

Subj: Me on Natl Newswire re FBI Fake Terror Snitch
 Date: 3/19/2004 4:00:45 PM Central Standard Time
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This article ran on the Knight-Ridder-Tribune newswire and in several newspapers around the country, including the Detroit Free Press, Houston Chronicle, Kansas City Star, etc. My quote is in red, in the full article below.

"Fake Snitch Tricks FBI & Flees Country"

http://www.freep.com/news/local/fbi12x_20040312.htm

(Faded text, likely a scan artifact or watermark, mentioning a Detroit Free Press article and a quote from a source.)

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Fake snitch tricks FBI and flees the country

BY DAVID ASHENFELTER AND TAMARA AUDI
 FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS

March 12, 2004

A Detroit resident suspected of dealing crack cocaine who won his freedom and fled the country after promising to lead investigators to Osama bin Laden has again exposed the vulnerability of the government's informant system.

The case involves Nageeb Al-Haidari, 32, a U.S. citizen with Yemeni connections, who was paid \$9,000 to serve as an FBI informant after telling agents that he could help them find bin Laden, the chief suspect in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the October 2000 bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen.

The Justice Department, FBI and U.S. Attorney's Office in Detroit declined Thursday to comment on the case described in a recent edition of Newsweek. The Wayne County Prosecutor's Office confirmed that the U.S. Attorney's Office had sent a letter asking that Al-Haidari be freed from jail in 2001, but a spokeswoman wouldn't go into details.

Newsweek reported that the negotiations between Al-Haidari and the government began in early 2001, months after the USS Cole bombing, but before Sept. 11. Newsweek said Al-Haidari told agents he could contact bin Laden and his associates at any time and could provide the FBI with names, phone numbers and addresses.

At the time, Al-Haidari was facing charges in Wayne County Circuit Court resulting from fleeing and eluding police in May 2000 after a shooting at a Detroit bar. He was indicted in U.S.

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District Court in March 2001 on cocaine distribution charges. Newsweek said the U.S. Attorney's Office arranged for Al-Haidari's release from jail just before he was sentenced to probation in the circuit court case, saying he was providing valuable information to the federal government.

Newsweek said that he returned to drug dealing and later fled the country.

The incident is the latest in a series of foul-ups that have embarrassed the FBI's Detroit office and the U.S. Attorney's Office.

The former lead prosecutor in last year's terrorism trial in Detroit is under investigation for possible misconduct in a case the Bush administration had hailed as a victory in the war on terrorism. Three of four men were convicted in the case.

The judge who presided over the trial has criticized federal prosecutors for failing to give defense lawyers documents that might have helped the defendants in the terror trial. The judge has ordered a thorough review of government files before deciding whether to grant the defendants' request for a new trial.

Last month, a paid Detroit FBI informant was charged with convincing agents that he had penetrated an international drug ring and then persuading them through alleged associates to pay \$164,000 for mostly phony drugs. The informant also is accused of tricking agents into believing that the head of the FBI Detroit field office, Willie Hulon, had leaked them information to the drug ring, resulting in Hulon's temporary reassignment.

Al-Haidari's lawyer, David Steingold, defended the FBI and U.S. Attorney's Office, but wouldn't discuss what Al-Haidari pledged to do for agents.

"Everything done in Mr. Al-Haidari's case was completely above board and not at all unusual," he said, adding that the government frequently offers favorable treatment to low-level drug dealers who can lead them to more serious offenders. "It's the cost of doing business."

Steingold said Al-Haidari is a lifelong Detroit resident who had attended three years of college and has three children who live with their mother.

Detroit-area lawyers have complained since the Sept. 11 attacks that federal authorities have been too eager to believe the tales of untrustworthy informants — not taking into account that some might use the system as a way to settle old scores with extended family members or former business partners.

In 2002, the case involving a local Yemeni suspected of terrorism was thrown out of U.S. District Court in Detroit after the government's key informant recanted his statements. The informant told prosecutors that the man intended to launch a terrorist attack in Michigan.

The informant turned out to be the former brother-in-law of the accused man, and was angry

over the man's divorce of his sister.

In another case, an Arab informant agreed to help a divorced friend strike back at his ex-wife and former brother-in-law by making up a story to the FBI, according to sealed federal court records obtained by the Free Press.

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