

# Research paper on anthrax attacks

[Law](#), [Evidence](#)



## **Introduction**

Bruce Edwards Ivins was an American vaccinologist, microbiologist, and a senior biodefense researcher stationed at the Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases in the United States. He was the key suspect of the anthrax attacks that occurred in 2001 in Maryland. From mid-October, Bruce Edwards Ivins and his colleagues tested samples to make a distinction between the real anthrax hoaxes that were sent to the government and newsrooms during this period. Ivins helped the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) to analyse the material recovered from one of the tainted envelopes. He committed suicide on July 29, 2008 after an overdose of Tylenol upon learning the Federal Bureau of Investigation had filed criminal charges against Ivins, connecting him to the anthrax attacks of 2001 (Decker, 2003). No direct evidence was unearthed about his involvement in the anthrax attacks.

### 2001 Investigation

United States Department of Justice held a news conference to announce that the government concluded Ivins was solely responsible for injury of dozens, and the death of five persons. These casualties resulted from the mailings of anonymous letters to the members of the media and congress in September and October 2001 (Decker, 2003). The letters were contaminated with anthrax commonly referred to as *Bacillus anthracis* and sent to the United States Senators Patrick Leahy and Tom Daschle and other offices such as the National Enquirer, NBC News, ABC News, and the New York Post. The results of the anthrax investigation were distributed to people via ABC News, which gave evidence to the fact that the chemical traces of bentonite

were recovered from the anthrax samples. The Iraqi made this chemical signature. It was later confirmed that the bentonite chemical was not discovered in the anthrax samples. It was presumed that Ivins was one of the sources that ABC News refused to reveal their identities (Willman, 2011). This contributed to the role of Edward Ivins role in the investigation of the widely reported findings. The federal prosecutor, United States Attorney Jeffrey Taylor, made an official statement that the sole culprit of the anthrax attacks was Ivins. He stated that Ivins submitted false evidence about the anthrax attack to misguide the investigators (Decker, 2003). However, he was not able to explain why he worked in the laboratory late hours during the attack. He also had immunised himself against anthrax in September 2001 and tried to frame his co-workers. Ivins was very upset that the vaccine that he had taken many years to develop was being pulled out of the market.

### 2008 Investigation

In August 2008, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the department of justice officials made an official announcement that charges pressed against Ivins could be filed if evidence was found. This was going to bring a breakthrough for a mystery that took many years to solve. An investigative summary was documented to conclude the anthrax attack investigation. After Steven Hatfill was exonerated, Ivins became distressed and was later put on treatment after he started experiencing suicidal thoughts. It was later reported that he deserved a death penalty, although he still maintained security clearance that was publicly critical for security procedure in the lab where the tests were being done. The task force contained investigators, law

enforcement agencies, and postal inspection service in the United States. More than 10, 000 witnesses from different countries came forward with potential evidence that was to be used to prosecute Ivins. Environmental samples were taken from the affected locations. New scientific methods were used to impact on the current and future investigation. A behavioural analysis, scientific briefing and investigative summary reports were made on mailings of letters that contained anthrax (Decker, 2003).

### **Criticism of the official findings**

In October 2003, there was a hoax that the anthrax attacks were being used to invade Iraq. Hysteria was generated by people who believed the United States wanted to go to war with the Iraq government. Brian Ross the chief investigative correspondent of the ABC News gave an investigative report that indicated an additive bentonite was found in the anthrax samples. The United States were blamed for engaging in a cover up of such a serious matter. The Justice Department finally declared that the mystery surrounding anthrax had been solved in 2008. Ivins was accused of creating and distributing the anthrax virus. Recent revelations have shown that negligence and incompetence to accuse the scientist without having enough evidence to take him to trial. The genetic analysis that was carried out has been disproved in a court of law. The media who took part in convicting Ivin later joined politicians to challenge the verdict. Increased pressure to reopen the case has collapsed Ivins lawyers have demanded the United States government to pay him for the damages caused.

## Conclusion

After more than 8 years, the federal bureau of investigations closed the anthrax case. A 92-page file was laid out about the evidence against Ivins. The report disclosed that Ivins was involved in the mailings of the letters that contained anthrax. The documentation is supposed to convince sceptics that Ivins' guilt charge was vague.

## References

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