

US officials release evidence against anthrax scientist Bruce Ivins

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WASHINGTON - The [Justice Department](#) put the "murder weapon" from the 2001 anthrax attacks in [Bruce Ivins'](#) hands Wednesday and branded him as the lone killer.

The key evidence: Ivins was "sole creator and custodian" of highly purified anthrax spores with genetic markings "identical" to the poison that killed five people, according to the Justice Department and files unsealed yesterday in the probe.

Authorities also said Ivins had good reason to create nationwide panic - he was worried the government planned to end his cherished program amid fears the vaccine hurt soldiers.

"It appears, based on the evidence, that he was acting alone," [FBI Assistant Director Joseph Persichini](#) told a news conference.

"We believed that, based on the evidence we had collected, we could prove his guilt to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt," U.S. Attorney for D.C. Jeffrey Taylor said.

The feds won't get the chance because Ivins killed himself last week. His lawyers still maintained Ivins' innocence, saying the feds' case adds up only to an "illusion of guilt."

The [FBI](#) isolated the unique batch of anthrax - dubbed RMR-1029 in court documents - as one of a kind, using breakthrough DNA technology.

The spores were "created and solely maintained by Dr. Ivins," Taylor said, and he described the flask in which the spores were kept as "effectively, the murder weapon."

Ivins was "the sole creator and custodian" of RMR-1029 since 1997, FBI affidavits said. No one got any of it "without going through Dr. Ivins," Taylor added.

"He had key-card access," a top prosecutor overseeing the case told the Daily News. "So we knew everybody who had access to that flask during that period."

But another investigator said the storage room was not secure - a point also raised by Ivins' lawyer, [Paul Kemp](#).

"No cameras - nothing," Kemp said.

The FBI's all-circumstantial case was detailed in hundreds of pages of bureau files that agents used to obtain search warrants against Ivins.

Taylor insisted he was "firmly convinced" of Ivins' guilt. Yet the bulk of the unsealed filings are filled with details about the microbiologist's bizarre sex fetishes and decades-long infatuation with the [Kappa Kappa Gamma](#) sorority and lacking in hard, smoking-gun evidence. For example:

- The FBI can't prove he mailed the letters - only that the envelopes were sold at [Virginia](#) and [Maryland](#) post offices.
- There is nothing to prove he drove from [Frederick, Md.](#), to [Princeton, N.J.](#), where the letters were dropped in a mailbox near a Kappa office.
- There are no fingerprints, handwriting matches or DNA from Ivins' body tying him to the crimes, Taylor admitted.

There were, however, odd coincidences aplenty:

- Anthrax letters sent to two pro-choice [U.S.](#) senators listed a "Greendale" school on the return address. Probers found he donated to a Christian charity representing a school by the same name.
- In an e-mail to a pal two weeks after the 9/11 attacks, Ivins warned, "[Bin Laden](#) terrorists for sure have anthrax and sarin gas" and "have just decreed death to all Jews and all Americans."

The warning was eerily similar to writings inside anthrax-laced letters that turned up in Congress, terrifying a nation still unnerved by 9/11. "WE HAVE THIS ANTHRAX," wrote the killer in his own hand. "DEATH TO AMERICA ... DEATH TO [ISRAEL](#)."

- Ivins lied to his wife about long road trips by rolling back his odometer.
- He used multiple e-mail addresses and aliases to edit the sorority's [Wikipedia](#) entry, posting derogatory tidbits. One snitch claimed Ivins stole a secret Kappa handbook.

The career scientist, honored by [the Pentagon](#) for his work into the anthrax vaccine, was about to be confronted with the evidence against him when he overdosed.

Ivins suffered bouts of heavy drinking and nervous breakdowns for years, and even told one co-worker in 2000 that he had "incredible paranoid, delusional thoughts at times."

In another e-mail, he said: "I wish I could control the thoughts in my mind. It's hard enough sometimes controlling my behavior."

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