

FBI'S SHRINKS-4-HIRE: STALKERS ARE LIKELY BIOTERRORISTS

The FBI has linked to a redacted executive summary of the report some shrink contractors did on Bruce Ivins. While it is just the executive summary and even that is partly redacted, the report basically paints Bruce Ivins was a stalker which therefore makes him a possible bioterrorist.

Unfortunately for the shrinks who did the report, they start by endorsing the FBI's now questionable anthrax theory.

Dr. Ivins acknowledged that he was the sole custodian of the "RMR-1029" flask that held the anthrax used in the attacks, and had unrestricted and unobserved access to the "hot suites" where work with anthrax could be conducted anytime day or night. From his own laboratory writings we know that the quality and spore concentration of the anthrax he produced matched that contained in the letters. In addition, he had the equipment necessary to produce the non-weaponized dried spores found in the letters.

The National Academy of Science had this to say about the source of the anthrax:

The flask designated RMR-1029 was not the immediate, most proximate source of the letter material. If the letter material did in fact derive from RMR-1029, then one or more separate growth steps, using seed material from RMR-1029 followed by purification, would have been necessary. Furthermore, the evidentiary material in the New York letters had physical properties that were distinct from those of the material

in the Washington, D.C. letters.

And this to say about whether or not anyone could comment on how the anthrax was prepared.

The committee finds no scientific basis on which to accurately estimate the amount of time or the specific skill set needed to prepare the spore material contained in the letters. The time might vary from as little as 2 to 3 days to as much as several months. Given uncertainty about the methods used for preparation of the spore material, the committee could reach no significant conclusions regarding the skill set of the perpetrator.

In other words, because the shrinks based their entire report on the claim that Ivins had the “means and opportunity” to commit the attack based on the scientific claims about the anthrax, they pretty much undermine their entire argument from the start (and undermine their claim that they had “no predispositions regarding Ivins’ guilt or innocence”).

But what I’m even more intrigued by is their apparently shoddy explanation for one of the FBI’s claims that has been subsequently debunked.

In its report on the investigation, the FBI claimed that Ivins targeted Senators Leahy and Daschle because they were pro-choice Catholics.

In 2001, members of the Catholic pro-life movement were known to be highly critical of Catholic Congressional members who voted pro-choice in opposition to the beliefs of the Catholic Church. Two of the more prominent members of Congress who fell in this category were Senator Tom Daschle, then Senator Majority Leader; and Senator Patrick Leahy, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, both

recipients of the 2001 anthrax mailings.

But the claim was primarily based on his wife's beliefs (the wife who, we now know, Ivins was trying to cheat on at every opportunity). More importantly, Ivins figured out a way to foil his wife's beliefs after his death by mandating that if he were not cremated, then \$50,000 of his estate would be donated to Planned Parenthood. In other words, the notion that Ivins targeted the two guys standing in the way of unquestioning passage of the PATRIOT Act because they are pro choice Catholics never really added up.

The shrinks, however, boldly assert they have identified the real themes that motivated Ivins.

As the Analysis section of this report explains in greater detail, Dr. Ivins had multiple motives in launching what he later called [redacted] through the mail. The key themes were revenge, a desperate need for personal validation, career preservation and professional redemption, and loss. These themes guided him not only in making the attacks, but in choosing his targets and shaping his methods.

The attacks above all enabled Dr. Ivins to gain retribution against his various perceived enemies. Some of those enemies, like Senators Daschle and Leahy, had directly incurred his wrath; others, like the New York Post, which to him represented the media and New York City, appeared to have been symbolic stand-ins for broader targets.

They explain (sort of) why Ivins might view Daschle as an enemy.

In June 2001, Senator Daschle, the Senate majority leader, sent a letter to the Department of Defense that heightened concerns about the vaccine.

But nowhere does the report provide an explanation for why Leahy would be a target. Nor why Ivins would target the other newspapers. And as all the crappy explanations for this crime do, the report apparently ignores the question of why Judy Miller received a fake version of the anthrax; particularly for conservatives, you'd think the NYT, not the Post, would be the symbol of evil decadent New York.

Now maybe the explanation of why Pat Leahy is such an evil man that Bruce Ivins allegedly tried to kill him appears in the redacted section. But at least in this summary, it appears the shrinks' report doesn't answer some of the most basic questions raised about the attack.

Update: Pro choice/life error fixed thanks to W0.