

IS MATT DEHART BEING PROSECUTED BECAUSE FBI INVESTIGATED CIA FOR THE ANTHRAX LEAK?

Buzzfeed today revealed a key detail behind in the Matthew DeHart case: the content of the file which DeHart believes explains the government's pursuit of him. In addition to details of CIA's role in drone-targeting and some ag company's role in killing 13,000 people, DeHart claims a document dropped onto his Tor server included details of FBI's investigation into CIA's possible role in the anthrax attack.

According to Matt, he was sitting at his computer at home in September 2009 when he received an urgent message from a friend. A suspicious unencrypted folder of files had just been uploaded anonymously to the Shell. When Matt opened the folder, he was startled to find documents detailing the CIA's role in assigning strike targets for drones at the 181st.

Matt says he thought of his fellow airmen, some of whom knew about the Shell. "I'm not going to say who I think it was, but there was a lot of dissatisfaction in my unit about cooperating with the CIA," he says. Intelligence analysts with the proper clearance (such as Manning and others) had access to a deep trove of sensitive data on the Secret Internet Protocol Router Network, or SIPRNet, the classified computer network used by both the Defense and State departments.

As Matt read through the file, he says, he discovered even more incendiary

material among the 300-odd pages of slides, documents, and handwritten notes. One folder contained what appeared to be internal documents from an agrochemical company expressing culpability for more than 13,000 deaths related to genetically modified organisms. There was also what appeared to be internal documents from the FBI, field notes on the bureau's investigation into the worst biological attack in U.S. history: the anthrax-laced letters that killed five Americans and sickened 17 others shortly after Sept. 11.

Though the attacks were officially blamed on a government scientist who committed suicide after he was identified as a suspect, Matt says the documents on the Shell tell a far different story. It had already been revealed that the U.S. Army produced the Ames strain of anthrax – the same strain used in the Amerithrax attacks – at the Dugway Proving Ground in Utah. But the report built the case that the CIA was behind the attacks as part of an operation to fuel public terror and build support for the Iraq War.

Despite his intelligence training, Matt was no expert in government files, but this one, he insists, featured all the hallmarks of a legitimate document: the ponderous length, the bureaucratic nomenclature, the monotonous accumulation of detail. If it wasn't the real thing, Matt thought, it was a remarkably sophisticated hoax. (The FBI declined requests for comment.)

Afraid of the repercussions of having seen the folder of files, Matt panicked, he claims, and deleted it from the server. But he says he kept screenshots of the dozen or so pages of the document

that specifically related to the FBI investigation and the agrochemical matter, along with chat logs and passwords for the Shell, on two IronKey thumb drives, which he hid inside his gun case for safekeeping.

Is it possible DOJ would really go after DeHart for having seen and retaining part of that FBI file?

For what it's worth, I think Bruce Ivins could not have been the sole culprit and it's unlikely he was the culprit at all. I believe the possibility that a CIA-related entity, especially a contractor or an alumni, had a role in the anthrax attack to be possible. In my opinion, Batelle Labs in Ohio are the most likely source of the anthrax, not least because they're close enough to New Jersey to have launched the attacks, but because – in addition to dismissing potential matches to the actual anthrax through a bunch of smoke (only looking for lone wolves) and mirrors (ignoring four of the potentially responsive samples) – Batelle did have a responsive sample of the anthrax. Though as a recently GAO report made clear, FBI didn't even sample all the labs that had potentially responsive samples, so perhaps one of those labs should be considered a more likely source. Batelle does work for the CIA and just about everyone else, so if Batelle were involved, CIA involvement couldn't be ruled out.

So I think it quite possible that FBI was investigating CIA or someone related to CIA in the attack. It's quite possible, too, that someone might want to leak that information, as it has been clear for years that at least some in FBI were not really all that interested in solving the crime. Even the timing would make sense, coming as it would have in the wake of the FBI's use of the Ivins suicide to stop looking for a culprit and even as the Obama Administration was beginning to hint it wasn't all that interested in reviewing FBI's investigation.

But there's something odd about how this was allegedly leaked.

According to Buzzfeed, the anthrax investigation came in one unencrypted folder with the ag document and a document on drone targeting the source of which he thinks he knows (it would like have been a former colleague from the ANG).

How would it ever be possible that the same person would have access to all three of those things? While it's possible the ag admission ended up in the government, even a DOJ investigation into such an admission would be in a different place than the FBI anthrax investigation, and both should be inaccessible to the ANG people working on SIPRNet.

That is, this feels like the Laptop of Death, which included all the documents you'd want to argue that Iran had an active and advanced nuclear weapons program, but which almost certainly would never all end up on the same laptop at the same time.

And, given DeHart's belief reported elsewhere this was destined for WikiLeaks, I can't help but remember the Defense Intelligence Agency report which noted that WikiLeaks might be susceptible to disinformation (not to mention the HB Gary plot to discredit WikiLeaks, but that came later).

This raises the possibility that the WikiLeaks.org Web site could be used to post fabricated information; to post misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda; or to conduct perception management and influence operations designed to convey a negative message to those who view or retrieve information from the Web site

That is, given how unlikely it would be to find these juicy subjects all together in one folder, I do wonder whether they're all authentic (though DeHart would presumably be able to assess the authenticity of the drone targeting

documents).

And DeHart no longer has the documents in question – Canada hasn't given them back.

Paul told the agents that his family had evidence to back up their account: court documents, medical records, and affidavits – along with the leaked FBI document Matt had found that exposed an explosive secret. It was all on two encrypted thumb drives, which Matt later pulled off a lanyard around his neck and handed to the guards.

[snip]

If Matt is, in fact, wrongly accused, answers could be on the thumb drives taken by the Canada Border Services Agency, which have yet to be returned to the DeHarts. But without access to the leaked files Matt claims to have seen, there is no way to verify whether he was actually in possession of them, and, if he was, whether they're authentic.

Though at least one person (a friend in London? Any association with WikiLeaks?) may have a copy.

Inside a hotel room in Monterrey, Mexico, Matt says he copied the Shell files onto a handful of thumb drives. He mailed one to a friend outside London, and several others to locations he refuses to disclose. He also says he sent one to himself in care of his grandmother, which he later retrieved for himself. When the subject of the drives comes up, Matt acts circumspect because, he says, he knows that our communications are being monitored.

There's definitely something funky about this story. Importantly, it's not just DeHart and his family that are acting like something's funky –

the government is too.

But that doesn't necessarily mean the FBI thinks
CIA did the anthrax attack.