

KSM HAD THE CIA BELIEVING IN BLACK MUSLIM CONVERT JIHADIST ARSONISTS IN MONTANA FOR 3 MONTHS

Before I get into the weeds, let me be clear: there are almost no black Muslims in Montana. Just 0.6% of Montana's roughly 1 million people are African American, or about 6,100 total. Just 0.034 Montanans identify as Muslim (or around 345 people). Montana has both the fewest African Americans and fewest Muslims. It is almost certainly the least likely state to find black Muslims seeking to wage jihad.

Nevertheless, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed had the CIA believing he was going to send Dhiren al-Barot (an Indian Muslim Brit whom KSM did have case out actual US terrorist targets in 2000) to Montana to recruit African American converts to Muslim to start forest fires.

On March 17, 2003, KSM stated that, prior to the September 11, 2001, attacks, he tasked Issa[al-Hindi, whose real name is Dhiren Barot] to travel to the United States to "collect information on economic targets." On March 21, 2003, KSM was waterboarded for failing to confirm interrogators' suspicions that KSM sought to recruit individuals from among the African American Muslim community. KSM then stated that he had talked with Issa about contacting African American Muslim groups prior to September 11, 2001. The next day KSM was waterboarded for failing to provide more information on the recruitment of African American Muslims. One hour after the

waterboarding session, KSM stated that he tasked Issa "to make contact with black U.S. citizen converts to Islam in Montana," and that he instructed Issa to use his ties to Shaykh Abu Hamza al-Masri, a U.K.-based Imam, to facilitate his recruitment efforts. KSM later stated that Issa's mission in the United States was to surveil forests to potentially ignite forest fires.¹⁵⁰²

It took the ALEC Station team over 3 months to conclude that KSM's plan to send an Indian Muslim to Montana to recruit virtually non-existent African American Muslim converts to start forest fires was a fabrication, in part because they first spent a week after he recanted this claim believing it was an attempt to trick them again.

On June 22, 2003, CIA interrogators reported that "[KSM] nervously explained to debriefer that he was under 'enhanced measures' when he made these claims" about terrorist recruitment in Montana, and "simply told his interrogators what he thought they wanted to hear."¹⁵⁰⁵ A CIA Headquarters response cable stated that the CIA's ALEC Station believed KSM's fabrication claims were "another resistance/manipulation ploy" and characterized KSM's contention that he "felt 'forced' to make admissions" under enhanced interrogation techniques as "convenient excuses." As a result, ALEC Station urged CIA officers at the detention site to get KSM to reveal "who is the key contact person in Montana?"¹⁵⁰⁶ [citing a June 26, 2003 ALEC Station cable] By June 30, 2005, ALEC Station had concluded that KSM's reporting about African American Muslims in Montana was "an outright fabrication."

A year after CIA decided KSM was not really going to have a non-existent cell of black

Muslims start forest fires, the FBI nevertheless warned a bunch of Rocky Mountain states, including Montana, to be on guard for the threat.

I can think of many more useful things the national security establishment could be doing than chasing ghosts – non-existent black Muslim jihadist ghosts, in the forests of Montana. But by torturing, we signed up to a ghost chase.