



## Whistleblower Complains of FBI Obstruction

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A government watchdog and FBI counter-terrorism agent are accusing the agency of prohibiting him from conducting his probe into terror financing activities because he complained about obstruction by bureau superiors.

Chicago-based FBI Special Agent Robert Wright, who worked in counterterrorism from 1993-1999, said the recent trajectory of his FBI career has taken a downward spiral since he complained about two incidents that inhibited his ability to continue terror funding and money laundering probes of members of Islamic terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah.

Wright, who is filing a complaint through his counsel Judicial Watch, said in documents that the FBI would not provide him decent computer equipment, a problem that has been acknowledged by the FBI as being a bureau-wide problem.

He also said that he was prevented from pursuing an investigation after an unnamed Muslim special agent refused to wear a wire during a probe because, as the Muslim agent allegedly said, "Muslims don't record other Muslims."

The complaint comes the same week that the attorney general and FBI director announced a series of changes at the Federal Bureau of Investigation aimed at beefing up the bureau's ability to move from a law enforcement agency to a domestic intelligence agency whose primary goal is to prevent terrorism.

The Justice Department also unveiled a series of draft guidelines that will encourage aggressive pre-emptive investigative techniques and analysis by field agents, a dramatic change from the practice of investigating and prosecuting crimes after they have been committed.

"We have to do a better job at collaborating with others," FBI Director Robert Mueller said in his Wednesday announcement. "And as critically important, we have to do a better job managing, analyzing and sharing information. In essence, we need a different approach that puts prevention above all else."

The FBI has been under fire since it was revealed that FBI field alerts to Washington of Middle Eastern men training at U.S. flight schools during the summer of 2001 were buried in paperwork, and agents in Minneapolis who circumvented normal channels to contact the CIA about suspected "20th hijacker" Zacarias Moussaoui were reprimanded.

During his announcement Wednesday, Mueller thanked Coleen Rowley, the Minneapolis agent who wrote Mueller to describe the congestion at headquarters that was hindering the investigation into Moussaoui.

Judicial Watch Chairman Larry Klayman, who is filing Wright's petition to get permission to publish a transcript on FBI mismanagement, called Mueller's recognition of Rowley "a cover your derriere, PR maneuver."

Agents who have complained about bureaucratic barriers in the past have been punished, and Wright said that he is one of them. Klayman said Wright has been demoted to "paper pusher" and "chief dishwasher" at the Chicago field office since he complained about the wrenches thrown into his probe.

Klayman blamed Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division Michael Chertoff for refusing to consider Wright's concerns prior to Sept. 11.

Wright has written a manuscript entitled "Fatal Betrayals of the Intelligence Mission," which he says exposes the FBI's inability to conduct anti-terror intelligence operations. The manuscript also provides guidelines for how Wright believes the entire FBI needs to be restructured.

He is seeking permission from the FBI to publish the manuscript, but Klayman suggested that could be a long wait, especially since Wright is under threat of retribution should he talk to members of Congress about what he knows.

Wright said throughout his six-year posting in counter-terrorism, he was involved in probes of Hamas and Hezbollah. His most successful 'get' netted \$1.4 million in terrorist money in 1998, money that he said today was linked to Saudi businessman and financier Yassin Kadi, who was identified late last year as a close associate of Usama Bin Laden.