.

The UAM invites faculty from UAlbany and institutions in the region to bring their classes to the University Art Museum. Faculty can schedule self-guided visits or reach out to the UAM's Education Coordinator, Berly Brown, to schedule exhibition tours and to learn about additional resources.

Events and Programs

Drawing on expertise across the University at Albany, the University Art Museum; the Department of Art and Art History; the Department of English; the New York State Writers Institute; and the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity (CEHC) will jointly offer public events and discussions

featuring an international lineup of artists, scholars, and security experts, bringing diverse perspectives on the exhibition's timely themes. Visit our website for announcements of *Job Security* events and programs to be held at the UAM.

Exhibition Support

Job Security: Voices and Views from the American Security Industry is generously supported by the Office of the President, Office of the Provost, The University at Albany Foundation, the University at Albany Alumni Association, and the New York State Writers Institute.

UAlbany Campus Land Acknowledgement

The University at Albany sits at the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers on the traditional lands of the Kanien'keháka and Muh-he-con-neok people, who stewarded this land for generations before the arrival of European colonists. The Kanien'keháka (People of the Flint) and Muh-he-con-neok (People of the Waters that are Never Still) are more commonly known today as the Mohawk Haudenosaunee and Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans. Despite the similarity of their westernized names, the Mohawk and Mohican were culturally and linguistically distinct.

The UAlbany community recognizes that we live and work on the homelands of sovereign Indigenous nations with rich histories and cultures that continue today – both within New York and beyond.

As an institution devoted to teaching, scholarship, and service, we strive to understand and learn from our history and to affirm Indigenous rights and issues. To this end, we are committed to cultivating reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities focused on equity, social justice, and sustainability – and dismantling legacies of colonization.

Press Contact: Christine Snyder, Office and Operations Manager, cbatson@albany.edu

Museum Hours August 12 – December 9, 2024:

Monday – Friday, 11am – 4pm

Open Select Saturdays, 11am – 4pm: 9/21, 9/28, 10/19

Closed: 9/2, 10/14, 11/11, 11/28, 11/29

Please check the museum's website for programming announcements.

About the University at Albany

The [University at Albany](#) is one of the most diverse public research institutions in the nation and a national leader in educational equity [and social mobility](#). As a Carnegie-classified R1 institution, UAlbany and its faculty and students are creating critical new knowledge in fields such as artificial intelligence, atmospheric and environmental sciences, business, education, public health, social sciences, criminal justice, emergency preparedness, engineering, informatics, public administration, and social welfare. Our courses are taught by an accomplished roster of [faculty experts](#) with student success at the center of everything we do. Through our parallel commitments to academic excellence, scientific discovery, and service to community, UAlbany molds bright, curious, and engaged leaders and launches great careers.

###