

HESHAM ABU ZUBAYDAH DATES FBI INVESTIGATION OF MOHAMMED OSMAN MOHAMUD A YEAR EARLIER

The most recent hearing in the Mohammed Osman Mohamud case provided the following details, which the FBI claimed described the beginning of their investigation into Mohamud.

February 2009: Samir Khan and Mohamud start emailing

August 31, 2009: Mohamud's father, Osman Barre, calls the FBI to say he's worried his son is being brainwashed

Early November 2009: Mohamud investigated in—but exonerated for—a date rape allegation

December 2009: Mohamud and Amro Alali exchange coded emails

The entire hearing was supposed to serve as the FBI's proof that the date rape allegations didn't mark the start of their interest in Mohamud—the Khan emails and Mohamud's father's call did.

Except that Jason Leopold's mammoth investigation into Abu Zubaydah's brother Hesham suggests the investigation started perhaps as much as a year before Samir Khan's emails.

After 9/11, public claims about his brother, and a failed American marriage, Hesham found it almost impossible to get citizenship, even after marrying another American woman. Finally, the FBI came to him and suggested if he turn informant, they would help him get his

citizenship.

After he agreed, they showed him a bunch of pictures of people of attendees at the Masjed As-Saber mosque in Portland. Including, in 2008, Mohamud.

Hesham said he would do “whatever it takes” to “prove to you that I am a good person and fix my situation.”

Gray called him two weeks later and they met again. She brought an envelope with about ten photographs. A majority were Somalis. But there were also photographs of Iraqis and Saudis, Hesham said.

Do you recognize any of these people?” Gray asked Hesham.

“Nope,” he said.

“I’d like you to go to the mosque and find out what these people are up to,” Gray said. “Find out if any of those people are helping terrorists.”

“I will keep my eyes open,” Hehsam said.

[snip]

Hesham said one of the photographs Gray showed him was of a young Somali named Mohamed Osman Mohamud who attended the Masjed As-Saber mosque. Mohamud, who was the subject of an FBI sting operation, was arrested in November 2010 on terrorism charges for allegedly attempting to detonate what he believed was a car bomb at a Christmas tree lighting ceremony in Portland. Hesham said he recalls being shown a photograph of Mohamud in 2008, two years before that incident, when Mohamud was just 16.

Samir Kahn’s success in leaving the US, when in similar circumstances other young men were stopped or prevented, has always been rather incredible. That’s made worse by the fact that

Khan was clearly being investigated by the FBI when he was allowed to leave the US (remember, even Mohamud wasn't allowed to go to Alaska for a summer job while he was being investigated).

But if Hesham's memory is correct, it shows several things. First, the FBI's currently operative story—which has changed several times already—would be proven incomplete again. Moreover, it might suggest that Khan (whose family got an apology when he died) had an ongoing relationship with the FBI after they allowed him to slip out of the US as they prevented so many others from doing.

And, finally, it would suggest the FBI first started targeting Mohamud well before he turned 18. It would suggest as a teenager, Mohamud withstood 2 years of that treatment before being entrapped trying to blow up the FBI's own bomb.

Again, all this rests on Hesham's memory. But his memory is utterly damning for the FBI's case against Mohamud.