

ZERO DARK 30 “HEROINE” OUTED AND SCARRED BY EUROPEAN TORTURE JUDGMENT

[SEE CRITICAL
UPDATE BELOW]



Although many people have been long familiar with her name and career, there seems to be new buzz about the [possible] identity of the female CIA operative lionized in the bin Laden killing and talk of the town movie “Zero Dark Thirty”.

The Twitters are abuzz this morning, but this article from John Cook at Gawker last September tells the tale:

Her name is Alfreda Frances Bikowsky and, according to independent reporters Ray Nowosielski and John Duffy, she is a CIA analyst who is partially responsible for intelligence lapses that led to 9/11. The two reporters recently released a “documentary podcast” called “Who Is Richard Blee?” about the chief of the agency’s bin Laden unit in the immediate run-up to the 9/11 attacks and featuring interviews with former counterterrorism official Richard Clarke, former CIA agent Bob Baer, Looming Tower author Lawrence Wright,

9/11 Commission co-chairman Tom Keane, and others. In it, Nowosielski and Duffy make the case that Bikowsky and another CIA agent named Michael Anne Casey deliberately declined to tell the White House and the FBI that Khalid al-Mihdhar, an Al Qaida affiliate they were tracking, had obtained a visa to enter the U.S. in the summer of 2001. Al-Mihdhar was one of the hijackers on American Airlines Flight 77. The CIA lost track of him after he entered the U.S.

Bikowsky was also, according to Nowosielski and Duffy, instrumentally involved in one of the CIA's most notorious fuck-ups—the kidnapping, drugging, sodomizing, and torture of Khalid El-Masri in 2003 (El-Masri turned out to be the wrong guy, and had nothing to do with terrorism). As the Associated Press' Adam Goldman and Matt Apuzzo reported earlier this year, an analyst they described only by her middle name—"Frances"—pressed for El-Masri to be abducted even though some in the agency weren't convinced he was the terrorist that Frances suspected he was. Instead of being punished or fired for the error, "Frances" was eventually promoted to running the Global Jihad Unit by then-CIA director Michael Hayden. According to Goldman and Apuzzo's story, "Hayden told colleagues that he gave Frances a pass because he didn't want to deter initiative within the counterterrorism ranks."

My, my, the CIA does have problems keeping secrets lately, don't they? A point saliently noted by Marcy in relation to both Matt Bissonnette and the Mexican "trainers" who were involved in in an ambush. I guess the *de rigueur* Obama Administration leak prosecution will be along any second.

It is fairly amazing Bikowsky's name has been kept out of the real limelight surrounding [speculation on] *Zero Dark Thirty* this long, considering her known involvement in the other issues, especially the one about gleefully horning in on the torture show viewing [which Bikowsky did in regards to KSM]. An attitude that speaks volumes as to the prominence of and apologia for torture in *Zero Dark Thirty*. I guess that is what happens when the government and CIA give Hollywood carte blanche to protected information and clandestine operatives like Alfreda Frances Bikowsky.

So, while it adds yet another piece to the *Zero Dark Thirty* discussion, Bikowsky is not breaking news. What is, however, is the judgment just handed down in the European Court of Human Rights in a case centered on one of Bikowski's biggest cock-ups, the el-Masri case. As reported in the Miami Herald:

A European court issued a landmark ruling Thursday that condemned the CIA's so-called extraordinary renditions programs and bolstered those who say they were illegally kidnapped and tortured as part of an overzealous war on terrorism.

The European Court of Human Rights ruled that a German car salesman was a victim of torture and abuse, in a long-awaited victory for a man who had failed for years to get courts in the United States and Europe to recognize him as a victim.

Khaled El-Masri says he was kidnapped from Macedonia in 2003, mistaken for a terrorism suspect, then held and brutally interrogated at an Afghan prison known as the "Sand Pit" and run by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency for four months. He says that once U.S. authorities realized he was not a threat, they illegally sent him to Albania and left him on a mountainside.

The European court, based in Strasbourg, France, ruled that El-Masri's account was "established beyond reasonable doubt" and that Macedonia "had been responsible for his torture and ill-treatment both in the country itself and after his transfer to the U.S. authorities in the context of an extra-judicial rendition."

This is an incident, and a judgment, that arguably might never have been but for the aggressive reckless action of [potential] *Zero Dark Thirty* "heroine" Bikowsky. As Adam Goldman and Matt Apuzzo noted in their blockbuster initial report on "Frances" (go reread Adam and Matt's article in full, there is so much more there), Khaled el-Masri was the wrong man. An innocent man turned into a tortured "ghost". Even worse, the reason this happened to this innocent man was the woman we now know as Alfreda Frances Bikowsky:

A hard-charging CIA analyst had pushed the agency into one of the biggest diplomatic embarrassments of the U.S. war on terrorism. Yet despite recommendations by an internal review, the analyst was never punished. In fact, she has risen to one of the premier jobs in the CIA's Counterterrorism Center, helping lead President Barack Obama's efforts to disrupt al-Qaida.

A European Human Rights court has managed to do what the United States courts have refused to do, and the American government has refused to allow, for Khaled el-Masri or anybody else – make a formal judicial finding of illegal rendition, torture and responsibility – in a case that was the work product of the American government and CIA. It is a beautiful thing, even if somewhat hollow in the judgment only being enforceable against Macedonia. Just the fact of the judgment speaks volumes about who, and what we, and our lionized "heroines" like

Bikowsky are. It also speaks volumes about the perfidy of the Executive and Judicial Branches of the American government that still maintain the lie of "State Secrets" and "National Security" to facts and human wrongs being openly and notoriously discussed and litigated in more honest and enlightened forums.

As to Alfreda Frances Bikowsky, maybe the question should not be why she didn't get a promotion, but why she still had a job at all after the Khaled el-Masri and Khalid al-Mihdhar/911 cock-ups? And maybe the message conveyed by *Zero Dark Thirty*, ought to be that leaving the bin Laden chase in the hands of torture freaks like Alfreda Frances Bikowsky impeded, not provided, the final result. Just maybe.

[ADDENDUM/UPDATE: I would like to make perfectly clear that there appears to be a case that Bikowsky is either the female agent, or perhaps more likely, part of a composite character in *Zero Dark Thirty*. There is no disclosure of that by the director and screenwriter, and no other direct evidence I have other than deductive reasoning based not only on the above links, but other source material such as here and here read in conjunction with the descriptions of the movie character that have been published in the media.

There are many characteristics of Bikowsky that have been described that fit with the character known as "Maya" in the movie; there are many that may not as well (including, potentially, age). Whether Bikowsky, whose name was already well within the public sphere, turns out to have been part of a composite template for "Maya", time will tell. In the meantime, I clearly jumped too hard, too fast to a conclusion that is not locked down with evidence; for that I apologize.

Would also like to note that everything said about the European Human Rights Court judgment is unaffected and still stands completely]

(Graphic by the one and only Darkblack)