

HOW THE FBI DEALS WITH A SUICIDAL ENTRAPMENT TARGET

Over the last few days, we learned that even after Aaron Swartz' prosecutors learned he was a suicide risk, they barreled ahead with their pursuit of a stiff sentence for downloading stuff he could get for free.

Meanwhile, in Portland, Mohamed Osman Mohamud's trial has started. One of the details that came out today—I guess the government thinks it helps their case—is that Mohamud's handlers believed he was suicidal and might attempt to set off a suicide bomb. So they enticed him with the hope of traveling overseas.

Under questioning by assistant U.S. Attorney Ethan Knight, the agent said he and his colleague grew concerned at one point because they considered Mohamud to be "suicidal, and we don't want him to take matters into his own hands."

In a video clip of Mohamud and his FBI handlers sharing a meal in a hotel room, the two agents are heard convincing Mohamud that he could ultimately do more to help "the cause" by staying alive. "We want to keep you for awhile," Hussein says in the video. "We think there's some things you can do better than just one time."

They also discussed sending Mohamud off to a Muslim country after November 26 in a move Youssef testified was aimed at giving Mohamud something to look forward to beyond the planned bombing.

Maybe it does help their case—they have to pretend that Mohamud would have tried to bomb Americans without the prodding of the FBI, after all.

But consider what they're admitting to. This is a kid who had been under FBI pressure for 3 years by this point. He had once attempted to travel to Alaska for a summer job, but was stopped by the government because they had put him on a no-fly list; after that, the entrapment began in earnest.

So the kid wants to get away. The government prevents that. He gets suicidal which, because he's a Muslim, the FBI presents as a heightened terrorist threat. And their solution to get him to stay alive long enough to play out their script is to have him imagine traveling overseas, which they themselves have prevented him from doing.

Then there's this nice detail.

The agents also showed Mohamud a purported Islamist militant training video, which actually was produced by the FBI, depicting men with scarf-covered faces shooting guns, and one setting off a bomb with a cell-phone detonator. Youssef said Mohamud's response to the video was that "it was beautiful."

The FBI has started making their own Islamist training videos.

Think about that for a second: you and I pay for Islamist training videos with our tax dollars.

And it's all the more rich given that Mohamud's entrapment began—at least according to the FBI but they've been caught over and over in this case lying about this—when he was corresponding with Samir Khan. There's reason to believe that wonder whether Samir Khan was once an FBI informant, if for no other reason than they let him travel overseas even though they considered his writing to be reason enough to start investigations into other kids, whereas they wouldn't let someone like Mohamud travel overseas.

So this all started with Samir Khan, and it is fueled by Islamist training videos that the FBI makes.

They may be absolutely incompetent (or unwilling) to catch the biggest criminals in our society. But federal law enforcement sure seems to be good at making people want to kill themselves.