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MFR04019842

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

Event:

Type of Event: Interview of [redacted] (Supervisory Language Specialist, Miami Field Office)

Date: October 2, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Michael Jacobson

Team number: 6

Location: FBI, Miami Field Office

Participants Non-Commission: Assistant General Counsel Bob Sinton

Participants - Commission: Chris Healey and Michael Jacobson

**Background**

[redacted] joined the FBI after high school. She finished college while she was at the FBI. She joined the FBI as an entry level employee at HQ. She moved to Miami in 1976 and did entry level functions. She was then selected as a Spanish language translator. There had been 1 translator in Miami and he retired, and she was selected for his position. She was promoted to a supervisory position in 1992, and has served in that position ever since. She is officially the office's foreign language coordinator. She is responsible for training and the testing of analysts, and is the primary liaison with FBIHQ. For example, if Miami needed more linguists, this need would be communicated to her, and she would relay it to HQ. She deals with the Language Services Division at HQ.

**Language Unit in Miami**

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### Language Services Division & FBIHQ

There are 3 units within the Language Services Division. The testing and training unit is headed by [redacted] which handles these functions for agents and support. There is also the translation and deployment unit, headed by [redacted]. They work with the contract linguists and support the language specialists and are responsible for hiring and assignment the LSs. The third is [redacted] who heads the Translation Center.

She coordinates all of her actions with HQ. For example, how they should use a contract linguist (vs. a LS). With an LS, they could switch them to other duties, but with a contract linguist they couldn't. If there was no work for a contract linguist, they would have to go home. When they need equipment for the LSs, they also coordinate with HQ. HQ also handles which of the LSs are selected for training courses. At a minimum, she deals with HQ weekly, but often daily.

This has always been HQ's role. This was so even pre 9/11, though it might be more centralized since 9/11.

They will also send excess work or work they can't do to HQ. Sometimes they need an email translated, and they don't have the right linguists. They will always coordinate this through HQ. But the reality is that they are usually taking work in in Miami and not farming it out.

After 9/11, HQ advertised on the web site that they were hiring linguists. HQ downloaded the packages. There is the same background process for LSs and contract linguists. She has been satisfied by the quality of the hires since 9/11. Miami's role in the hiring was: they would be tested in Miami, but the packages would be sent to HQ for grading. The process has slowed somewhat since right after 9/11. The Security Division demanded that the FBI create a post-adjudication risk management. They realized that there were people brought on board who had been rushed through the background process. The solution has been to have people who are working certain languages will be

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polygraphed and interviewed (PSI) every year. She thinks that these will be people working the traditional FCI languages. Her concern is that it should be by what program they work, not just by what language. They should do it by what language and what classified work the person is doing. For example, [redacted] 9/11 Classified Information

They also have to do monthly reports on CT FISAs for HQ. For non-CT FISAs, there are only quarterly reports.

**Linguists' clearances**

They have had linguists come on board at less than TS, but all of the Arabic linguists have had TS. For example, there was a translator working [redacted] who only had secret clearance. It would be HQ's decision as to what classification level the linguist should have. She noted that they would still have a polygraph for a secret clearance.

**Quality control System**

They have recently implemented a quality control system. This was at the instruction of HQ. They have taken senior linguists and had them review the less experienced LSs work. [redacted] 9/11 Classified Information [redacted] There is a formal process for this. The reviewer has forms to fill out, which the supervisor then reviews. It works well, but some of the LSs don't like it, because they are protective of their work. She is a formal part of the review process. If there is a difference of opinion between herself and the LS, she would kick it to HQ for resolution but this hasn't happened yet.

**Contract vs. LSs**

Not all of the contract linguists want to work full time. They might have to have 2 contract linguists in place to get one full time language specialist. Usually, they will have a deadline for assignments. They tell the contractor that once they accept the assignment, they have to meet the deadline. 9 out of 10 times this works. They impose deadlines because the agents need the information for their investigations.

Many of the contractors want to become full time LSs. Out of the 8 contractors under her, probably 5-6 would want to. There is no limit to the number of contractors they can hire, from an FSL point of view. It's a budgetary issue, and it's up to HQ.

Right now [redacted] 9/11 Classified Information

[redacted] Of course, there is no guarantee they will make it through.

**Backlog issues**

There is very little backlog in the Arabic translation. They have to be current. This is a new policy mandated by HQ. She thinks that the policy is that CT FISAs have

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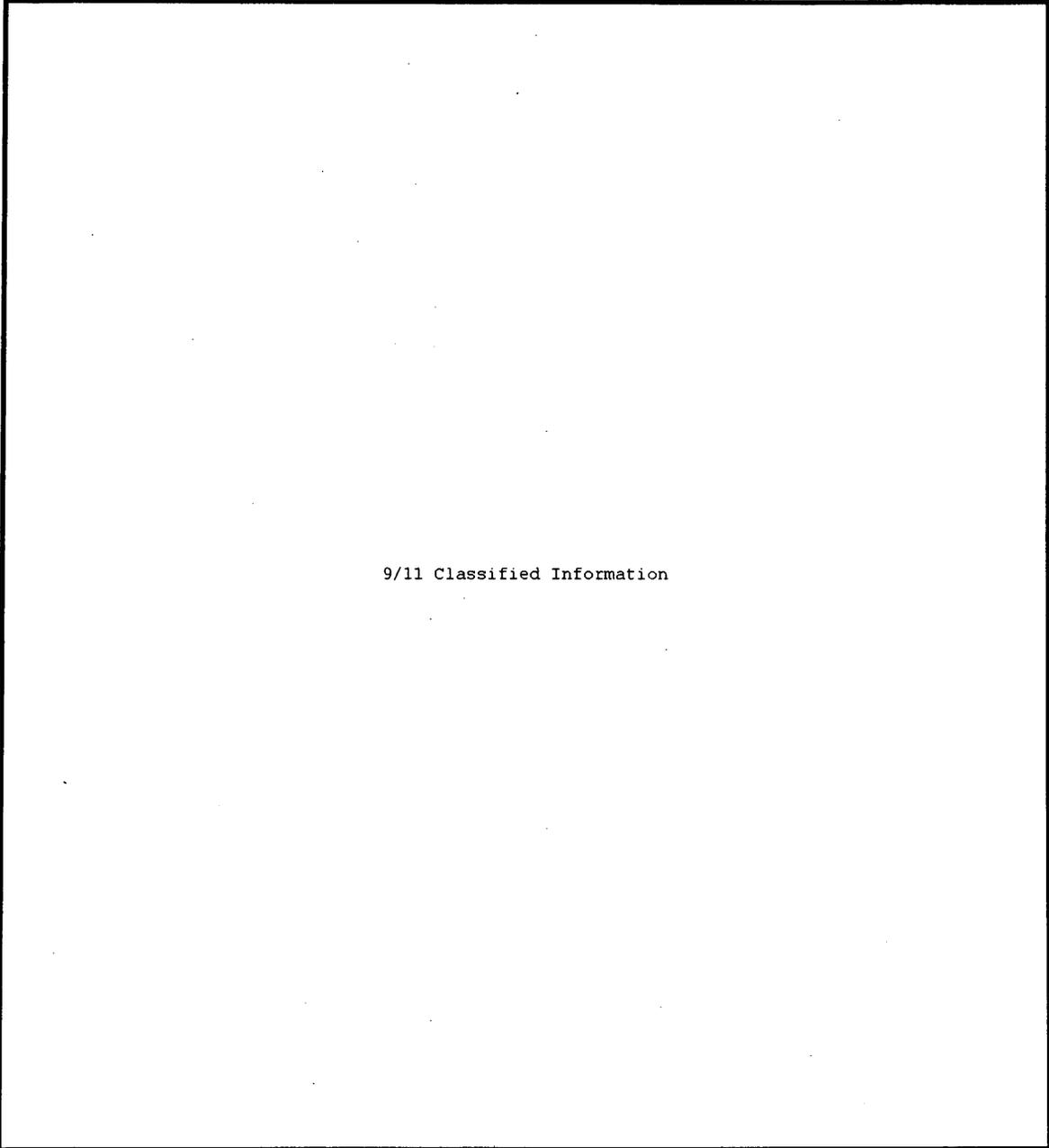
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to be translated [redacted] With non-CT FISAs they are not as strict. Miami does not have a problem with FISA translation. They have a case that was FISA and is now criminal and going to court. [redacted]

[redacted] They have also had to coordinate this with another field office.

There is plenty of Arabic work in Miami with [redacted]  
[redacted] Other offices don't have as much so they are taking in more work. [redacted]

[redacted] Noone wants to prioritize within that. Everyone thinks that their case is number one in importance.



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The LSs do have ACS access. But she thinks that they just have FBINET, and not the text portion. The contractors do not have it.

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#### Interaction with analysts

The amount of contact between LSs and analysts depends on the case. Right now, they are not really dealing with analysts one on one. Maybe from time to time they deal with the analysts.

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#### Breakdown in work

She thinks that intercepts is what they spend the most time on. It's probably equal between the verbatim translations (for court) and the FISAs. Next would be documents. They have not been involved in many interviews. With the Middle Eastern people they are interviewing, they are more likely to speak English. It is less likely with the Hispanic population. As a general rule, LSs like going out on interviews. They have had cases where an agent will assume the person speaks English but then discovers that they don't, and they will get a call. Right after 9/11, the LSs were being sent to GTMO. Anyone with Arabic proficiency was going down. This stopped after 6 months when the military

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took over. She doesn't think that the FBI has been providing LSs at all to GTMO since then (not just the Miami Division).

In some cases, HQ has canvassed for people to go overseas. But the SAC does not want to send people overseas because of their work load in Miami. It's the SAC's call. There has been a real power struggle between the SAC and HQ, and so far the SAC has won.

#### Other agencies

She hasn't dealt with CIA or NSA linguists. She has dealt with the military linguists. They brought them in to help, but they weren't that good. Overall, the military personnel are better at talking than written products. With the FISAs, the agents asked them to review the military personnel's work.

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