

Fort Detrick Scientist “Commits Suicide” as Anthrax investigation closes in

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Bruce Ivins, a microbiologist at the US Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) at Fort Detrick, Maryland, reportedly committed suicide after ingesting prescription-strength Tylenol and codeine, as the FBI prepared to charge him in the anthrax attacks weeks after the 9/11 attack in 2001.

Ivins was part of the FBI team that investigated the anthrax sent in letters to the Senate’s Democratic leadership.

In March of this year, Fox News reported: “The FBI has narrowed its focus to ‘about four’ suspects in the 6 1/2-year investigation of the deadly anthrax attacks of 2001, and at least three of those suspects are linked to the Army’s bio-weapons research facility at Fort Detrick in Maryland . . . Among the pool of suspects are three scientists – a former deputy commander, a leading anthrax scientist and a microbiologist – linked to the research facility, known as USAMRIID. The FBI has collected writing samples from the three scientists in an effort to match them to the writer of anthrax-laced letters that were mailed to two U.S. senators and at least two news outlets in the fall of 2001, a law enforcement source confirmed.” It is now believed that the microbiologist in question was Ivins. The other suspects have not yet been identified. Although the FBI said the four Fort Detrick personnel were suspects, WMR previously reported that some Fort Detrick personnel were in a whistleblower status concerning knowledge of the perpetrators of the anthrax attacks.

Fox News’ March report stated: “Fox News obtained an email from a USAMRIID employee describing how he was surprised to learn the powdered anthrax was produced at Fort Detrick. The e-mail written by the employee who had been asked to compare the anthrax sent through the mail with that produced at Fort Detrick read in part: “Then he said he had to look at a lot of samples that the FBI had prepared . . . to duplicate the letter material . . . Then the bombshell. He said that the best duplication of the material was the stuff made by [name redacted]. He said that it was almost exactly the same . . . his knees got shaky and he sputtered, ‘But I told the General we didn’t make spore powder!’”

WMR reported on July 3, 2008: “WMR has now learned from an informed source in Frederick, Maryland, the location of Fort Detrick, that the author of the email was in the highest echelons at USAMRIID. Previously, WMR learned from an official of the National Guard Bureau in Provo, Utah that the aerosolized anthrax used in the attacks was originally produced at the US Army’s Dugway Proving Ground in Utah, the location of the government’s only aerosolized anthrax production facility in the country, and sent to Fort Detrick for use in the postal system attacks in 2001.”

On October 5, 2005, WMR reported on the major reason behind the Army's anthrax attacks on American citizens and political leaders: "It should be recalled that Congress originally passed the Patriot Act during an anthrax attack on the offices of the Senate Democratic Majority Leader and the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Although the anthrax used in the attack was traced to a strain maintained by the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) at Ft. Detrick, Maryland, the perpetrators were never found."

On April 8, 2002, this editor wrote the following for CounterPunch: "Now that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has officially put the anthrax investigation on a back burner, it is time for Americans to think the unthinkable: that the FBI has never been keen to identify the perpetrator because that perpetrator may, in fact, be the U.S. Government itself. Evidence is mounting that the source of the anthrax was a top secret U.S. Army laboratory in Maryland and that the perpetrators involve high-level officials in the U.S. military and intelligence infrastructure.

Forget unfounded conspiracy theories. The evidence is overwhelming that the FBI has consistently shied away from pursuing the anthrax investigation, in much the same way it avoided pursuing leads in the USS Cole, East Africa U.S. embassies, and Khobar Towers bombings.

On April 4, ABC News investigative reporter Brian Ross broadcast on ABC World News Tonight that after six months the FBI still had hardly any clues and no suspects in its anthrax investigation. A Soviet defector, the former First Deputy Director of Biopreparat from 1988 to 1992 and anthrax expert, Ken Alibek (formerly Kanatjan Alibekov), now a U.S. government consultant, made the astounding claim that the person who is behind the anthrax attacks may, in fact, been advising the U.S. government. After having passed a lie detector test, Alibek was cleared of any suspicion.

Interestingly, Alibek is President of Hadron Advanced Biosystems. On October 2, 2001, just two days before the first anthrax case was reported in Boca Raton, Florida and a week and a half before the first anthrax was sent through the mail to NBC News in New York, Advanced Biosystems received an \$800,000 grant from NIH to focus on very specific defenses against anthrax. Hadron has long been linked with the CIA. The links include charges by many former government officials, including the late former Attorney General Elliot Richardson, that the company's former President, Earl Brian, illegally procured a database system called PROMIS (Prosecutors' Management Information System) from Inslaw, Inc. and used his connections to the CIA and Israeli intelligence to illegally distribute the software to various foreign governments.

Ross reported that U.S. military and intelligence agencies have refused to provide the FBI with a full listing of the secret facilities and employees working on anthrax projects. Because of this stonewalling, crucial evidence has been withheld. Professor Jeanne Guilleman of MIT's Biological Weapons Studies Center told ABC, 'We're talking here about laboratories where, in fact, the material that we know was in the Daschle letter and in the Leahy letter could have been produced. And I think that's what the FBI is still trying to find out.'

The first major media outlet to accuse the FBI of foot dragging was the BBC. On March 14, the BBC's Newsnight program highlighted an interview with Dr. Barbara Rosenberg of the Federation of American Scientists. After claiming the CIA was involved, through government

contractors, in secret testing of sending anthrax through the mail, Rosenberg, someone with close ties to the biological warfare community, has been attacked by the White House, FBI, and, not surprisingly, the CIA.

The BBC also interviewed Dr. Timothy Read of the Institute of Genomic Research and a leading expert on the genetic characteristics of anthrax. Read said of the two strains, 'They're definitely related to each other ... closely related to each other.' However, Read would not go so far as to suggest the Florida strain, known as the Ames strain, and that developed at the U.S. Army's top secret Fort Detrick biological warfare laboratory - officially known as the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases - were one and the same.

William Capers Patrick III was part of the original Fort Detrick anthrax development program, which 'officially' ended in 1972 when President Nixon signed, along with the Soviet Union and United Kingdom, the Biological Weapons Convention. Nixon had actually ordered the Pentagon to stop producing biological weapons in 1969. It now seems likely that the U.S. military and intelligence community failed to follow Nixon's orders and, in fact, have consistently violated a lawful treaty signed by the United States.

Last December, the New York Times claimed Patrick authored a secret paper on the effects of sending anthrax through the mail, a report he denies. However, Patrick told the BBC that he was surprised that as an expert of anthrax (he was a member of the UN biological warfare inspection team in the 1990s), the FBI did not interview him right after the first anthrax attacks.

The BBC reported that Battelle Memorial Institute (a favorite Pentagon and CIA contractor and for whom Alibek served as biological warfare program manager in 1998) conducted a secret biological warfare test in the Nevada desert using genetically-modified anthrax early last September, right before the terrorist attacks. The BBC reported that Patrick's paper on sending anthrax through the mail was also part of the classified contractor work on the deadly bacterial agent.

The Hartford Courant reported last January that 27 sets of biological toxin specimens were reported missing from Fort Detrick after an inventory was conducted in 1992. The paper reported that among the specimens missing was the Ames strain on anthrax. A former Detrick laboratory technician named Eric Oldenberg told The Courant that while at Detrick, he only handled the Ames strain, the same strain sent to the Senate and the media. The Hartford Courant also revealed that other specimens missing included Ebola, hanta virus, simian AIDS, and two labeled 'unknown,' a cover term for classified research on secret biological agents.

Steven Block of Stanford University, an expert on biological warfare, told The Dallas Morning News that, 'The American process for preparing anthrax is secret in its details, but experts know that it produces an extremely pure powder. One gram (a mere 28th of an ounce) contains a trillion spores . . . A trillion spores per gram is basically solid spore . . . It appears from all reports so far that this was a powder made with the so-called optimal U.S. recipe . . . That means they either had to have information from the United States or maybe they were the United States.' (author's emphasis).

Block also told the Dallas paper, 'The FBI, after all these months, has still not arrested anybody . . . It's possible, as has been suggested, that they may be standing back because

the person that's involved with it may have secret information that the United States government would not like to have divulged."

The "secret information" about the anthrax attacks is now leaking out in a torrent and the perpetrator, as many suspected seven years ago, is the U.S. government. So the question begs to be asked — if the U.S. government would subject its own citizens to a bio-warfare terrorist attack, could it have also engineered plane hijackings and the demolition of the World Trade Center with the assistance of Saudi, Israeli agents, and private military contractor agents? The record now suggests the answer to that question is a clear and very loud "Yes."

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