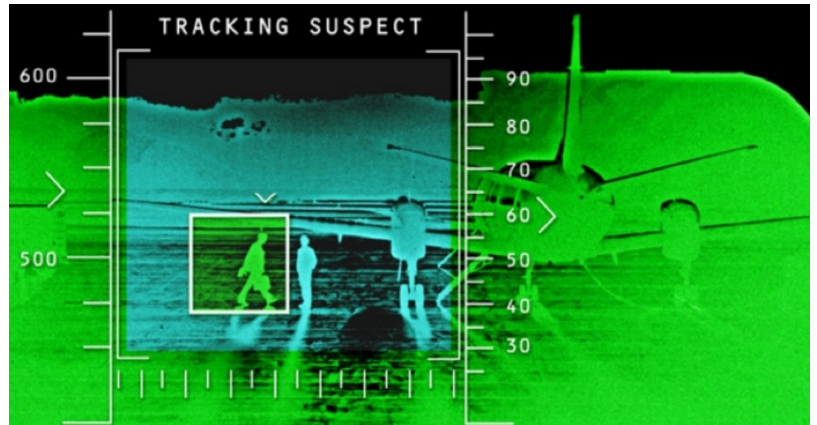




Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 14, 2013

FBI Celebrates Duping Another Mentally Ill Man Into Fake Terror Plot

Following a series of similar widely ridiculed so-called “sting” operations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation [announced](#) last week that it had foiled yet another “terror plot” that, [like virtually every supposed “terrorist” case in recent years](#), was created and managed from start to finish by the FBI itself. This time, the dupe was a 28-year-old California man, Matthew Aaron Llaneza, with a [documented history of mental illness](#), who apparently believed his government handlers were helping him wage “jihad.” Critics, however, say the whole scheme [smacks of entrapment](#) and a [waste of taxpayer money](#).



Llaneza was arrested by federal agents on February 7 in Oakland after he supposedly tried to blow up a bogus bomb the FBI helped him create. According to authorities, the mentally ill San Jose suspect planned to detonate the fake explosives outside a Bank of America branch. The alleged plan, officials said, was to start a “civil war” by making it appear as if the attack had been carried out by “anti-government militias,” sparking a crackdown by the government on right-of-center dissidents.

“Unbeknownst to Llaneza, the explosive device that he allegedly attempted to use had been rendered inoperable by law enforcement and posed no threat to the public,” the FBI admitted in a [press release](#) celebrating the arrest of its mentally unstable stooge. The man was charged in a [criminal complaint](#) with “attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction against property used in an activity that affects interstate or foreign commerce.” If convicted, he could face life in prison.

According to the government’s court filings, the mentally ill man met with an undercover FBI agent late last year under mysterious circumstances. The federal official somehow managed to convince the naïve dupe that he was connected to the “Taliban and the mujahidin in Afghanistan” — Islamist forces that were [originally armed and trained by the U.S. government](#) before becoming official enemies. From there, federal handlers worked with the man to develop the half-baked plot and the fake bomb to blow something up.

“Llaneza’s stated goal was to trigger a governmental crackdown, which he expected would trigger a right-wing counter-response against the government followed by, he hoped, civil war,” the FBI claimed in a statement applauding its work defending the Homeland from its own plot. “Llaneza’s arrest was the culmination of an undercover operation during which he was closely monitored by the FBI’s South Bay Joint Terrorism Task Force.” State and local officials also participated in the scheme, the FBI said.

Despite the Justice Department’s celebration over foiling its own bogus plot, as has become typical in this sort of case, critics are raising serious concerns. Among the most widely expressed: [Official documents](#) and family members confirmed that Llaneza has a long history of mental-health issues.



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Hospital and medical records obtained by local media outlets revealed Llaneza had previously attempted suicide, was taking medication for psychosis, and that doctors considered him “delusional” and suspected he may have been suffering from schizophrenia.

The suspect’s former attorney, Cameron Bowman, [told](#) NBC Bay Area that Llaneza was a “troubled individual” in many ways, and that this was well known — it was in the public record, in fact. “His family had a lot of concern for his mental health,” Bowman explained. “The court had a lot of concern about his mental health issue.... Outside experts felt that he was bipolar, possibly schizophrenic.” At a hospital, documents showed that Llaneza himself had told doctors he was depressed and suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Despite supposedly having converted to Islam, which strictly prohibits the consumption of alcohol, official reports also show that the suspect had substance abuse problems. His father had, for example, expressed serious concerns to authorities one night when the younger Llaneza, highly intoxicated, had been taken to the hospital and placed on a mental health hold for strange and aggressive behavior, according to news reports.

Executive Director Zahra Billoo with the controversial Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) told reporters that the whole operation smelled of entrapment, adding that it was especially troubling in light of Llaneza’s well-documented mental-health issues. “Did the FBI take a [mentally ill] aspirational terrorist, make him an operational terrorist and then thwart their own plot?” he [asked](#). “CAIR has been saying this for years now: It’s the FBI’s job to stop operational terrorists. It’s not the FBI’s job to enable aspirational ones.”

Across the Internet, in forums and comment sections of press reports, citizens ridiculed and slammed the FBI operation as yet another set up, blasting the agency as well. Critics in the media also lambasted authorities for the half-baked plot, criticizing everything from the squandering of taxpayer resources to the highly controversial tactic of prodding mentally unstable people into perpetrating crimes — especially when there are so many real issues to deal with.

“Court documents made it immediately clear that the federal government spent a considerable amount of resources on the case,” [noted](#) Robert Gammon, calling the whole operation a “waste,” in a piece published by the *East Bay Express*. “However, court documents also showed that the foiled ‘bomb plot’ was not really a bomb plot. Instead, it turned out to be a sad affair involving the apparent entrapment of a mentally ill man who was coaxed by the FBI into attempting to set off a fake bomb that it had given him.”

Of course, this is hardly the first time in recent memory that the federal government has used similar strategies to convince naïve and often mentally unstable individuals to participate in criminal activity. *The New American* has documented multiple cases just in the last year where the FBI used taxpayer money and even convicted felons to coax fools or mentally challenged individuals into committing fake acts of terror. Oftentimes federal agents lead the plot from start to finish before arresting their stooge and calling a press conference to pat each other on the back.

In October of last year for example, federal agents [convinced a naïve 21-year-old Bangladeshi that he was a member of al-Qaeda](#), giving the alleged entrapment victim fake bombs to blow up the [privately owned](#) Federal Reserve Bank of New York before swarming in and arresting him. In reality, there was no al-Qaeda, there was no threat, there were no bombs, and the only alleged “plot” the FBI “foiled” was the one it hatched with its stooge, Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis.



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Earlier that year, the FBI [concocted a similar half-baked plot](#), using a convicted felon to trick a group of young self-styled left-wing anarchists into trying to blow up a bridge near Cleveland. Again, the whole plot was run from beginning to end by federal agents and their “confidential informant” — a convicted criminal and con man.

A separate case in 2009 in which a government informer also convinced mentally unstable individuals to plant fake bombs in New York even drew criticism from the judge who oversaw the case. “The government made them terrorists,” the presiding magistrate [observed](#). Even the establishment press — the [New York Times](#) included — has been forced to speak out about the increasingly absurd “terror” plots invented and “foiled” by federal officials.

Analysts say the FBI is becoming increasingly discredited among the public as it continues to entrap ever-more vulnerable fools into committing bogus crimes. While the precise motivation remains unclear — authorities claim to be “defending the Homeland” — some experts have said the burst of fantastical headlines about “foiled” so-called “terror plots” helps to keep paranoia alive among gullible citizens while ensuring that the taxpayer money continues flowing.

Others have questioned whether the focus on creating and busting fake terrorists is actually endangering the public by diverting resources from working on real crime. However, even as the federal government purports to be waging a “terror war” all over the globe, even on American soil, the Obama administration has been publicly [supporting, funding, and arming self-styled al-Qaeda leaders everywhere from Libya to Syria](#).

Llaneza’s public defender did not immediately comment on the charges against his client, who made an initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Donna M. Ryu on February 8. The suspect also appeared in federal court for a bail hearing on Wednesday. Some analysts expect that, like the Bangladeshi student who pled guilty last week, Llaneza may ultimately end up pleading guilty to the charges if prosecutors offer a deal just to escape the potential life sentence.

Alex Newman is a correspondent for The New American, covering economics, politics, and more. He can be reached at anewman@thenewamerican.com.

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