

THE NEW ANTIWAR RELEASE: “THEY CAN’T KEEP THIS STUFF SECRET. NOTHING IS SECRET ANYMORE.”

Two years ago, Antiwar.com became aware of files relating to the site, that had been requested and were posted in relation to a FOIA on allegations Israelis had observed the 9/11 attack. I wrote about those files here. The files – which started in relation to another investigation on Pakistani terrorism suspects and got picked up because Justin Raimondo had written about the Israeli allegations – were referred to San Francisco for further investigation. But since the FOIA that had returned the documents pertained to the Israeli allegations, it was not immediately clear what happened to the San Francisco investigation.

Antiwar FOIAed then – after FBI wouldn’t give them their file – sued, with the help of ACLU.

What they learned is that:

1. A complaint Eric Garris made in 2001 was treated as a threat by San Francisco’s FBI office
2. An investigation drummed up, in part, because of Garris and Raimondo’s antiwar views in 2004 used that misinterpreted complaint as one justification to demand further investigation

The substantive content of what they got includes:

- 2 pages dating to 1972 (!) on a mock tribunal Garris served on as a judge for representing the Peace and Freedom Party. (Note, the file in question postdates J Edgar Hoover's death by 4 months, so it can't be called a genuine Hoover file.)
- 2 pages pertaining to San Francisco's utter fuck-up of an investigation into a threat Garris forwarded to them on 9/12/01. Antiwar had received a threatening email, but when Garris forwarded the email to the FBI, the FBI treated it as a cyberthreat to the FBI.
- 22 pages from a much larger chunk of what was supposed to be a Threat Assessment conducted in Newark and dated 4/30/04 (this is the part that had been revealed before). I believe my comments on that material here remain valid; I'll explain what's new below.
- 3 pages recording (sort of) San Francisco's response to the Newark referral dated 7/29/04, though the FBI has redacted the results of that response.
- 2 pages from Pittsburgh

(missing a third page between the two) from what appears to be a referral of a lead from the Newark Threat Assessment dated 8/18/04. (Remember, according to a DOJ IG Report, Pittsburgh was one of the worst offenders for harassing anti-war protestors.)

- 2 pages from some activity from Springfield, IL dated 9/12/05. The tie to Antiwar is tangential, but because it has a file, this office seems to have suggested digging up all the old documents on it. This file notes that "SF declined the recommendation of Newark," which is how we can surmise San Francisco declined to open a preliminary investigation into them.
- 2 pages from a referral to St. Louis dated 9/22/05. Given the timing, I suspect it is a follow-up to the Springfield lead, but most of the file is purportedly outside the scope of the FOIA (so unrelated to Antiwar).
- 2 pages from the main Counterterrorism office referring back to the

original Newark Threat Assessment dated 4/22/08 as part of a longer review (the Newark investigation of Antiwar is mentioned on page 6 of the document, and the earlier materials is deemed unrelated).

In other words, there was the San Francisco fuck-up, the Threat Assessment tied to a terrorism case in Newark, and then the effort to use that to drum up further investigation of Antiwar that way.

What's particularly interesting is the material that had been withheld for privacy reasons in the earlier FOIA release (see pp 62-71) which are now unredacted. In addition to personal information on Garris and Raimundo, it includes observations about what had been written about and by them.

One entry, for example, describes a story about the FBI's monitoring of peace groups in which Raimundo is quoted.

The Argus, dated 2/18/2003, HEADLINE: Watchlist resurrects '50s fears; critics say FBI information in many ways is worse than Mc Carthy's hunt for communists, by Sean Holstege. In this article Justin Raimondo states "They can't keep this stuff secret. Nothing is secret anymore."

Perhaps the FBI wouldn't turn this file over without a lawsuit to prevent us from knowing they thought that was newsworthy?

Based on that, other writings, some of their readers (as laid out in my earlier post) and the fact that Raimondo had posted a very very early terrorist watchlist he had found on the Internet, FBI concluded Garris and Raimondo needed more attention. These two judgments about

them were redacted in the earlier FOIA release.

Due to the lack of background information available on Justin Raimondo, it is possible that this name is only a pseudonym used on www.antiwar.com.

Many individuals do view this website including individuals who are currently under investigation and Eric Garris has shown intent to disrupt FBI operations by hacking the FBI website.

And from this the Newark office appears to have tried to get an Antiwar publication investigated.

One more observation. Page 15 and 16 of the current release seems to be the release notice for what I've been calling "the Newark investigation." But in fact, it appears not to be the same files released in the earlier FOIA, because that one had extensive hand lettering (and so I suspect that version of the file were the documents that resided in Newark's office files). Just as interesting, though, FBI withheld 64 pages (probably actually more) using a "trade secrets" exemption.

Now, I might think that file came from ECAU, the web monitoring part of the FBI at the time that Newark instructed to keep monitoring Antiwar.com. But the B4 exemption suggests it is some private entity. So is that chunk of 64 documents the work of some contractor?

I'd sure like to know. Cause apparently someone has (or had) made it their trade secret to read the writings of peace activists for the FBI.