

Military Resistance 10D7



Just Wounded

From: Dennis Serdel
To: Military Resistance
Sent: April 16, 2012
Subject: Just Wounded

Written by Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade; United Auto Workers GM Retiree

Just Wounded

They came out of surgery
one gurney then another
pushed by two nurses

and slid into beds
then another nurse came
screaming all the way down
the tent, get out of bed and
pull the mattress on top
of you, we're getting attacked
by rockets and mortars
the new one looked across
to the other, I don't even
know if I can get out of bed
the other nodded, they're not
after us, they are after the jets
and runway, even so these
mattresses would do nothing
so they stayed where they
were. There was a huge battle
and the choppers flew in
bringing in the wounded
and bringing in the dead
the surgeons just slashed and
threw shrapnel on the floor
while the nurse bandaged
them up. It was like mash
but without the music
no joviality this was Chu-Lai
Vietnam 1968
from there they were flown
down to south and
stacked up on tiny beds
given a twilight shot that
kept them calm all the way
to Japan they were taken
to a huge hospital in Tokyo
with rows of beds all taken
up by Soldiers lighter
wounded on one floor
then heavier on the floors
underneath they heard
the noise from the streets
below where Japanese
police in riot gear fought
with protesters who didn't
want the american Soldiers
to be where they were
they would show movies
on a sheet on some nights

and sometimes not at all
they swab down the wounds
that they leave open then
screwball stitch up like
they don't care how it looks
one finally had a wheelchair
to look up the others in
his company, one black kid
said I have to shit in a bag
for the rest of my life, then
big young Sarge said
I can't have any kids, they
blew off my cock and balls
the dead and just the heavily
wounded took the airstream
back to the states, those
just wounded not as bad
were sent to Recuperation
camps off the main rails
40 miles from Tokyo, 5
in all. they were given
Army bedding and clothes
had to make their own beds
meet in the morning for
exercising, if one could
only do 1 inch of a sit-up
that was good enough,
one half of a jumping jack
that was ok, then it was over
until later. it was quite
comical to watch 2 grunts
play tennis as they would
hopple after the ball it did
not not matter how many
times the ball would bounce
they had a company store
where they could buy
civilian clothes and send gifts
back home, a Gisha doll,
a Buddha carved out of wood
the store would send them
for them. they had a steam
room filled with steam and
another that was just hot
good places to talk with the
other Soldiers as they sweated

out their stories. after a while
they were given passes to jump
on the rails into Tokyo his
companion was a camera freak
and bought fish eye lenses
and other goodies as they
stopped into every camera
shop said they are dirt cheap here.
those who died and just
the badly wounded took a jet
on the airstream to the usa
Take the Wall in DC and add
on those just wounded
chip in the Vietnamese killed
and the one's just wounded
take the WWII War Memorial
and carve into the granite
all those who were killed
and all those who were just wounded
carve the names of the other side
and the Japanese too
The Korean Memorial is nice
with "Freedom Is Not Free
But The Money Is Good"
but carve the names of the dead
and the one's just wounded
have the other sides names
in there too including the two
big bombs. Might as well
start the Iraq Wall with names
of the dead and the names
of the just wounded and the
names of the Iraqi dead
and the names of those just
wounded, might as well
start the Afghanistan Wall
the other side's names
on it too then by the Pentagon
start another, call it crazy call
it misfits call it a Marine
driving into a moving train
call it a Soldier and a shotgun
and you know who wins
call it a Soldier just wounded
with a gun surrounded by a
dozen police cars and with

their bullhorn they are saying
"Put down the gun" but he's
so crazy he lifts his gun up
and the police shoot him
about twenty times as another
Soldier shoots at the white house
as another just wounded drives
a truck into Congress then carve
his name on the pentagon wall

Shock Writing by Dennis Serdel

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AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**Insurgents Fight Government
And Foreign Soldiers For 18
Hours In Attack On Capital Of
Afghanistan:
"With The Battle Over, A Fuller
Account Of The Attacks Emerged
On Monday"**

“For More Than Three Hours, The Blackhawks Circled”

“The First Time The U.S. Military Has Used Such Firepower In Kabul Since Taliban Fell In 2001”

A Western diplomat with security expertise said: “I don’t share at all the optimism of NATO or the Americans.

“It’s true that they did it better than in the past -- there is progress but still, to build up so many attacks and being able to launch them simultaneously demonstrates clearly (the Taliban’s) ability to strike where and when they want,” he said on condition of anonymity.

April 16, 2012 By DION NISSENBAUM, ZIAULHAQ SULTANI and HABIB KHAN TOTAKHIL, Wall Street Journal & By ALISSA J. RUBIN, New York Times & The Associated Press & AFP [Excerpts]

KABUL—A brown SUV careened down Ali Hamad’s busy street on Sunday afternoon and halted outside a small office of the Afghan intelligence service.

A curly haired man jumped out, and a policeman started berating him for driving the wrong way. As Mr. Hamad, a Kabul shopkeeper, looked on, the man lifted his AK-47 assault rifle and shot the officer with a volley of rounds.

That shooting marked the start of the Taliban-led insurgency’s most brazen attack on the Afghan capital in more than a decade of war.

The U.S., German and British embassies and some coalition and Afghan government buildings took direct and indirect fire, according to Lt. Col. Jimmie Cummings, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition.

It was only 18 hours later, following strafing runs by U.S. helicopter gunships in the heart of Kabul, that Afghan forces and their Western allies brought the rapid succession of attacks to an end.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said the attacks had been planned for two months to show the insurgency’s potency after NATO officials called the Taliban weak.

He told The Associated Press that they did not mark the start of the insurgents’ spring offensive, which would begin shortly.

“It is a message for the spring offensive but it has not yet started,” Mujahid said.

Numbers differed on the number of security force members killed: the Interior Ministry said 8, while the president's office said 11, with 42 wounded.

As Afghan police carted away the insurgents' bodies and their weapons from rubble-strewn buildings on Monday, President Hamid Karzai called for an investigation into the "intelligence failures" by the Afghan government and "especially" the U.S.-led coalition that he said allowed the militants to sneak their huge arsenal into what are supposed to be the country's most secure neighborhoods.

The tactic used Sunday, taking over unfinished high-rises and raining rockets on neighborhoods below, was the same employed in September's attacks on the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.

Coalition officials denied that there had been an intelligence failure.

Gen. Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the U.S. had intelligence that insurgents hoped to mount simultaneous attacks around the country — but the U.S. had no details, and had issued no specific warnings in Kabul. [Right. No failure there. T]

Afghan and American officials said the attacks, which included battles in three nearby provinces, were the work of the Haqqani network, an autonomous wing of the Taliban that has been behind some of the biggest strikes in the Afghan capital.

“With The Battle Over, A Fuller Account Of The Attacks Emerged On Monday”

The mayhem appears to have begun in Kabul's diplomatic quarter, on a busy street often filled with one-legged beggars and street children hawking chewing gum to Westerners stuck in capital traffic.

As the first insurgent gunned down the Afghan police officer, the militants' SUV rammed the gate of a seven-story unfinished high-rise construction project across the street and rushed inside.

Western contractors heard the gun battle and saw the insurgents ascending through the brick building partially shielded by scaffolding and billowing curtains of green mesh. Some of the Westerners grabbed their weapons and started firing on the militants, according to witnesses.

As the Westerners drew fire, the militants launched rocket-propelled grenades into a neighborhood of diplomatic compounds and military bases.

Across town, witnesses saw four gunmen jump out of a minibus and rush into an unfinished six-story building overlooking the Afghan parliament compound.

Gen. Ahmad Fahim Qayem, commander of the Afghan Interior Ministry quick-reaction force whose primary responsibility is to deal with such attacks, rushed to direct the response.

Within minutes, the general and nine aides were hit by shrapnel from an insurgent rocket.

As others stepped in to direct the response, insurgents stormed through the unfinished building.

Office workers who had been sitting down for a late lunch on occupied lower floors suddenly found themselves scrambling for safety. In a fourth-story construction company office, a half-dozen people locked the door and hoped the militants would pass them by.

After 90 minutes of sporadic fighting, four gunmen kicked down that door and rushed inside, said a 28-year-old worker. The man cowered in the kitchen and prepared for the worst, but a colleague grabbed a Quran and handed it to his colleague.

"I held the Quran in my hands in front of them and screamed: 'For the sake of this Quran, don't kill us!' " the worker recalled.

Apparently swayed by this appeal, the insurgents let them flee.

As the civilians rushed out of the building, police appeared to mistake them for insurgents and opened fire, the man said.

The Quran still in hand, the man once again made a plea for his life that convinced the police he wasn't a suicide bomber.

Back in the city's diplomatic neighborhood, Norwegian special-operations forces military mentors working with another team of specially trained Afghan forces sought to bring the attack to a rapid end.

Throughout the afternoon, Afghan forces fired round after round of light antitank rockets at the insurgents hiding behind the unfinished brick walls on the higher floors of the building.

But the persistent assault failed to dislodge the militants. As night fell, according to a participant in the response, a small contingent of British Special Operations Forces moved in to help.

After midnight, and after coalition commanders repeatedly touted the Afghans' ability to tackle the crisis on their own, the ground team decided that it needed the firepower of the kind the Afghan military doesn't possess.

They asked the U.S.-led military coalition to dispatch close air support.

Around 2:30 Monday morning, a pair of UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters dipped over the Kabul mountains and zeroed in on the insurgent-held building in the diplomatic quarter, unleashing sustained machine-gun fire.

For more than three hours, the Blackhawks circled back for at least six more attacks, marking the first time the U.S. military has used such firepower in Kabul since Taliban fell in 2001.

The Blackhawks also strafed the insurgents in the building near the parliament, a tactic that helped bring that standoff to an end, according to U.S. military officials.

On the outskirts of Kabul, Afghan forces clamped down on a third team of insurgents who had taken over another construction project to attack an adjacent military base.

Back in the diplomatic quarter, according to a participant in the response, Afghan forces and their British mentors ruled out an attempt to storm a building they feared was filled with booby traps. Instead, they prepared to use rope ladders attached to the scaffolding to scale the outside of the building. As the sun rose over the battered building, according to eyewitnesses, Afghan forces and a small contingent of British military mentors methodically scaled the scaffolding, killing insurgents and pushing survivors toward the exposed highest floors.

The last insurgent holdouts were finally killed, and Kabul fell quiet by 7:30 a.m. for the first time in more than 18 hours.

“The Taliban is constantly developing new methods of attack,” said Rohan Gunaratna, head of the International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research at Singapore’s Nanyang Technological University.

“If they succeed, they may continue to use them, otherwise they move on.”

The fact that so many militants managed to make it through Kabul’s so-called “Ring of Steel” checkpoints and attack high-value targets in the heart of the capital has raised questions about lapses in security.

A Western diplomat with security expertise said: “I don’t share at all the optimism of NATO or the Americans.

“It’s true that they did it better than in the past -- there is progress but still, to build up so many attacks and being able to launch them simultaneously demonstrates clearly (the Taliban’s) ability to strike where and when they want,” he said on condition of anonymity.

**POLITICIANS CAN’T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WAR**

Spain, France, Australia Speeding Up Troop Withdrawal From Afghanistan: “European Governments, They Feel The Karzai Administration Is Too Corrupt And Too Indifferent To The Requests Of Its Allies”

4.17.12 By Sebastian Moffett, Reuters & AP [Excerpts]

Australia expects to pull most of its troops out of Afghanistan nearly a year earlier than planned, the prime minister announced Tuesday, saying Australian soldiers have nearly completed their mission to transfer security responsibilities to Afghan forces in the decade-long war.

Australia has 1,550 troops in Afghanistan, the largest force provided by any country outside NATO.

Australia had originally planned to withdraw its soldiers by the end of 2014, though Gillard had hinted at an early exit in November when she said the troops' mission could be finished before then.

Edward Burke, a research fellow at the Centre for European Reform, a London-based think-tank said insurgents had received funding siphoned off from international aid sent to help Karzai.

“For many European governments, they feel the Karzai administration is too corrupt and too indifferent to the requests of its allies,” said Burke. “Many European governments in a time of austerity don’t see the rationale.”

Spain last year said 40 percent of Spanish troops would return home by the first half of 2013 - accelerating withdrawal plans by a few months, according to one newspaper.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who is currently campaigning for re-election, announced France would pull out of Afghanistan completely at the end of 2013, instead of in 2014 as previously planned after four French troops were killed by a rogue Afghan soldier.

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SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Insurgent Bomber Kills Government Troops And Spies in Baidoa

17 April 2012 AllAfrica

Mogadishu — A bomber killed 5 people, mostly Ethiopians in the southern Somali town of Baidoa on Tuesday, when he detonated an explosive vest as he tried to enter a government security building, officials said.

Reports said the bomber detonated his explosives in front of UN headquarters in the town, killing 5, three of them were confirmed to be Ethiopian spy while the two others were TFG troops officials.

Ethiopian soldiers fighting alongside Somali government forces took control of Baidoa in February.

African Union troops deployed in the town earlier this month, the first time the force has dispatched troops outside the capital Mogadishu since the 10,000-strong force was set up five years ago.

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“As The U.S. Federal Criminal Code Has Grown Increasingly Large And Complicated, Critics From The Left And Right Alike Argue It Is Becoming Too Easy For Americans To Unwittingly Commit Crimes”

**“The Law Is So Vague That Harmless Misstatements Can Be Turned Into Federal Felonies”
Respected Marine Biologist Could Go To Prison For Helping Whales Eat:**

“The Government Court Filings Don’t Provide Details Of The Alleged Wrongdoing In Any Of The Counts”



Marine biologist Nancy Black aboard the Sea Wolf II in March. Brian L. Frank for The Wall Street Journal

April 9, 2012 By JOHN R. EMSWILLER And GARY FIELDS, Wall Street Journal
[Excerpts]

MONTEREY, Calif.—When federal prosecutors can’t muster enough evidence to bring charges against a person suspected of a crime, they can still use a controversial law to get a conviction anyway: They charge the person with lying.

The law against lying — known in legal circles simply as “1001” — makes it a crime to knowingly make a material false statement in matters of federal jurisdiction.

Critics across the political spectrum argue that 1001, a widely used statute in the federal criminal code, is open to abuse. It is charged hundreds of times a year, according to court records and interviews with lawyers and legal scholars.

Nancy Black, a marine biologist and operator of whale-watching boats, recently became ensnared by 1001. When one of her boat captains whistled at a humpback whale that approached the boat a few years ago, regulators investigated whether the incident constituted harassment of a whale, which is illegal.

This past January, Ms. Black was charged in the case — not with whale harassment, but with lying about the incident.

She also faces a charge of illegally altering a video of the whale encounter, as well as unrelated allegations involving whale blubber.

Together, the charges carry up to 20 years in prison.

She denies all wrongdoing, including lying. “I wasn’t charged with anything about the dealings with the humpback,” says Ms. Black, 49 years old.

“So why would they charge me with lying about it? It makes no sense.”

The law against lying, officially Title 18, section 1001 of the United States Code, is “a bread-and-butter” statute for Justice Department prosecutors, says Thomas O’Brien, the former U.S. Attorney in Los Angeles.

As the U.S. federal criminal code has grown increasingly large and complicated, critics from the left and right alike argue it is becoming too easy for Americans to unwittingly commit crimes.

Nobody argues that telling a falsehood to Uncle Sam is either wise or admirable, but some say 1001 is overly broad.

“There is no statute out there that’s more pernicious,” says Stephen Saltzburg, a former senior Justice Department official and now a law professor at George Washington University.

He says the law is so vague that harmless misstatements can be turned into federal felonies. A person can be charged even if the lie didn’t really fool anyone, or if the person didn’t know the criminal consequences of fibbing, some critics point out.

While 1001 helps nab guilty parties, it can also be a trap “for innocent people to fall into,” said Rep. Louie Gohmert (R., Texas), in an interview. Rep. Gohmert, a critic of the federal justice system’s expansion, said he hopes to put new limits on the statute in a criminal-reform bill pending in the House.

Statute 1001’s precursor, the False Claims Act of 1863, had a relatively narrow focus: It was intended to punish contractors and suppliers who were defrauding the government during the Civil War.

Over the next 135 years, Congress significantly increased the reach of federal law regarding falsehoods. By 1998, courts around the country carved out an exception—known as the “exculpatory no” — aimed at blocking prosecution of a person who denied (falsely) being involved in wrongdoing.

The exception was at least partly inspired by the Constitution’s protection against self-incrimination.

But in 1998, the Supreme Court threw out the exculpatory no, saying the law as written by Congress didn’t allow for an exception.

While some false-statement prosecutions might seem “harsh,” Justice Antonin Scalia wrote, “courts may not create their own limitations on legislation, no matter how alluring the policy arguments for doing so.”

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, in a separate opinion, worried about “the extraordinary authority Congress, perhaps unwittingly, has conferred on prosecutors to manufacture crimes” out of false statements.

In February, the Washington Legal Foundation, a pro-business group, asked the Supreme Court to take a new look at statute 1001 in the case of an Idaho farmer, Cory King, who was convicted federally of lying to a state livestock inspector about where a valve on the property sent some water.

Mr. King allegedly said the valve routed the water to the sprinkler system when in fact it sent water to a well, where it was later used for irrigation. The state didn’t pursue criminal charges, opting for a fine.

At issue: Since Mr. King’s statement was made to a state official — someone with no connection to the federal government, the WLF says in a court filing — should the federal law against lying apply? Letting the conviction stand “would strip the statute of virtually all jurisdictional limitations,” the brief says.

Justice Department court filings argue that lying to the state inspector interfered with enforcement of federal drinking-water laws.

The false statement “need not be made directly” to the federal government, said one Justice Department court filing.

In an interview, Mr. King maintained he didn’t give a false statement. He is finished with his probation.

“It Was The Most Traumatic Thing That Ever Happened To Me”

Ms. Black, the marine biologist, says she has been caught for more than five years in “a nightmare” that began with the whistling incident involving her whale-watching boats.

An animal lover, she lives with two cats, three lizards, four parakeets and four dogs, including a 13-year-old retriever named Andy who is a constant companion. Ms. Black estimates Andy has “seen more killer whales than any dog on the planet.”

Since her childhood, she says, killer whales held a particular fascination. She obtained a master’s degree in marine sciences and has been researching killer whales in this seaside community since the mid-1980s.

Monterey Bay is on the annual migratory and feeding paths for blue, humpback and gray whales, making it “one of the best places in the world to watch whales,” she says. It is also a magnet for killer whales, which feed on the calves of gray whales accompanying their mothers from their birthplace off the coast of Mexico to feeding grounds off Alaska.

Ms. Black has co-authored scientific papers and helped catalog the identities of hundreds of killer whales based on their skin markings. “Nancy is the guru of killer whales in Monterey Bay,” says Ken Balcomb, executive director of the nonprofit Center for Whale Research in Friday Harbor, Wash. To finance her work, she operates two whale-watching boats for tourists.

The trouble began in October 2005.

During a whale-watching trip, a humpback whale approached one of her boats. The captain began whistling, hoping the noise might keep the creature from leaving, according to Ms. Black.

A crewman on her other boat, which Ms. Black was captaining nearby, also urged passengers to make noise, she says. (Neither the captain nor the crewman faces charges.)

The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 outlaws “harassment” of whales that could disrupt their behavioral patterns or injure them.

Ms. Black says she doesn’t believe the whistling, or the ships’ closeness to the whales, violated the rules, particularly since the creature had approached on its own.

Ms. Black says she considered the whistling “unprofessional” and told her employees not to do it again.

She says the then-wife of her boat captain then went to the government to find out if there was anything wrong with whistling on the boat.

The now former captain declined to comment. His ex-wife couldn’t be reached for comment.

Several days later, Ms. Black says, a federal official from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration — a Commerce Department agency with duties ranging from weather forecasting to fisheries management — made an informal request (as opposed to a subpoena) for her to provide video of the whistling incident. She provided a video edited to show the captain’s whistling, she says, because that is what she thought the investigator wanted to see.

She didn’t include video of the other crew member allegedly egging on passengers to make noise.

The indictment alleges Ms. Black altered the video “with the intent to impede” investigation of the whale incident and then falsely told authorities the video was “the original recording, when that recording had in fact been altered.”

She acknowledges editing the video and denies that it was altered to impede the probe. In interviews, she denied lying about the video and has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

She says she gave the edited video to two officials, including a NOAA investigator, and went through the video with them.

About a year later, on a morning in November 2006, more than a dozen federal agents, led by a NOAA inspector, entered her house with a search warrant and took away her files, photos and computers, she says.

“It was the most traumatic thing that ever happened to me.”

Over the five-year period since the raid on Ms. Black’s home, federal investigators have questioned friends and colleagues, she and her friends say, and many of them became reluctant to deal with her.

She says the raid was so traumatic to her that she sometimes gets fearful when a stranger’s car parks in front of her house. She says she has paid more than \$100,000 in legal fees so far.

“I’m just a normal person, doing the thing I love,” says Ms. Black. “How could this happen to me?”

“Prosecutors Threatened That If His Client Didn’t Plead Guilty To One Or More Misdemeanors, She Would Face A Range Of Charges”

Ms. Black’s attorney, Lawrence Biegel, says prosecutors threatened that if his client didn’t plead guilty to one or more misdemeanors, she would face a range of charges.

The indictment, filed in January, contains four criminal counts including illegal alteration of records resulting from editing the video. The false-statements charge comes from allegedly lying about the video’s completeness.

The indictment includes a paragraph referencing a 12-count indictment, which the Justice Department spokesman said was mistakenly pasted in from a document unrelated to Ms. Black’s case.

Ms. Black says she was never asked about the completeness of the video and if she had known the officials wanted an unedited copy, she would have provided one.

Her lawyer, Mr. Biegel, says authorities eventually obtained the entire video from him after Ms. Black informed officials that, even after removing records from her home, they didn’t have the complete video.

He notes that despite years of investigation, the government didn’t find evidence to charge Ms. Black with wrongdoing during that 2005 whale-watching trip.

The two other counts in the indictment involve allegations that Ms. Black illegally fed or attempted to feed killer whales in the wild, once in April 2004 and once in April 2005. Each of those counts carries a potential one-year sentence.

The government court filings don't provide details of the alleged wrongdoing in any of the counts.

Ms. Black says those incidents involved using an underwater camera to record killer whales feeding on a gray whale they had just killed. Pieces of blubber from the dead whale were floating on the water, she says, so to better record the event, she cut a hole through one piece of blubber in the water and put a rope through the hole to stabilize the blubber while the killer whales ate.

Since the whales themselves had killed the animal they were eating, Ms. Black says she believes her actions don't qualify as feeding them.

Her attorney Mr. Biegel says that in one of the two alleged incidents, no killer whale bit the blubber.

“Taliban Sympathiser” Arrest Prompts New Questions About FBI Tactics:

“Al-Akili’s Arrest Came Just Days After He Had Sent Out An Email To Friends And Local Muslim Civil Rights Groups Complaining That He Believed He Was The Target Of An FBI ‘Entrapment’ Sting”

“The Only Charges Brought Against Al-Akili Were For Firing A Rifle At A Local Shooting Range Almost Two Years Ago”

The Guardian contacted al-Akili by email and on March 14 by phone and al-Akili agreed to talk more to the Guardian about his belief that he was being set up by Hussain.

But he was arrested the next day and has been denied bail as a potential threat to the public, keeping him in jail.

26 March 2012 Paul Harris in New York, Guardian News and Media Limited

The arrest of a Pittsburgh man described as a Taliban sympathiser has sparked allegations that the FBI deployed a notorious confidential informant used in previous controversial stings on suspected Muslim radicals.

Khalifah al-Akili, 34, was arrested in a police raid on his home on March 15. He was later charged with illegally possessing a gun after having previous felony convictions for drug dealing. However, at his court appearance an FBI agent testified that al-Akili had made radical Islamic statements and that police had uncovered unspecified jihadist literature at his home.

But, in a strange twist, al-Akili's arrest came just days after he had sent out an email to friends and local Muslim civil rights groups complaining that he believed he was the target of an FBI "entrapment" sting.

That refers to a controversial FBI tactic of using confidential informants – who often have criminal records or are paid large sums of money – to facilitate "fake" terrorist plots for suspects to invent or carry out.

In the email – which was also sent to the Guardian before al-Akili was arrested – he detailed meeting two men he believed were FBI informants because of the way they talked about radical Islam and appeared to want to get him to make jihadist statements.

According to his account, one of them, who called himself Saeed Torres, asked him to buy a gun. Al-Akili said he refused.

The other, who was called Mohammed, offered to help him go to Pakistan for possible Islamic radical training. Al-Akili also refused.

In the email al-Akili recounted that he obtained a phone number from Mohammed and put it into Google.

The search returned a reference to the case of the Newburgh Four, where an FBI confidential informant called Shahed Hussain helped secure the convictions of four men for attempting to blow up Jewish targets in the Bronx.

Hussain's actions became notorious among civil rights groups due to the incentives he deployed on his targets, who were local black Muslims in the impoverished town of Newburgh. They included offering one suspect \$250,000, a car and a free holiday. Al-Akili said he also found a picture of Shahed Hussain on the internet and realised it was the same man as "Mohammed".

Al-Akili concluded his email by saying: "I would like to pursue a legal action against the FBI due to their continuous harassment and attempts to set me up."

The Guardian contacted al-Akili by email and on March 14 by phone and al-Akili agreed to talk more to the Guardian about his belief that he was being set up by Hussain.

But he was arrested the next day and has been denied bail as a potential threat to the public, keeping him in jail.

Al-Akili's lawyer Mike Healey believes that the FBI may have been monitoring al-Akili's emails, and possibly his phone, and then rushed to arrest him once Hussain had been identified and al-Akili had effectively gone public with his fears.

Healey questioned why the FBI would use Hussain, who has also been widely criticised for his role in another "entrapment" case in Albany, New York, which resulted in the jailing of a local imam and a pizza shop owner. "What are they doing bringing him here? I am amazed they would use someone like that," he said.

Yet, despite being painted in court as a dangerous radical Islamist, the only charges brought against al-Akili were for firing a rifle – which Healey said was owned by a friend – at a local shooting range almost two years ago in June 2010.

Al-Akili faces the prospect of a hefty jail sentence if found guilty.

A spokesman for the FBI declined to comment on whether the agency had been using Shahed Hussain as a confidential

MORE:

The Undercover Entrapment Of Muslim Americans:

“Shareef Would Repeatedly Ask Al-Akili To Help Him Obtain A Gun, Which Al-Akili Refused To Do”

Informer Says “The Way The FBI Conducts Their Operations, It Is All About Entrapment ... There Is No Real Hunt. It's Fixed”

“For His Services, Hussain, ‘The Sole Personal Witness For The FBI,’ Earned \$100,000”

13 April 2012 By Maureen Clare Murphy, The Electronic Intifada [Excerpts]

Khalifah al-Akili, a 34-year-old Muslim American from the Pittsburgh area, was to publicly claim that he was the target of an FBI sting operation at a press conference last month.

Had he not been arrested at his home one day before the press conference was to take place, al-Akili would have described how he was harassed and stalked by undercover FBI operatives, one of whose identity was exposed after a Google search of his phone number returned results linking him to another undercover entrapment case in New York state.

Authorities claim that al-Akili “had made radical Islamic statements and that police had uncovered unspecified jihadist literature at his home,” as the Guardian’s Paul Harris reported (“Taliban sympathiser’ arrest prompts new questions about FBI tactics,” 26 March 2012).

Al-Akili is currently in detention, charged with a firearms code violation related to a seven-second video of him firing a gun at a shooting range.

Shortly before his arrest, al-Akili reached out to civil liberties groups, national Muslim organizations and the media with his claim of being targeted in an FBI entrapment plot.

The timing of his arrest before the press conference hosted by the National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms has caused some, including his lawyer, to suspect that his arrest was timed to prevent him from getting his story out.

“Shareef Would Repeatedly Ask Al-Akili To Help Him Obtain A Gun, Which Al-Akili Refused To Do”

At the press conference, al-Akili would have narrated how several months ago, he met a man who called himself Shareef, who would attend dawn prayers at an area mosque and, according to a National Coalition statement, would “with increasing frequency (turn) the conversation to fighting.” Shareef would repeatedly ask al-Akili to help him obtain a gun, which al-Akili refused to do.

Shareef promised to help al-Akili finance a restaurant if al-Akili would do something for him, “which al-Akili understood to mean some ‘act of violence against others,’” according to the statement.

Al-Akili tried to avoid the man, but this proved difficult as Shareef lived only two blocks away.

The National Coalition adds: “When Shareef offered to introduce al-Akili to a man he called his ‘brother,’ al-Akili tried to evade the meeting, but as he was walking back to his apartment from the store one night, Shareef pulled his vehicle up to al-Akili.

“A man got out of the passenger side, introduced himself as Mohammed, and said that he wanted to talk to al-Akili over coffee.

“Al-Akili made excuses, but when he got home the phone began to ring; it was Shareef and Mohammed downstairs, wanting to come in.

“Al-Akili pretended not to be at home.”

Mohammed would again appear out of nowhere, insisting that al-Akili meet him.

Al-Akili took down his phone number and would eventually run a Google search of it. This is how he found out that Mohammed was actually Shahed Hussain, an undercover FBI operative.

According to an interview that al-Akili gave to the Times Union newspaper shortly before his arrest, when al-Akili asked Hussain whether he was an FBI informant, Hussain quickly ended the call and within a day, Shareef had vacated his apartment and vanished without a trace (“FBI informant in upstate stings, including Albany, surfaces in Pittsburgh case,” 17 March 2012).

“For His Services, Hussain, ‘The Sole Personal Witness For The FBI,’ Earned \$100,000

When al-Akili ran a Google search of Mohammed’s phone number, he had found a reference to the Newburgh Four, a group of African American Muslim men who were convicted on the basis of testimony and secret recordings made by undercover informant Shahed Hussain.

The four men, from an impoverished community in upstate New York, are currently serving lengthy prison sentences for participating in a plot to blow up Jewish targets and fire a Stinger missile at US military planes.

Not exactly self-starters, the Newburgh Four were more likely motivated by financial gain than ideology.

As Paul Harris reported in the Guardian last year, great material rewards including \$250,000, free vacations and new cars were promised by Hussain to the alleged conspirators for their cooperation in the plot designed and encouraged by Hussain.

Hussain even paid for the food and rent of one of the men, as the Associated Press reported (“Was too much offered?,” 22 September 2010).

The men, all with serious troubles including jail time and mental health problems, may have believed they were playing Hussain — when Hussain gave one of them a camera to use for surveillance work related to the alleged plot, the camera was promptly sold.

And when the same man, James Cromitie, tried to back out of the alleged plot, “Hussain said his overseas terrorist ‘brothers’ might cut his head off,” according to the Guardian.

For his services, Hussain, “the sole personal witness for the FBI,” earned \$100,000.

Before setting his sights on Newburgh, Hussain was the government’s chief witness in the prosecution and conviction of two Muslim men in Albany, New York for money laundering to fund terror. As the Times Union reported in 2006, a loan promised by Hussain to one of the convicted men was the basis of the money laundering charges

According to the paper, Hussain has been involved in the arrest and prosecution of more than a dozen persons.

It was exposed during the Albany trial that the FBI recruited Hussain after he was arrested in December 2001 for taking bribes of several hundred dollars each as part of a ring to illegally give drivers licenses to immigrants who couldn’t pass the written examination.

It was also revealed that he may have been involved in a homicide in Lahore, Pakistan.

Hussain isn’t exceptional as far as undercover FBI agents go — only that he was exceptionally bad at providing effective cover in the al-Akili case (al-Akili told the Times Union that Hussain and his colleague “were ‘too obvious’ and requested receipts even for small items they purchased like coffee and donuts”).

A groundbreaking study by Mother Jones magazine and the Investigative Reporting Program published last year examined the prosecutions of more than 500 defendants in terrorism-related cases in the US. The investigation found that “nearly half the prosecutions involved the use of informants,” motivated by money or “the need to work off criminal or immigration violations” (“The Informants,” September/October 2011), as in the case of Hussain.

Furthermore, “Sting operations resulted in prosecutions against 158 defendants. Of that, 49 defendants participated in plots led by an agent provocateur — an FBI operative instigating terrorist action.”

Indeed, the report found that “With three exceptions, all of the high-profile domestic terror plots of the last decade were actually FBI stings.”

Because so few domestic terrorism cases actually go to trial — the specter of terror means juries almost always return guilty verdicts, so defendants usually take plea deals — the role of undercover FBI operatives in domestic terror cases rarely comes under scrutiny.

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Rare insight into the FBI’s policy regarding undercover operatives was provided after ex-informant Craig Monteilh came forward about his role in the infiltration of Muslim communities in Orange County, California.

Monteilh, who served time for passing fraudulent checks, told the Guardian last month that the FBI even “gave him the OK to have sex with the Muslim women his undercover operation was targeting,” and to record their “pillow talk”.

Monteilh's provocateur tactics ironically prompted the community he was spying on to get a restraining order against him and he was reported to the FBI. The Guardian reports that Monteilh is now part of an American Civil Liberties Union lawsuit against the FBI, and has “joined forces” with the people he once targeted “to campaign for their civil liberties.”

Monteilh told the Guardian: “The way the FBI conducts their operations, it is all about entrapment ... There is no real hunt. It's fixed.”

“If You Are Muslim And Criticize US Foreign Policy, You Too Can Be Prosecuted — Unless You Agree To Play The FBI's Game”

The study of domestic terrorism prosecution published by Mother Jones notes that “Ever since 9/11, counterterrorism has been the FBI's No. 1 priority, consuming the lion's share of its budget,” and the bureau now boasts “a roster of 15,000 spies — many of them tasked, as Hussain was, with infiltrating Muslim communities in the United States.”

However, a February report on “Muslim-American Terrorism in the Decade Since 9/11” by the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security found that the scale of so-called homegrown Muslim-American terrorism “does not appear to have corroborated the warnings issued by government officials” for the year 2011.

Finding a “relatively low level of radicalization among Muslim-Americans,” the report adds that the US government's predicted surge in “homegrown Islamic terrorism” has not materialized and that the decline in prosecutions for funding terrorism, which makes up the bulk of domestic terrorism cases, “is particularly notable in view of the heightened scrutiny that terrorism financing now receives from law enforcement agencies.”

And last month, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) released documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act demonstrating that the FBI in San Francisco used a mosque outreach program to gather intelligence on Muslim organizations and their constituents “without any suspicion of wrongdoing” (“FBI FOIA Docs Show Use of “Mosque Outreach” for Illegal Intel Gathering”).

On my blog for The Electronic Intifada, I have covered a domestic terrorism case in which three young men in North Carolina received decades-long prison sentences for providing material support to terror groups — even though government prosecutors failed to identify the specific terror groups to which the men are supposed to have provided support.

Conversely, high-profile public figures have established close ties with and are providing advocacy to the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), an Iranian dissident group on the US State Department's designated foreign terrorist organization list. The US government is even providing training to this designated terrorist organization, according to a report by The New Yorker's Seymour Hersh.

Of course, foreign policy is the driving force behind the development and application of anti-terror legislation, as the historic and contemporary targeting of Palestinian leaders and solidarity activists in the US reinforces.

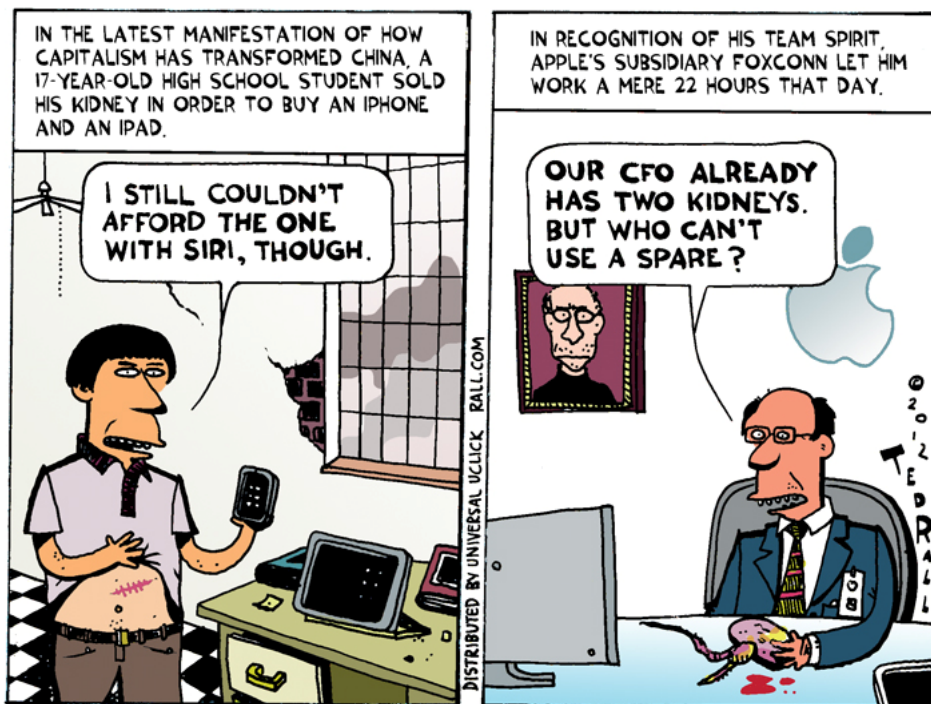
Opposition to the increasingly unpopular wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are frequently used against defendants in terror trials, who are sometimes prosecuted after having refused to become informants themselves, as in the case of Tarek Mehanna, who received a 17.5 year prison sentence yesterday for various trumped-up terror charges.

As the ACLU of Massachusetts commented last month, “if you are Muslim and criticize US foreign policy, you too can be prosecuted — unless you agree to play the FBI’s game” (“Double standards distort the judicial process”).

The result of all this is that US Muslims like Khalifah al-Akili face lifetime sentences behind bars without having committed any acts of violence or harm as the government’s relentless drive to get terror convictions goes unchecked.

Meanwhile the civil liberties of entire communities are violated, burning whatever trust those communities may have had in the law enforcement that should be there to protect them, not go after them.

CLASS WAR REPORTS



“The Chinese Ruling Class Fully Understands That This Potential Exists And Fears The Possibility Of An ‘Arab Spring’ On Its Own Doorstep”

“Rampant Corruption And Increasing Polarisation Of Wealth And Conspicuous Consumption By Those That Have Enriched Themselves Have Led To Huge Resentment And Explosions Of Anger”

“The Gunpowder Of Inflation And Rising Food Prices, Along With Rampant Corruption, The Repression Of Workers’ Rights And Huge Polarisation, Is An Explosive Recipe”

9 January 12 By Jane Hardy & Adrian Budd, International Socialist Journal Issue 133
[Excerpts]

Prices of new apartments in Beijing and Shanghai increased by between 50 and 60 percent during 2009 and by 2011 a huge property bubble had developed.

Average house prices are now ten times average household income (three times average annual incomes is normal, rising to five to seven times in other Asian countries).

Evidence that this bubble of speculative frenzy is bursting lies in the forests of empty, half-built complexes that litter the country.

By autumn 2011 two other sources of systemic risk were unraveling. The huge debts amassed by local governments and the rapid expansion of informal markets to supply credit threatened to boomerang back on the real economy.

In response to government exhortations to borrow and stimulate regional economies after the 2008 crisis, local governments accumulated unprecedented debts which by 2011 were estimated to amount to 27 percent of China's economy, a sizeable share of the overall public sector debt which stands at 70 to 80 percent of GDP.

Chengdu province, for example, borrowed 3 billion renminbi (\$473 million) to more than double the size of its planned transport hub in two years. Similarly easy credit has been extended to state-owned enterprises, up to 40 percent of which remain loss-making. Cheap loans to firms and local government have amplified overinvestment into a generalised risk to the economy and produced clear parallels with the subprime crisis that engulfed the Atlantic economy from 2007.

According to the head of Beijing's International Financial Forum, defaults by local government are a real possibility in the face of increases in interest rates and curbs on credit. He said, "Our (Chinese) version of subprime in the US is lending to local authorities... Everybody assumes that they will be bailed out by central government if they default, but I disagree with this. It means that people will ultimately pay the bill for it all, at a cost to broader welfare"

According to some sources defaults have already begun with the north east province of Liaoning missing debt repayments in 2010. Even before this China's problems had begun to concern the international financial institutions that oversee global capitalism.

Hung quotes the Bank for International Settlements:

"In China, the principal concern must be that misallocated capital will eventually manifest itself in falling profits, and that will rebound back on the bank system, fiscal authorities and the prospects for growth more generally. After a long period of credit fuelled expansion, this would be classic denouement. Indeed this was very much the path followed by Japan (before the prolonged crisis in the 1990s)."

In tandem with increased military spending in defence of China's global geopolitical interests, more resources have been devoted to internal security and quelling the growing number and increasing violence of protests.

Although China's rapid growth has brought millions of people out of poverty, rampant corruption and increasing polarisation of wealth and conspicuous consumption by those that have enriched themselves have led to huge resentment and explosions of anger.

The Chinese model has intensified inequalities of wealth with 1 percent of top income households owning 40 percent of the total wealth (in the US 5 percent of people own 60 percent of wealth). There is a massive divide between people who live in urban and rural areas, and between the coastal regions and the hinterland. Some 50 percent of China's population continue to live in rural areas with an average disposable income of only \$898 compared with \$2,900 for those in urban areas.

There has been a burgeoning of speculation as enterprises and rich individuals try to make fast and effortless profits.

This has been reflected in badly built schools that collapsed during the earthquake of 2008 and scandals about adulterated food.⁹³ In July 2011 a crash on China's much vaunted high-speed railway left 39 dead and 200 injured. The high-speed rail network, which seemed to underline China's unstoppable rise, has come to symbolise cut-throat competition, cost cutting and endemic corruption.

The pool of mainland Chinese millionaires has been growing at a dramatic rate with the number of individuals with more than 1,000 million renminbi (equivalent to £100 million or \$154 million) increasing at an annual rate of 50 percent from 24 in 2000 to 1,363 in 2010.

This increase in wealth for a few is evident in the endless building and rebuilding of luxury apartments, high-class hotels and shopping malls selling designer goods, and the rapid expansion of luxury goods companies in China. One forecast predicts that the demand for luxury goods and travel from China will account for 44 percent of global sales by 2020, up from 15 percent today, as China becomes the world's largest domestic market for luxury goods. In the fourth quarter of 2010 China accounted for 39 percent of the total operating profits (\$1.7 million) generated by the luxury car producer BMW.

Against many still seduced by China's "communist" claims, we argue that the Chinese model is based on a set of class relations — these are being increasingly challenged.

The gunpowder of inflation and rising food prices, along with rampant corruption, the repression of workers' rights and huge polarisation, is an explosive recipe.

Chinese workers have proved to be far from docile or acquiescent.

A Beijing academic's estimate of the number of "incidents", an official euphemism for strikes, protests and riots, was 180,000 in 2010 (double the number five years ago) working out at 483 a day.

In 2010 there was a strike wave in transnational corporations in southern China where workers managed to win large wage increases.

In 2011 social unrest had a different complexion. Rather than involving the relatively well educated, higher-paid migrant workers of Japanese subsidiaries, the common thread linking these incidents was the wider social status and vulnerable position of migrant workers.

These protests were not based in the workplace, but expressed the cumulative anger of this group of super-exploited workers, which exploded in huge riots.

In June 2011 Guangdong, the southern heartland of China which accounts for roughly one third of exports, was rocked by a large and violent protest.

In Zengcheng three days of riots and running street battles erupted after a 20 year old pregnant street vendor was manhandled by government security guards to stop her selling her goods outside a supermarket. Some 10,000 people attacked police property

and burned and overturned armoured vehicles — 6,000 police were deployed to get the protest under control.

In the same month dozens of armoured troop carriers poured into a town in central Hubei province after the death of a popular anti-corruption official in police custody prompted violent demonstrations and the pelting of police with eggs and bottles.

Migrant workers, whose labour was crucial to economic growth, have become a major source of instability for the government.

Between 1992 and 2002 the leadership under Jiang Zemin “opened up” China to the global economy and presided over explosive growth.

However, by 2002 the next generation of leaders — Wen Jiabao (premier) and Hu Jintao (CCP general secretary) — was faced with having to deal with the contradictions of China’s spectacular accumulation and mollify an increasingly restive and belligerent working class and peasantry.

According to official Chinese government figures mass protests increased from 10,000 incidents involving 730,000 protesters in 1993 to 60,000 incidents involving more than three million protesters in 2003. The large number of unrecorded protests makes the unofficial figure much higher.

The response of the leadership was to adopt the rhetoric of a “harmonious” society along with conceding some limited rights to workers. The most important concrete manifestation of this was a new Labour Contract Law in January 2008. This gave workers increased rights and security at work and sought to control the spontaneous bottom-up riots and disputes that had characterised protests by channelling discontent into formal mechanisms.

More generally, from 2005 Hu Jintao and his allies had tried to fuel domestic consumption to rebalance the economy by boosting the disposable income of peasants and urban workers. Measures included the abolition of agricultural taxes and a rise in government procurement prices for agricultural products.

Although these measures to raise rural living standards were a small step their effect was instantaneous. Slightly improved conditions in the rural-agricultural sector slowed the flow of migration to the cities and produced a sudden shortage of labour and hikes in wages in the coastal export-processing zones.

According to Hung no sooner had the government taken its first step towards domestic consumption-driven growth than some sections of the ruling class in the coastal export sector complained about the impact on their profitability. They demanded compensating policies to safeguard their competitiveness, and attempted to sabotage further initiatives to raise workers’ living standards.

Nevertheless, such is the pressure on China’s rulers that more recently measures to stave off social unrest have included the raising of the minimum wage and threshold for tax along with plans to build 36 million units of low-cost housing.

The lead-up to the once in a decade transition to the “fifth generation of leaders” due to take place at the CCP’s 18th National Congress has exposed the divisions in the ruling class.

They include arguments about how far to rein in the tempo of accumulation and about the political reforms and degree of redistribution necessary to placate the working class.

By its very nature, competitive accumulation is anarchic and does not proceed on a smooth upward path.

Unevenness is reinforced, as we are now witnessing, by the differentiated impact of economic crisis.

If China is subject to the dynamic of uneven development between and within states, it is also locked into the pattern of booms and slumps of mature capitalism. Certainly, in the early years of its transformation it was able to draw on its vast labour surplus to generate spectacular growth and accumulation. But as it did so, it was remorselessly incorporated into the global system and so subject to the same crisis tendencies as the rest of the world.

Its rulers will face these difficulties fully aware of the widespread explosion of anger among workers railing against low wages, poor working conditions and the corruption practised by the new rich in and around the CCP.

The power to change all this, and to ensure a better future for all of us, lies with the millions of Chinese workers whose labour has fuelled China’s spectacular growth. As yet the massive anger of those at the bottom has not been coordinated to pose a real threat to the state.

Yet the Chinese ruling class fully understands that this potential exists and fears the possibility of an “Arab Spring” on its own doorstep.



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