



Remarks Prepared for Delivery by U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Taylor at Amerithrax Investigation Press Conference

WASHINGTON, D.C.
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Good afternoon. I'm Jeff Taylor, the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia. I am joined here today by Joseph Persichini; Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office; Chief Postal Inspector Alexander Lazaroff; and Assistant U.S. Attorney Ken Kohl.

As the Department indicated last week and has been widely reported, substantial progress has been made in the Amerithrax investigation in recent years. As you know, this investigation into the worst act of bioterrorism in U.S. history has been one of the largest and most complex ever conducted by the FBI. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service has also made an extraordinary contribution to this investigation. Over the past seven years, hundreds of thousands of agent-hours have been dedicated to solving this crime.

Ordinarily, we do not publicly disclose evidence against a suspect who has not been charged, in part because of the presumption of innocence. But because of the extraordinary and justified public interest in this investigation, as well as the significant public attention resulting from the death of Dr. Bruce Edwards Ivins last week, today we are compelled to take the extraordinary step of providing first, the victims and their families, as well as Congress, and the American public with an overview of some recent developments as well as some of our conclusions.

Earlier today, several search warrant affidavits were unsealed in federal court in the District of Columbia. Among other things, these search warrants confirm that the government was investigating Dr. Ivins in connection with the attacks, which killed five individuals and injured 17 others in 2001. Dr. Ivins was a resident of Frederick, Maryland, and a long-time anthrax researcher who worked at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases, known as USAMRIID.

Dr. Ivins died of an overdose on July 29, 2008, and, at the time of his death, was the sole suspect in the case. Our investigation had begun to shift to a particular laboratory at USAMRIID in 2005 and began to focus on Dr. Ivins as a suspect in 2007. In the weeks prior to his death, we had been in conversations with his attorneys regarding the direction of the investigation because we believed that based on the evidence we had collected, we could prove his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Based upon the totality of the evidence we had gathered against him, we are confident that Dr. Ivins was the only person responsible for these attacks.

We are now beginning the process of concluding this investigation. Once this process is complete, we will formally close the case. Had Dr. Ivins been indicted, he would have been presumed innocent until proven guilty as in the case with any other criminal defendant. We regret that we will not have the opportunity to present the evidence to a jury to determine whether the evidence establishes Dr. Ivins' guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

We have provided you copies of the court documents, which give details about our evidence. I encourage you to read through them carefully.

I will summarize from these documents and then I'll turn the podium over to the FBI to go into greater detail. I will also note that, for a variety of reasons, there may be some questions and details we may not be able to discuss publicly today. I hope you respect these boundaries, given the extraordinary steps we're taking with this disclosure today.

Now, turning to the evidence.

First, we were able to identify in early 2005 the genetically-unique parent material of the anthrax spores used in the mailings. As the court documents allege, the parent material of the anthrax spores used in the attacks was a single flask of spores, known as "RMR-1029," that was created and solely maintained by Dr. Ivins at USAMRIID. This means that the spores used in the attacks were taken from that specific flask, regrown, purified, dried and loaded into the letters. No one received material from that flask without going through Dr. Ivins. We thoroughly investigated every other person who could have had access to the flask and we were able to rule out all but Dr. Ivins.

Second, as a renowned expert in the production and purification of anthrax spores, Dr. Ivins was one of a handful of scientists with the capability to create spores of the concentration and purity used in the attacks. The affidavits allege that, not only did Dr. Ivins create and maintain the spore batch used in the mailings, but he also had access to and experience using a lyophilizer. A lyophilizer is a sophisticated machine that is used to dry pathogens, and can be used to dry anthrax. We know others in Dr. Ivins' lab consulted him when they needed to use this machine.

Third, in the days leading up to each of the mailings, the documents make clear that Dr. Ivins was working inordinate hours alone at night and on the weekend in the lab where the flask of spores and production equipment were stored. A review of his access records revealed that Dr. Ivins had not spent this many "off hours" in the lab at any time before or after this period. When questioned about why he was in the lab during these off hours prior to each of the mailings, Dr. Ivins was unable to offer any satisfactory explanation.

Fourth, the affidavits indicate Dr. Ivins had engaged in behavior and made a number of statements that suggest consciousness of guilt. For example, one night shortly after a search warrant was executed on his house, Dr. Ivins took highly unusual steps to discard a book and article on DNA coding while under 24/7 surveillance. In addition, he had submitted a questionable sample of anthrax from his flask of parent spores to the FBI, presumably to mislead investigators. He had also made far-reaching efforts to blame others and divert attention away from himself, and had made threatening e-mail statements to a friend regarding the case. Recently, he had detailed threats in his group therapy session to kill people who had wronged him, after learning he might be indicted.

Fifth, as reflected in the court documents, Dr. Ivins had a history of mental health problems and was facing a difficult time professionally in the summer and fall of 2001 because an anthrax vaccine he was working on was failing. The affidavits describe one e-mail to a co-worker in which Dr. Ivins stated that he had "incredible paranoid, delusional thoughts at times," and feared that he might not be able to control his behavior.

Sixth, throughout his adult life Dr. Ivins had frequently driven to other locations to send packages in the mail under assumed names to disguise his identity as the sender. He had also admitted to using false names and aliases in writings. In addition, he was a prolific writer to Congress and the media, the targeted victims in the anthrax attacks. Law enforcement recovered 68 letters to such entities from his house in a Nov. 1, 2007 search.

I'll conclude with one more point. The envelopes used in the attacks were all pre-franked envelopes, sold only at U.S. Post Offices during a nine-month window in 2001. An analysis of the envelopes revealed several print defects in the ink on the pre-printed portions of the envelopes. Based on the analysis, we were able to conclude that the envelopes used in the mailings were very likely sold at a post office in the greater Frederick Maryland, area in 2001. Dr. Ivins maintained a post office box at the Post Office in Frederick, from which these pre-franked envelopes with print defects were sold.

During the course of the seven-year investigation, Dr. Ivins was interviewed by federal authorities several times -- three times in 2008 alone. His statements were inconsistent over time and failed to explain the evidence against him.

The points I have just gone over are only a summary of the court documents we have provided you. There are additional details in the documents, which again, we encourage you to read thoroughly. All the information contained in this statement is now public information. I am able to give you this information because the United States followed proper procedures and formally requested that a federal court unseal several search warrants in this investigation, and that court approved the request. In addition, I consulted and received express permission of the Justice Department to do so.

I'd now like to introduce Mr. Persichini to provide you with some greater detail on the evidence and how the investigation was conducted. Thank you.

[Amerithrax Court Documents](#)

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