



Does an Al Qaeda anthrax operative own four pharmacies in New York City? That frightening possibility is raised in one of the 700-plus Guantanamo detainee assessments released recently by WikiLeaks and other sources.

The documents detail the history and threat potential of terrorist suspects detained at Gitmo. Recently, a blogger sent me an email pointing out that one of these assessments contains a particularly chilling section. It says that a detainee captured by the CIA in 2003 possessed a diary that contained contact information for a "possible al-Qaida anthrax operative" who then was living in New York City and who owned several pharmacies there.

The assessment provides the name of this suspect—a businessman of Pakistani origin—but I'm not going to identify him because he could not be reached for comment and this information could be wrong.

That makes this story a vexing tale: government information (once secret, yet now publicly available) indicates that a suspected terrorist is running drug stores in New York, but it's impossible to tell whether this information is solid, or whether an innocent man has been mistakenly incriminated.

The report, written in 2008, notes that the suspected terrorist/pharmacist's name appeared in a document found at an Al Qaeda safe house in Pakistan juxtaposed with a reference to an anthrax vaccine. The report does not detail this reference or describe the document. The detainee assessment also reports that information linking the suspected operative to anthrax and biological weapons was found on a calendar belonging to yet another suspected terrorist, but it does not specify the nature of this information.

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