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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL & MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW



THE NATIONAL REGISTRY
OF EXONERATIONS

2,937 EXONERATIONS SINCE 1989
MORE THAN 25,600 YEARS LOST

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AHMED HANNAN

Other Federal Exonerations with Misconduct



Ahmed Hannan

On September 17, 2001, six days after the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., FBI agents raided an apartment in Detroit searching for a man on the FBI watch list of suspected terrorists.

They did not find the man they were looking for, but they did find three North African immigrants—Karim Koubriti, Ahmed Hannan and Farouk Ali-Haimoud. They also found the photograph of another man, Youssef Hmimmssa, who was arrested not long after in Iowa.

All four were indicted on September 27, 2001, on charges misuse of visas and fraud in connection with identity documents.

Similar charges were later filed against Abdel-Ilah Elmardoudi.

On August 28, 2002, Koubriti, 22, Hannan, 32, Elmardoudi, 35, and Ali-Haimoud were charged with conspiracy to provide material resources or support to terrorists. The indictment accused them of planning to acquire missiles and shoe and truck bombs and plotting attacks on Comerica Park, Disneyland, Las Vegas, a U.S. airbase in Incerlik, Turkey and a hospital in Amman, Jordan. The indictment was secured in part on the testimony of Hmimmssa, who had been charged in the case, though not with terrorist activities, and who pled guilty in exchange for his cooperation against his co-defendants.

Following lengthy jury selection, the trial began on March 26, 2003—the first terrorism trial in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. The trial featured the testimony of Hmimmssa, who said Elmardoudi told him about the possibility of attacks on the United States a month prior to the September 11th attacks. He described the defendants as Islamic extremists who sought to provide weapons to the Middle East and help fellow countrymen enter the U.S.

The prosecution also presented sketches they found in the apartment that they said showed one of the targets they intended to attack.

On June 3, 2003, Elmardoudi and Koubriti were convicted of supporting terrorism and document fraud conspiracy. Hannan was convicted of document fraud and Ali-Haimoud was acquitted.

After the trial, a heated legal battle ensued over leaks to the media as well as alleged violations of a court gag order by U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft.

On October 15, 2003, in the midst of this dispute, lawyers for the defendants petitioned for a new trial, alleging prosecutorial misconduct—that documents were withheld by the prosecution.

State: Fed-MI

County: (Eastern)

Most Serious Crime: Fraud

Additional Convictions:

Reported Crime Date: 2001

Convicted: 2003

Exonerated: 2004

Sentence: 5 years

Race/Ethnicity: Other

Sex: Male

Age at the date of reported crime: 32

Contributing Factors: Perjury or False Accusation, Official Misconduct

Did DNA evidence contribute to the exoneration?: No

Among the withheld documents was evidence that the prosecutors knew the sketches were harmless drawings of the entire Middle East region. Prosecutors also withheld a note from a man who was in jail with Hmimmssa and talked to him about lying to the FBI regarding the defendants' ties to terrorism. U.S. District Court Judge Gerald Rosen said, "The prosecution materially misled the court, the jury and the defense as to the nature, character and complexion of critical evidence."

The Justice Department moved to set aside the convictions and on September 2, 2004, the charges were dismissed.

The prosecutor on the case, Richard Convertino, resigned in 2005 and on March 29, 2006, he was indicted on charges of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and making false statements arising from the withholding of evidence. In October 2007, he was acquitted.

Convertino sued the Justice Department alleging his civil rights were violated by the leaking of information about the internal investigation of his conduct. The lawsuit was dismissed in March, 2011.

– *Maurice Possley*

Report an error or add more information about this case.

Posting Date: Before June 2012

ABOUT THE REGISTRY

The National Registry of Exonerations is a project of the Newkirk Center for Science & Society at University of California Irvine, the University of Michigan Law School and Michigan State University College of Law. It was founded in 2012 in conjunction with the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University School of Law. The Registry provides detailed information about every known exoneration in the United States since 1989—cases in which a person was wrongly convicted of a crime and later cleared of all the charges based on new evidence of innocence. The Registry also maintains a more limited database of known exonerations prior to 1989.

CONTACT US

We welcome new information from any source about exonerations already on our list and about cases not in the Registry that might be exonerations.

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KARIM KoubRITI

Other Federal Exonerations with Misconduct



Karim Koubriti

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All four were indicted on September 27, 2001, on charges misuse of visas and fraud in connection with identity documents.

Similar charges were later filed against Abdel-Ilah Elwardoudi.

On August 28, 2002, Koubriti, 22, Hannan, 32, Elwardoudi, 35, and Ali-Haimoud were charged with conspiracy to provide material resources or support to terrorists. The indictment accused them of planning to acquire missiles and shoe and truck bombs and plotting attacks on Comerica Park, Disneyland, Las Vegas, a U.S. airbase in Incirlik, Turkey and a hospital in Amman, Jordan. The indictment was secured in part on the testimony of Hmimmssa, who had been charged in the case, though not with terrorist activities, and who pled guilty in exchange for his cooperation against his co-defendants.

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Among the withheld documents was evidence that the prosecutors knew the sketches were harmless drawings of the entire Middle East region.

State: Fed-MI

County: (Eastern)

Most Serious Crime: Supporting Terrorism

Additional Convictions: Fraud

Reported Crime Date: 2001

Convicted: 2003

Exonerated: 2004

Sentence: 5 years

Race/Ethnicity: Other

Sex: Male

Age at the date of reported crime: 22

Contributing Factors: Perjury or False Accusation, Official Misconduct

Did DNA evidence contribute to the exoneration?: No

Prosecutors also withheld a note from a man who was in jail with Hmimmssa and talked to him about lying to the FBI regarding the defendants' ties to terrorism. U.S. District Court Judge Gerald Rosen said, "The prosecution materially misled the court, the jury and the defense as to the nature, character and complexion of critical evidence."

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