



For eight years, government officials turned to Dennis Montgomery, a California computer programmer, for eye-popping technology that he said could catch terrorists. Now, federal officials want nothing to do with him and are going to extraordinary lengths to ensure that his dealings with Washington stay secret.

The Justice Department, which in the last few months has gotten protective orders from two federal judges keeping details of the technology out of court, says it is guarding state secrets that would threaten national security if disclosed. But others involved in the case say that what the government is trying to avoid is public embarrassment over evidence that Mr. Montgomery bamboozled federal officials.

A onetime biomedical technician with a penchant for gambling, Mr. Montgomery is at the center of a tale that features terrorism scares, secret White House briefings, backing from prominent Republicans, backdoor deal-making and fantastic-sounding computer technology.

Interviews with more than two dozen current and former officials and business associates and a review of documents show that Mr. Montgomery and his associates received more than \$20 million in government contracts by claiming that software he had developed could help stop Al Qaeda's next attack on the United States. But the technology appears to have been a hoax, and a series of government agencies, including the Central Intelligence Agency and the Air Force, repeatedly missed the warning signs, the records and interviews show.

Mr. Montgomery's former lawyer, Michael Flynn — who now describes Mr. Montgomery as a "con man" — says he believes that the administration has been shutting off scrutiny of Mr. Montgomery's business for fear of revealing that the government has been duped.

[More...](#)