

More FBI-suppressed evidence is exposed in lawsuit over Saudi Arabia's role in 9/11 terror attacks

Kevin Reed**21 August 2024**

Documents recently released in connection with the lawsuit filed against Saudi Arabia by families of the victims of the 9/11 terror attacks have revealed important details about the relationship of the Al Qaeda hijackers to the kingdom's intelligence apparatus, as well as the suppression of this evidence by the FBI for more than two decades.

This evidence—which includes two important videos and a drawing of a passenger jet—was originally seized by UK officials 10 days after the 2001 terror attacks from the Birmingham, England home of Omar al-Bayoumi, an operative of Saudi intelligence, and turned over to the FBI.

However, this evidence was never reviewed or analyzed during any of the official US government investigations into the events of 9/11 or included in the material subsequently released by the FBI in 2016 and 2021.

The new evidence has come to light because it was provided directly by London's Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to the plaintiffs through discovery in their \$100 billion lawsuit against Saudi Arabia, which has been in litigation since 2002. It is described in detail in the family's filing in opposition to a motion by the Saudi government to dismiss the case. The plaintiffs' motion was filed on December 20, 2023, and released by the court to the public after redaction on May 5, 2024.

Based on the previously declassified FBI documents from July 2016 and September 2021, it was established that al-Bayoumi's meeting with two of the September 11 hijackers shortly after they arrived in Los Angeles in January 2000 was a pre-planned and well-orchestrated rendezvous at a restaurant and not a chance contact, as maintained in the official 9/11 Commission Report of 2004.

Al-Bayoumi provided significant support to the Saudi terrorists Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Mihdhar, including signing an apartment lease for them in San Diego across the street from where he lived. Al-Bayoumi also transferred nearly \$10,000 into their bank account, bought them a car, helped them obtain driver's licenses, set up Internet service and their email accounts and provided information about flight schools where they could be trained as pilots.

Al-Hazmi and al-Mihdhar eventually became two of the "muscle" hijackers aboard American Airlines Flight 77 when it crashed into the Pentagon.

Among the new evidence to emerge from the families' lawsuit is two videos, one that further substantiates al-Bayoumi role as both a Saudi intelligence operative and a key facilitator for the two hijackers after their arrival in the US, and one in which he is "casing" the US

Capitol with two associates in June 1999.

The court filing by the 9/11 victims' families states, "Two weeks after helping the hijackers settle in San Diego by securing them housing, bank accounts and other assistance, Bayoumi held a welcome party for the hijackers at their apartment, which was videotaped" by an associate of al-Bayoumi at his instruction.

The document further states:

The MPS seized the complete party video in the raid of Bayoumi's residence, and produced it in this litigation. The complete version produced by the MPS (after jurisdictional fact depositions concluded) is different from the version the FBI produced to Plaintiffs, and the duration and content of the complete video show that it is also different from and more complete than the one the FBI provided to the 9/11 Commission.

An analysis of the video confirms that the party on February 17, 2000 was organized by Bayoumi and his "collaborators to introduce the hijackers to a carefully curated group of like-minded community members and religious leaders who could be trusted to look after the hijackers and cocoon them in a protective support network. Contrary to the 9/11 Commission's understanding based on the incomplete video it reviewed, the complete video confirms that the hijackers attended and participated in the party throughout, and they held special status at the event," the motion says.

In other words, the versions of the video previously provided by the FBI to the US government's 9/11 Commission and to the plaintiffs were edited and concealed the fact that the party coordinated by al-Bayoumi was to welcome the hijackers and introduce them to others in the community. Instead, the FBI's edited versions corresponded to al-Bayoumi's claims that "the party was held to honor a 'visiting sheikh' who was departing the US," as part of his effort to deceive investigators, according to the plaintiff's motion.

A second "casing" video taken by al-Bayoumi himself at the US Capitol includes his narration and references to a "plan." According to the plaintiff's motion, "A new video," was "seized from Bayoumi's residence after 9/11 and produced just days ago by the MPS" and shows al-Bayoumi conducting "a classic 'casing' of the US Capitol for an attack." The twelve-and-a-half minute video details the structural features, entrances and security posts at the US Capitol.

Another piece of evidence seized by the London MPS from al-Bayoumi's apartment in September 2001 is a pad on which he had sketched an airplane in blue ink and written a mathematical equation next to the drawing. According to the plaintiff's document, the equation is "a calculation used to discern the distance at which a target on the ground will be visible from a certain altitude."

An expert witness for the plaintiffs testified that the equation allows a pilot to calculate "at what altitude he would be able to see [an] airport" from a certain distance and that the sketch and equation "are consistent with preparations made as part of the planning for the 9/11 attacks and were made to assist the 9/11 hijackers in carrying out those attacks," by providing them "with the visual cues needed to fly the hijacked jetliners into their targets."

Even though this evidence was turned over to the FBI 10 days after September 11, 2001, Al-Bayoumi's notepad, drawing and equation were never reviewed by the US government's 9/11 Commission.

According to a report in the *New York Times*, during testimony in Manhattan federal court on July 31, one of the plaintiff's lawyers disclosed for the first time that al-Bayoumi admitted during a deposition in 2021 that the drawing and equation on the notepad belonged to him.

Michael J. Morell, a former deputy director of the CIA, was interviewed by the *Times* for its report. He said Congress or the Justice Department should investigate the failure of the FBI to disclose the evidence when it was originally turned over by the MPS in 2001. Morell asked, "What happened to this stuff after it was turned over to the F.B.I.?"

US District Judge George B. Daniels is presiding over the lawsuit and is expected to rule shortly on the dismissal motion filed on March 4 by lawyers for Saudi Arabia. The new evidence directly undermines the defense claim that al-Bayoumi did not "knowingly" assist the terrorists, and his work for the Saudi government "had nothing to do with helping terrorists."

In 2015, Judge Daniels ruled in favor of a Saudi motion for dismissal. However, the bipartisan passage of the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA) in May 2016 overrode the judge's decision—and Congress overrode a veto of the act by then-President Barack Obama—enabling the families to revive their lawsuit in March 2017.

The lawsuit stated that Saudi Arabia "knowingly provided material support and resources to the al Qaeda terrorist organization ... facilitating the September 11th Attacks." The actions of the FBI for more than 20 years have served to block the families of the victims of the terror attacks from proving their allegation.

Even though Judge Daniels has allowed the plaintiff's discovery to proceed—which has resulted in the surfacing of critical evidence to prove their case—he has restricted it to al-Bayoumi and his activities in Southern California and blocked any discovery related to the other hijackers and their relationships with the Saudi government in other locations, including Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Sarasota counties in Florida; Phoenix, Arizona; suburban Washington, D.C.; northern New Jersey; Boston, Massachusetts and Portland, Maine.

Commenting on the new evidence in a press statement, Terry Strada, national chair of 9/11 Families United, said:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its army of lawyers and lobbyists have long sought to keep evidence of its role in the 9/11 attacks hidden from the American public. With the public

release of this new evidence, which was not made available to the 9/11 Commission, it is critical that the American people be allowed to finally see all the evidence and for our ongoing legal battle against the Kingdom to no longer be sealed behind closed doors in federal court.

The suppression of critical evidence by the FBI about the role of Saudi intelligence in the establishment of a network of terrorists in the US is no doubt connected to efforts to conceal the relationship the US government had with the hijackers prior to 9/11. As explained by the WSWS on July 16, 2016:

If the government is determined to continue to shield such Saudi connections, it is undoubtedly because they would expose the involvement of the US intelligence agencies themselves in the events of 9/11.

If such whitewashes are required, it is because elements within the US government were aware that Al Qaeda was preparing an operation on US soil, turned a blind eye to it and even facilitated it because they knew it could be used as a pretext to carry out longstanding plans for aggressive war in the Middle East.

The recent hearings, the upcoming federal court decision and news reports in corporate media outlets such as the *New York Times* about the case are themselves connected with strategic political objectives and the desire of the White House to resolve the \$100 billion lawsuit against Saudi Arabia.

A report in Reuters on May 21 cited an unnamed senior US official as saying the Biden administration and Saudi Arabia had reached a "near final set of arrangements" for a defense pact that would "normalize relations between Israel and Riyadh." The official reportedly said the deal was "more or less complete," but cautioned that certain elements, including a pathway to "Palestinian statehood" arrangements and "stabilizing" Gaza, "still needed to be completed."

The information published by Reuters also reveals that the US-sponsored Gaza genocide by Israel serves the global hegemonic aims of Washington. A component of the US strategy is a "grand bargain" in the Middle East involving the deal with the Saudi Arabian monarchy in exchange for military weaponry and civilian nuclear support. According to the anonymous US official who spoke to Reuters, the Saudi deal is "in return for halting Chinese arms purchases and restricting Beijing's investment in the country."



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