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EVENTS

Early 1999-March 21, 2000: Muslim FBI Agent Refuses to Wear Wire in Meeting with BMI Head; FBI Infighting Follows

Gamal Abdel-Hafiz, the only Muslim FBI agent in the years just prior to 9/11, becomes involved in FBI agent Robert Wright's Vulgar Betrayal investigation in early 1999. An accountant working for BMI Inc., an investment firm with connections to many suspected terrorism financiers (see 1986-October 1999), tells Abdel-Hafiz that he is worried that BMI funds had helped fund the 1998 US embassy bombings in Africa (see August 7, 1998). BMI president Soliman Biheiri hears that Abdel-Hafiz had been told about this, and wants to meet with him to discuss it (apparently without realizing that Abdel-Hafiz is an undercover FBI agent). Wright asks Abdel-Hafiz to wear a wire to the meeting, but Abdel-Hafiz refuses to do so. This leads to infighting within the FBI. On July 6, 1999, Abdel-Hafiz files a religious discrimination complaint, accusing Wright of making derogatory comments to fellow agents. [Frontline, 10/16/2003] On March 21, 2000, Wright makes a formal internal complaint about Abdel-Hafiz. FBI agent Barry Carmody seconds Wright's complaint. Wright and Carmody accuse Abdel-Hafiz of hindering investigations by openly refusing to record other Muslims. In an affidavit, Wright claims that Abdel-Hafiz refused to wear the wire "based on religious reasons saying, 'A Muslim doesn't record another Muslim.'" Abdel-Hafiz does not deny the quote, but claims it was taken out of context. [Wall Street Journal, 11/26/2002; ABC News, 12/19/2002; Frontline, 10/16/2003] Federal prosecutor Mark Flessner and other FBI agents back up the allegations against Abdel-Hafiz. [ABC News, 12/19/2002] Carmody will also claim that, in a different investigation, Abdel-Hafiz hindered an inquiry into the possible ties to Islamic militants of fired University of South Florida Professor Sami Al-Arian by refusing to record a conversation with the professor in 1998. [Tampa Tribune, 3/4/2003] Complaints to superiors and headquarters about Abdel-Hafiz never get a response. [Fox News, 3/6/2003] "Far from being reprimanded, in February 2001 Abdel-Hafiz [is] promoted to one of the FBI's most important anti-terrorism posts, the American Embassy in Saudi Arabia, to handle investigations for the FBI in that Muslim country." [ABC News, 12/19/2002; Frontline, 10/16/2003] In

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2003, FBI agent John Vincent will complain, "Five different FBI field divisions complained of this agent's activities, and the FBI headquarters response was to promote him to a sensitive position in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia." [Federal News Service, 6/2/2003] Abdel-Hafiz will be suspended in February 2003 over charges that he faked a break-in of his own house in order to collect \$25,000 in insurance benefits and then failed an FBI polygraph test when asked about it. In January 2004, the FBI's Disciplinary Review Board will reinstate him after deciding there was insufficient evidence in the case. [Tampa Tribune, 3/4/2003; Frontline, 10/16/2003]

Entity Tags: Vulgar Betrayal, Robert Wright, Gamal Abdel-Hafiz, John Vincent, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Sami Al-Arian, Mark Flessner, Barry Carmody

ENTITIES

Barry Carmody

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