

DOJ ANTHRAX REPORT WORKING THREAD

DOJ has posted its Anthrax Report and related documents.

The Justice Department, FBI and U.S. Postal Inspection Service today announced that the investigation into the 2001 anthrax attacks, which killed five individuals and sickened 17 others, has formally concluded.

Earlier today, representatives of the FBI and Justice Department provided a 92-page investigative summary along with attachments to victims of the attacks, relatives of the victims and appropriate committees of Congress. This document sets forth a summary of the evidence developed in the "Amerithrax" investigation, the largest investigation into a bio-weapons attack in U.S. history. As disclosed previously, the Amerithrax investigation found that the late Dr. Bruce Ivins acted alone in planning and executing these attacks.

The investigative summary and the attachments are now accessible to the public and have been posted to the Justice Department Web site at www.usdoj.gov/amerithrax under the Freedom of Information Act. In addition, roughly 2,700 pages of FBI documents related to the Amerithrax case are now accessible to the public and have been posted to the FBI website at <http://foia.fbi.gov/foiaindex/amerithrax.htm> under the Freedom of Information Act.

The Amerithrax Task Force, which was comprised of roughly 25 to 30 full-time investigators from the FBI, U.S. Postal Inspection Service and other law

enforcement agencies, as well as federal prosecutors from the District of Columbia and the Justice Department's Counterterrorism Section, expended hundreds of thousands of investigator work hours on this case. Their investigative efforts involved more than 10,000 witness interviews on six different continents, the execution of 80 searches and the recovery of more than 6,000 items of potential evidence during the course of the investigation. The case involved the issuance of more than 5,750 grand jury subpoenas and the collection of 5,730 environmental samples from 60 site locations.

Use this as a working thread.

Update: Ah jeebus. Here's half of what they say about Hatfill:

B. The Elimination of Dr. Steven J. Hatfill as a Suspect

In August 2002, it became widely known that Dr. Steven J. Hatfill was a person of interest to the Task Force. Early in the investigation, numerous individuals who suspected that he might be involved in the letter attacks contacted the FBI. While working as a researcher at USAMRIID from 1997 to 1999, Dr. Hatfill had virtually unrestricted access to the Ames strain of anthrax, the same strain used in the 2001 mailings. Dr. Hatfill also appeared to know the intricacies of conducting a successful anthrax dissemination by mail, although it was not uncommon for those in the bio-defense community to develop such scenarios for training exercises. In addition, he had filled multiple prescriptions for the antibiotic Cipro® in 2001, which was the only drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of

inhalational anthrax; however, its use also was consistent with treatment for a persistent infection from which Dr. Hatfill was suffering at the time.

Ultimately, the FBI's genetic analysis of the organism used in the attacks led investigators to exclude him conclusively as a suspect. Early in the investigation, it was assumed that isolates of the Ames strain were accessible to any individual at USAMRIID with access to the biocontainment labs. Later in the investigation, when scientific breakthroughs led investigators to conclude that RMR-1029 was the parent material to the anthrax powder used in the mailings, it was determined that Dr. Hatfill could not have been the mailer because he never had access to the particular biocontainment suites at USAMRIID that held the RMR-1029. In other words, although Dr. Hatfill had access to Ames strain anthrax while at USAMRIID, he never had access to the particular spore-batch used in the mailings.

No apologies, not excuses in this.

Update: I'd love to see this explained in more detail—particularly how leaks tying this to Iraq got to the press.

For example, Task Force agents vigorously pursued the possibility that the letters were the result of a state-sponsored attack, and specifically focused on those governments known to have, or have had, an offensive biological weapons program.

Short of explaining the leaks, you've not dismissed possible other motives.

Update: On victimology:

A victimology assessment revealed few themes of commonality among the targeted victims. Three of the five known targeted victims were media/press entities: Tom Brokaw/NBC, the New York Post, and the National Enquirer/AMI. The remaining two targeted victims were United States Senators. Senators Daschle and Leahy and Tom Brokaw all were middle-aged white males who held positions of leadership in their respective fields at the time of the attacks.

That's it?!?!?! That's the best they can do with this crowd? And no mention of the fake attack to Judy Miller, which—it seems to me—might be as much a clue to motive as anything else.

Ah well, I guess that has been disappeared down the memory hole.

Update: How much is 220 ml?

According to this review, there was approximately 220 ml of RMR-1029 that was unaccounted for on Dr. Ivins's Reference Material Receipt record prior to the mailings in 2001.

Update: This is kind of a weird throwaway:

However, within a few months of the anthrax attacks, the FDA fast-tracked the approval process and approved the Anthrax Vaccine Adsorbed ("AVA"), even though it didn't meet the original potency standards. This was a significant development for the anthrax researchers.

It would seem to take away from their explanation for motive. But it also obscures the whole political pressure driving this, coming straight from the top.