



ARTICLE Nº7 OF 8

THE DRONE PAPERS



Ryan Gallagher

October 15 2015, 12:59 p.m.

As he walked through the busy streets of London, Bilal el-Berjawi was glancing over his shoulder. Everywhere he went, he suspected he was being followed. Within a few years —

4,000 miles away in remote Somalia — he would be dead, killed by a secret U.S. drone strike.



Andrew Testa

A SMALL AND STOCKY British-Lebanese citizen with a head of thick dark hair, Berjawi had grown up much like any other young boy in the United Kingdom's capital city, attending school during the day and playing soccer with friends in his free time. But by his early 20s he was leading no ordinary life. He was suspected of having cultivated ties with senior al Qaeda militants in East Africa, his British citizenship was abruptly revoked, and he was placed on a U.S. kill list.

In January 2012, Berjawi met his sudden end, about 10 miles northwest of Mogadishu, when a missile crashed into his white car and blasted it beyond recognition.

At the time of Berjawi's death, the Associated Press **reported** that the missile strike targeting him had been carried out by a drone, citing an

anonymous U.S. official. *The Economist* criticized the secrecy surrounding the attack and questioned whether it had amounted to a “very British execution.”

Now, a classified U.S. document obtained by *The Intercept* shines new light on the circumstances surrounding Berjawi’s death. It reveals that the U.S. government was monitoring him for at least five years as he traveled between London and Somalia; that he was targeted by a covert special operations unit running a fleet of more than two dozen drones, fighter jets, and other aircraft out of East Africa; and that cellphone surveillance facilitated the strike that killed him.

The document, a case study included in a secret 2013 report by the Pentagon’s Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Task Force, does not mention Berjawi by name, instead referring to a target code-named “Objective Peckham.” But it contains enough specific details about the target’s movements and the time and place of the attack that killed him to confirm his identity beyond doubt.



A video produced by al Shabaab purports to show Berjawi’s mangled vehicle in the aftermath of the drone strike that killed him on Jan. 21, 2012.

The Intercept has pieced together the final years of Berjawi’s life based on the Pentagon case study, public records, interviews with individuals who knew him, and a transcript of a long conversation Berjawi had in April 2009 with members of Cage, a London-based rights group, in which he discussed his encounters with security agencies in the U.K. and Kenya.

The story of Berjawi's life and death raises new questions about the British government's role in the targeted assassination of its own citizens – also providing unique insight into covert U.S. military actions in the Horn of Africa and their impact on al Qaeda and its affiliate in the region, al Shabaab.



Church Street Market near Edgware Road, northwest London. Sept. 29, 2015. Photo: Andrew Testa for The Intercept

BERJAWI – WHO WAS KNOWN by a variety of other names, including Bilal Abul-Jariya, Abu Omar, and Abu Hafsa – spent his youth in the St. John's Wood district of northwest London, living in an apartment a short walk from Abbey Road Studios. He was a baby when his mother moved him, along with his sister and brother, to the United Kingdom.

According to Berjawi's own account of his upbringing, provided to Cage and reviewed by *The Intercept*, he was born in Lebanon in 1990 and came to London the same year. But passport records uncovered by Ugandan media indicate that he may in fact have been born in September 1984, which would make him 27 at the time of his death.

As a teenager, Berjawi hung around with his friends on London's busy Edgware Road and frequented some of the shisha bars and Lebanese food stores scattered across the area.

Tam Hussein, a former youth worker for a community organization in north London, met Berjawi for the first time around 2003. Berjawi was 16 or 17 at the time, according to Hussein. "He was a good kid back then," Hussein told me. "But he was a roughneck, he was a fighter. That's what he was known for."

Hussein recalled that Berjawi was associated with a Muslim gang in north London that was embroiled in fights with rival Irish youths. But he saw no sign that Berjawi was involved in anything other than unruly teenage behavior.

On one occasion, Berjawi and a group of his friends were given the opportunity to go on a vacation overseas, funded by the community organization Hussein worked for. Hussein recalls that the group chose a holiday resort in Benidorm, on the east coast of Spain, where they were thrown out of a hotel for being too raucous.

"They got up to such craziness, smashed up a hotel room," Hussein said. "I never saw him [Berjawi] drinking, but obviously he got up to – he liked all the stuff that young guys like, partying and stuff like that."

The period between 2003 and 2006 appears to have been a crucial and formative time in Berjawi's life, when he transitioned from partying in

Spain and playing soccer in London parks to joining up with al Qaeda-affiliated militants in Somalia.

According to the [Pentagon case study](#), in 2006 Berjawi left London for a short period and attended a training camp called “Bayt al-Jinn,” where he received explosives training. He then “returned to the U.K. and provided financial support to AQ allied elements in East Africa.”

The case study does not specify the location of the Bayt al-Jinn camp. However, a previously secret detainee report on a Kenyan terror suspect held at Guantánamo, [published by WikiLeaks](#) in 2011, mentions a “Bayt Jinn House” in Mogadishu that was allegedly frequented by international al Qaeda operatives in the region. The Guantánamo report also states that a group known as the “London boys” – of which Berjawi was a member – attended a training camp in Mogadishu in the fall of 2006.

The U.S. government accounts are corroborated by a [martyrdom biography](#) of Berjawi published on jihadi Internet forums after his death, which states that he “joined with the Mujahideen in Somalia during the time of the Islamic Courts Union,” referring to a coalition of Sharia courts that gained control of large parts of Somalia in 2006. There he attended his “first training,” according to the biography, then returned to the U.K., where he took responsibility for “the collection of funds and its delivery.”



Abbey Road in St. John's Wood, London. Sept. 29, 2015. Photo: Andrew Testa for The Intercept

AFTER RETURNING FROM Somalia in 2006, Berjawi does not appear to have had any direct contact with British police or security agencies. Despite his apparent instruction at an al Qaeda-affiliated camp, he was not arrested on his way back to England, suggesting that intelligence collected by the U.S. about his whereabouts might not have been immediately shared with British agencies. Lynne Arnold, a spokesperson for London's Metropolitan Police, declined to answer questions for this story, saying she was "not able to discuss" why Berjawi was not arrested or whether U.S. authorities had shared any information about him.

According to the interview conducted by Cage, which campaigns on behalf of terrorism suspects who are denied legal rights, Berjawi did not

begin to notice that British authorities were interested in him until about 2007.

That year, counterterrorism forces in Nairobi detained two of Berjawi's friends from London, who had fled Somalia after war broke out with Ethiopia. The pair were later released without charge. Upon their return to London, the men told Berjawi that during their detention in Kenya, British agents had questioned them and shown them his photograph.

“That’s when I realized myself I was starting to be followed,” Berjawi said. “I would see someone – the same person – following me, wherever I was. The same car – I actually even memorized the number plate.”

Berjawi's suspicions appear to have been further confirmed between 2007 and 2008. During a trip to Lebanon, he was stopped at a Lebanese airport and questioned about why he had traveled to the country. He told the authorities he was visiting family, gave them a phone number for his uncle, and eventually they let him through. Berjawi was interrogated again on his way out of Lebanon, but arrived back in London without any problems. A few days after his return, however, Berjawi called his uncle and learned that he had been approached by Lebanese counterterrorism agents, who had been asking questions about him.

BY EARLY 2009, BERJAWI was working in London with his stepfather as a plumber and air-conditioning engineer. He had gotten married, had a baby girl, and his wife was pregnant with another child, this time a boy. But Berjawi was still on the radar of security agencies, and he was about to experience his first serious interrogation.

With a childhood friend named Mohamed Sakr, Berjawi arranged a trip to Kenya. According to his account, he wanted to go on a wildlife safari, but counterterrorism officials in Kenya suspected otherwise. When he arrived in the Mombasa airport, Berjawi was stopped and questioned. He was permitted into the country, but noticed a man of Somali origin following him everywhere, whom he suspected was some sort of spy.

“Wherever I go to eat, whatever safari park we go to, he’s always there on his phone,” Berjawi told Cage. “When I stop, he stops; when I walk, he walks.”

After a few days in Mombasa, Berjawi and Sakr traveled to Nairobi, perhaps in an effort to avoid the man they believed was tailing them. When they arrived, the pair stayed at the family home of Naji Mansour, an American citizen living in Nyari, an affluent Nairobi neighborhood located near the United Nations Africa headquarters.

Mansour, who was 32 at the time, lived with his wife and two children in a large house in a compound with its own gym, games room, and garden. The main part of the house had four bedrooms, but there were two additional bedrooms in a separate wing that the family kept for guests.

Recalling how he first came into contact with Berjawi and Sakr, Mansour told me that he put them up as a favor to a friend named Mohamed, whom he had met in Dubai while working briefly for a tech company there that provided information security services.

According to Mansour, Berjawi and Sakr claimed they had traveled to Kenya to research a substance known as “miraa” – or khat – an amphetamine-like stimulant grown and consumed in the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Mansour’s first impression of the pair was that they were “regular Joes.” They lounged around the house, watched movies, played games with his children, and occasionally prayed. “But they didn’t seem like hardcore, staunch Muslims,” Mansour said.

At first, Berjawi and Sakr said they would only need a place to stay for a few days. But a few days soon turned into a week. When Mansour asked about their plans, he was told they were waiting for some money to be sent to them before they moved on.

“I didn’t feel like they were a threat in any way, even when they overstayed,” said Mansour. “The only strange thing that I noticed from them the whole time is that it seemed like they weren’t trying to go out; they weren’t trying to leave the house.”



Illustration: The Intercept

Suddenly, about two weeks into their stay, in February 2009, Kenyan anti-terror police surrounded Mansour's Nairobi house. Berjawi was playing pool in the games room when he heard a loud series of knocks at the door. He peered through a curtain and saw heavily armed Kenyan officers, a helicopter flying above, and lots of cars. The police then stormed the property, told Berjawi to get on the floor, and pointed a gun at his head while he was searched.

Berjawi told Cage that he and Sakr were handcuffed, taken to the anti-terror police headquarters, and placed in separate cells. Berjawi described his cell as a "black hole" with "no pillows, no light, nothing," and said that when he asked for food a guard told him that he had to drink his own urine.

Later that day, Berjawi said he was taken from his cell through a long dark corridor to a private room. He was dazzled by the bright lights when the door opened, but when his eyes regained focus he could see about five men, dressed smartly in suits.

"They looked like professional people, y'know, they didn't look like they belonged there," Berjawi later recalled. "You could tell the difference between them and the guards that were working there. With the guards you can smell the sweat on them, and some of them were even drunk."

Berjawi said the men accused him of being an al Qaeda suicide bomber who had come to Kenya as part of a plot to attack the Israeli Embassy and an Israeli-owned supermarket. He denied the allegations and requested a lawyer. "My friend, this is Africa," he recalled being told. "In Africa, the only thing we can give you is black magic."

For four days, Berjawi and Sakr were held in custody and repeatedly interrogated. According to Berjawi, when he was eventually given some food, a porridge-like dish called "ugali," the guards had sprinkled it

with cigarette ash. He claimed they also asked him if he was gay and insinuated that they were going to send in a man who would rape him. Toward the end of the ordeal, Berjawi said that both he and Sakr endured several mock executions. “They just threw us out the car in the forest, and we heard ‘tchck-tchk’ – you know, the noise was there, and then I’d feel a gun to the back of my head, like that, but ... nothing. Then they’d just all laugh, pick us back up, throw us back into the car, then they’d drive again. They did this twice or three times.”

(Kenya’s National Police Service, the authority responsible for law enforcement in the country, did not respond to requests for comment on this story.)

ACCORDING TO BERJAWI, there were no British agents present during his interrogations in Kenya. He did believe, however, that British government operatives were feeding questions to the Kenyans, who seemed to know many highly specific details about his life in London, such as his daughter’s name, where he played soccer, the names of his friends, and which mosque he attended.

On the final day of his detention, a woman Berjawi said was from the British Embassy visited him, asked how he was doing, and handed him some forms to fill out. Shortly afterward, he was released. Together with Sakr, Berjawi was flown back to London accompanied by four Kenyan agents.

When the plane touched down, an announcement came over the speakers instructing all passengers to remain in their seats. A large group of “big white built men came on the plane with suits,” Berjawi later recounted. “One of them directly looked at me and smiled, and he called me, ‘Bilal, would you like to stand up?’”

The men ushered Berjawi and Sakr off the plane, at which point the friends were separated. The men told Berjawi they were from the British domestic security agency, MI5.

Over a period of about 10 hours, the agents interrogated him about his visit to Kenya and warned him he was not allowed to decline to answer their questions, suggesting he was detained under a British law, the **Terrorism Act**, which makes it a criminal offense to respond with “no comment.”

The British agents snapped photographs of Berjawi and took his fingerprints. He recalled that they were apologetic, telling him, “We have to do this.” But he was left feeling aggrieved; after interrogating him, the agents took his money and shoes, handed him his clothes in a garbage bag, and left him alone in the airport, barefoot, without any means to return to his home in northwest London.

A few weeks later, Berjawi called his uncle in Lebanon, who described receiving another visit from counterterrorism agents. This time, the agents informed him that Berjawi was “involved in al Qaeda,” based on “information from Britain.” They emphasized that his nephew shouldn’t

return to Lebanon or there would be problems.

Meanwhile, Berjawi began to suspect that he was being followed each time he set foot outside his London home. On one occasion, shortly after he returned from Kenya, he went out to the supermarket and noticed two men who he believed were tailing him. On the street, he bumped into an old friend and stopped for a quick conversation. Berjawi said that the two men subsequently approached his friend, who was taken away in a car to a nearby police station and interrogated.

The increased scrutiny appears to have agitated and unsettled Berjawi, though he still had not been arrested in the U.K. or charged with any crimes.

In April 2009, he approached Cage to complain that he was being “harassed” by security services, according to the transcript of the meeting **shared with** *The Intercept*.

“I don’t want to be harassed, followed – I feel intimidated, I’ve got a lot of side effects, you know,” Berjawi told the advocacy group. “My friends have been scared away from me because they’ve been approached. I feel isolated. ... It’s becoming a bit too much.”



Church Street Market near Edgware Road, northwest London. Sept. 29, 2015. Photo: Andrew Testa for The Intercept

WITHIN SIX MONTHS, in October 2009, both Berjawi and his friend Sakr were back in Somalia. A year later, in September 2010, the British government revoked the passports of both men under the British Nationality Act, severing its legal obligations to uphold their rights as citizens, a move that may have paved the way for their assassination.

Berjawi wanted to appeal the decision to revoke his passport, and in October 2010 sent an email to a contact at Cage asking the organization to instruct his lawyer, Saghir Hussain, to represent him in the case. Hussain told me that there were difficulties filing the appeal, primarily because of security concerns about talking over the phone to Berjawi in Somalia.

“I said to his family, ‘Look, I can’t guarantee that while he’s communicating with us he won’t be droned and killed,’” Hussain recalled. “That’s why it was decided that it was too risky for us to carry on.”

As it turned out, Hussain’s concerns were well-founded.

Since 2006, according to the secret Pentagon study, a covert Joint Special Operations Command unit known as TF 48-4 had been keeping close tabs on Berjawi’s movements. He had been featured on a so-called baseball card, used by the U.S. government to encapsulate information about candidates for assassination, and had thus entered a process for kill or capture known as “find, fix, finish,” or FFF.

By December 2009, the document alleges, Berjawi was helping to “facilitate money, equipment, and fighters” through the U.K. to Somalia. Throughout 2010, the U.S. government collected intelligence on him through intercepted communications, and before long operators pinpointed his location.

On June 23, 2011, Berjawi was tracked to an area near Kismayo, a port city some 250 miles from Mogadishu. The special operations unit launched a missile strike, according to the document, but it was unsuccessful due to a malfunction and other problems related to “approval authorities.”

Although Berjawi was not killed, he may have been wounded in the attack or in another carried out around the same time. On June 24, the Associated Press **reported** a missile strike late the previous day on a convoy of al Qaeda-linked militants near Kismayo, which injured two or three of the fighters.

Two weeks later, Somali media **reported** that Berjawi, a “senior officer” with al Qaeda, was believed to have been injured in an attack and had traveled to Kenya for medical treatment.

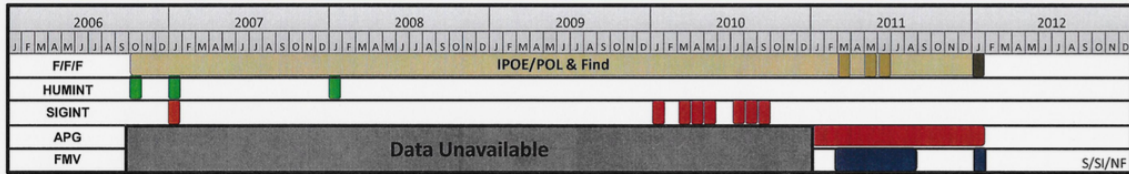
It was not until the following year that U.S. forces again identified Berjawi’s location.



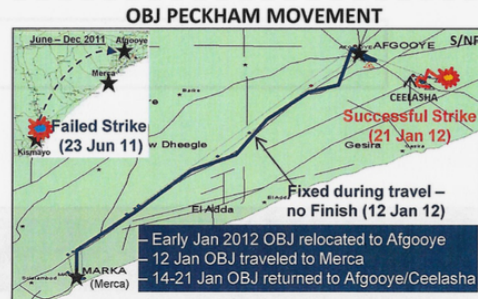
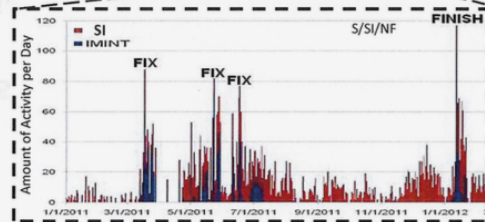
A note written by Berjawi in October 2010, after his U.K. citizenship was revoked. No appeal was filed, and he was killed by a U.S. drone strike on Jan. 21, 2012.

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FFF Timeline: Objective Peckham Case Study



Activity	Description Summary
FIND	Intelligence collection on target to establish pattern of life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (S/NF) 2006: OBJ Peckham attended "Bayt Al-Jinn", a specialized training program – including explosives training (S/NF) 2006 - 2009: OBJ Peckham returned to the UK and provided financial support to AQ allied elements in East Africa (S/NF) Oct 2009: OBJ Peckham returned to Somalia after his second attempt; Travel was coordinated by OBJ LOCKHART (S/NF) Dec 2009: OBJ Peckham coordinated with Kenyan based facilitator to facilitate money, equipment, and fighters through the UK to SOM
FIX	Target has been located for kinetic/non-kinetic engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (S/NF) 23 June 2011: Strike failed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problems with Approval Authorities, NAVAF C2, and AC malfunction (S/NF) 12 January 2012: Fix during a vehicle follow – No Strike
FINISH	Kill/Capture or neutralization of an enemy Target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (S/NF) 21 Jan 2012: OBJ PECKHAM was eliminated via kinetic strike <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0359: White SUV enters CEL-D12 (OBJ PECKHAM NAI) 0502: Adult with heavy strides and slight limp (OBJ PECKHAM) 0811: Vehicle follow begins 1039: Full Register/Match (SI) 1103: Strike 1131: Full Reg (SI) 1254: Continue to monitor the scene



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Source: TF 48-4 Baseball Cards, Oct 2006 - June 2012; EA ISR Logs, Jan 2011 - June 2012; IBM Analysis

A secret case study details the surveillance and assassination of "Objective Peckham," Bilal el- Berjawi, in January 2012. APG = Aerial Precision Geolocation; FFF = Find, Fix, Finish; FMV = Full Motion Video; HUMINT = Human Intelligence; SIGINT = Signals Intelligence

ACCORDING TO THE SECRET Pentagon document, titled "FFF Timeline: Objective Peckham Case Study," on January 21, 2012, Berjawi's white SUV was observed at 3:59 a.m., presumably by drone, and his movements were tracked over several hours in an area a few miles northwest of Mogadishu, between the towns of Afgooye and Ceelasha.

The case study timeline describes an "adult with heavy strides and slight limp (OBJ PECKHAM)" at 5:02 a.m. Three hours later, at 8:11 a.m., a "vehicle follow begins." At 10:39 a.m. the timeline shows that surveillance equipment logged a "Full Register/Match" of a cellphone in

the target area, meaning the unique identifying codes of a SIM card and handset associated with Berjawi had been confirmed by the special operations unit.

Twenty-four minutes later, at 11:03 a.m., Bilal el-Berjawi, otherwise known as Objective Peckham, “was eliminated via kinetic strike,” the entire front half of his vehicle mangled by the explosion.

The timeline of the strike, oddly, shows another match with the cellphone at 11:31 a.m. The drone continued “to monitor the scene.”

The following day a spokesperson for al Shabaab calling himself Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage **confirmed** the death of Berjawi, whom he described as a senior al Qaeda commander in Somalia. Rage said that Berjawi had been killed by a U.S. drone, and vowed revenge for the killing. He added: “We take his death as congratulation, thanks to Allah. ... His martyrdom dream has just become true.”

As news of Berjawi’s demise spread, it fueled paranoia within elements of al Qaeda in Somalia. Seven months prior to his death, al Qaeda’s chief in East Africa, Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, had also **been killed**. Berjawi was said to have been close to Mohammed, and perhaps was his successor, so when he too died in a sudden attack there were suspicions that al Shabaab was carrying out some kind of clandestine coup.

Some news reports out of Kenya initially suggested the attack on Berjawi was an “**inside job**,” and that he had been assassinated due to a power struggle. **Subsequently**, one Somali outlet reported that at least 100 foreign al Qaeda fighters in Somalia had fled the country, partly due to leadership squabbles.

“It is true that those brothers left us and went to Yemen due to some minor internal misunderstandings amongst ourselves,” an al Shabaab

spokesperson was quoted as saying at the time. “This started when we lost our brother, Bilal el-Berjawi, on January 21.”

Once it became apparent that Berjawi had in fact been killed in a U.S. drone strike, the groups appear to have settled their differences and strengthened their alliance. Three weeks after Berjawi’s death, the leaders of both al Qaeda and al Shabaab appeared in a video together. Al Shabaab **pledged** its allegiance to al Qaeda and vowed that it would “march with you as loyal soldiers.”



Lisson Grove in northwest London. Sept. 29, 2015. Photo: Andrew Testa for The Intercept

SHORTLY BEFORE BERJAWI was killed, his wife back in London had given birth to a new baby boy. She is believed to have spent time with Berjawi in Somalia but had returned to London in 2011.

Upon hearing about the birth of his third child, Berjawi reportedly phoned his wife while she was in the hospital, hours before he was killed. Relatives speculated that it was this phone call that had exposed him as a target for the drone strike. That seems unlikely, however. According to the timeline obtained by *The Intercept*, Berjawi's location had already been established by the covert special operations unit nine days prior to the lethal attack. Cellphone surveillance helped pinpoint him on the day he died, but it is unclear whether the phone in question belonged to Berjawi, or whether it had been covertly placed in his vehicle by someone else to aid the strike.

Six months after Berjawi's death, in July 2012, al Shabaab **publicly executed** three men accused of helping British and American spy agencies kill Berjawi. In a propaganda video, the alleged informants confessed to having hidden a cellphone in Berjawi's vehicle so that he could be tracked and bombed. One of the accused informants, Isaac Omar Hassan, said a man working with the CIA in Mogadishu handed him a Nokia X2 cellphone and an envelope containing \$4,000 cash. He was asked to place the phone in Berjawi's vehicle and make sure it was turned on when requested, which he said he did on the day Berjawi was targeted.

BERJAWI'S CHILDHOOD FRIEND Mohamed Sakr, whom he had traveled with on his trips to Kenya and Somalia, met a similar fate.

In February 2012, about a month after Berjawi's demise, Sakr was also killed in a reported U.S. drone strike in Somalia.

The revocation of Berjawi's and Sakr's British passports prior to their deaths by U.S. drone strike has **raised questions** about whether the British government was secretly complicit in their assassination.

Ben Stack, a spokesperson for the U.K. **Home Office**, declined to comment for this story when asked whether the passports were revoked as part of a coordinated sequence of events that culminated in deadly attacks by U.S. special operations forces. “We don’t routinely comment on security matters,” he said.

Kat Craig, a lawyer with the London-based human rights group **Reprieve**, told me that she believed there was “mounting evidence” that the British government has used “citizenship-stripping” as a tactic to remove legal obstacles to killing people suspected of becoming affiliated with terrorist groups.



Bilal el-Berjawi holding an AK-47 rifle in a martyrdom video produced after his death by al Shabaab’s media wing.

“If the U.K. government had any role in these men’s deaths – including revocation of their citizenship to facilitate extra-judicial killings – then the public has a right to know,” Craig said. “Our government cannot be involved in secret executions. If people are accused of wrongdoing they should be brought before a court and tried. That is what it means to live in a democracy that adheres to the rule of law.”

Since 2006, the British government has reportedly **deprived** at least 27 people of their U.K. citizenship on national security grounds, deeming their presence “not conducive to the public good.” The power to revoke a person’s citizenship rests solely with a government minister, though the decision can be challenged through a controversial immigration court. When cases are brought on national security grounds, they are routinely based on secret evidence, meaning the accusations against individuals are withheld from them and their lawyers.

“The net effect of the practice,” according to Craig, is “not only to remove judicial oversight from a possible life and death decision, but also to close the doors of the court on anyone who seeks to expose some of the gravest abuses being committed by Western governments.”

There have **reportedly** been at least 10 British citizens killed in drone attacks as part of a covert campaign that, between 2008 and 2015, has gradually expanded from Pakistan to Somalia and now to Syria. Most recently, in late August, Islamic State computer hacker Junaid Hussain, a former resident of Birmingham, England, was **assassinated** on the outskirts of Raqqa, Syria, by a U.S. strike. Several days earlier, in another attack near Raqqa, the U.K. government **deployed** its own drones for the first time to target British citizens, killing Islamic State recruits Ruhul Amin and Reyaad Khan while they were traveling together in a car.

It remains unclear whether, like Berjawi and Sakr, these targets had their British passports revoked before they were killed. Stack, the Home Office spokesperson, would not discuss the citizenship status of Hussain, Amin, Khan, or other Brits killed by drones. “We don’t talk about individual cases and also we don’t comment on matters of national security,” he told me.



Regent's Park Mosque, northwest London. Sept. 29, 2015. Photo: Andrew Testa for The Intercept

AROUND THE COMMUNITY in which Berjawi grew up, the reverberations of his life and death continue to be felt. Most recently, **news reports** have featured his name as a one-time associate of Mohammed Emwazi, better known as the masked Islamic State executioner nicknamed “Jihadi John.” Emwazi lived near Berjawi in northwest London, and a source familiar with his circle of friends told me that the pair had attended the same school. Emwazi was a few years younger than Berjawi and “looked up” to him, according to the source, who asked not to be named.

Several of Berjawi's former friends still live and work in London but have distanced themselves from the controversy surrounding him. One of Berjawi's closest former friends now works as a bus driver; another of his peers has since become an imam. Many, including Berjawi's

family members and neighbors, are reluctant to talk about him publicly.

On the quiet tree-lined street in London where Berjawi spent his youth, cars come and go and a new generation of children laugh and play games out on the sidewalk. At Berjawi's old apartment, where some members of his family still live, there is a creased Arabic poster pinned to the door with a message for visitors. "Whoever believes in God and the Judgment Day," it reads, "let him speak up, or remain silent."

Top photo: Church Street Market near Edgware Road, London. Sept. 29, 2015. Andrew Testa for The Intercept

Additional reporting:



Jeremy Scahill

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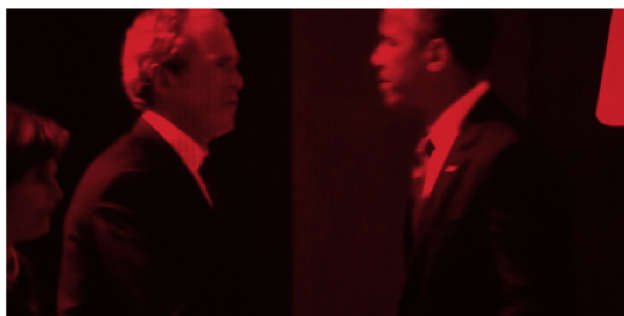
As the pandemic worsens, it's not just the virus itself that threatens human life. The corruption, cronyism, and incompetence of those in power is adding fuel to the fire. The public deserves to know more than just case counts and death tolls, which is why our reporters are digging deep to break stories on corporate profiteering and political jockeying that undermine public health.

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01.



THE ASSASSINATION COMPLEX

Jeremy Scahill

The whistleblower who leaked the drone papers believes the public is entitled to know how people are placed on kill lists

and assassinated on orders from the president.

02.

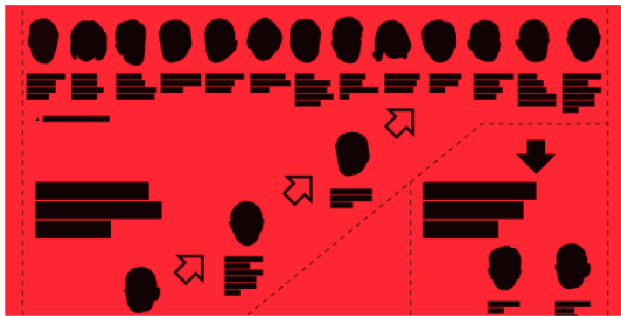


A VISUAL GLOSSARY

Josh Begley

Decoding the language of covert warfare.

03.

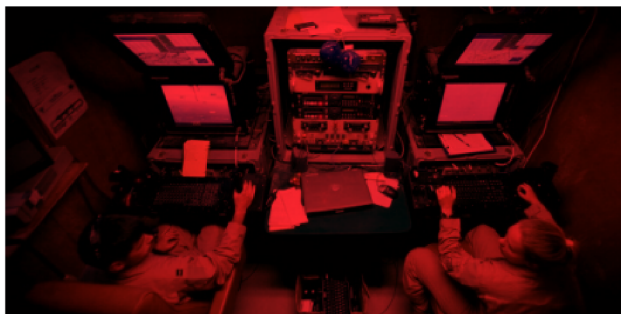


THE KILL CHAIN

Cora Currier

New details about the secret criteria for drone strikes and how the White House approves targets.

04.



FIND, FIX, FINISH

Jeremy Scahill

The tip of the spear in the Obama administration's ramped up wars in Somalia and Yemen was a special operations task force called TF 48-4.

05.

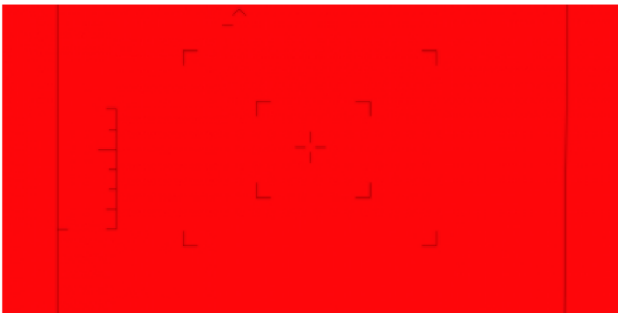


MANHUNTING IN THE HINDU KUSH

Ryan Devereaux

Leaked documents detailing a multi-year U.S. military campaign in Afghanistan reveal the strategic limits and startling human costs of drone warfare.

06.



FIRING BLIND

Cora Currier, Peter Maass

A secret Pentagon study highlights the chronic flaws in intelligence used for drone strikes in Yemen and Somalia.

07.



THE LIFE AND DEATH OF OBJECTIVE PECKHAM

Ryan Gallagher

For years Bilal el-Berjawi traveled freely from the U.K. to Somalia under the watchful eyes of intelligence services. Then the U.S. killed him with a drone strike.

08.



TARGET AFRICA

Nick Turse

To reduce the “tyranny of distance,” drones fly from bases in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Navy ships.

09. GLOSSARY

THE ALPHABET OF ASSASSINATION

A guide to the acronyms, abbreviations, and initialisms used in *The Drone Papers*.

10. DOCUMENTS

SMALL FOOTPRINT OPERATIONS 2/13

SMALL FOOTPRINT OPERATIONS 5/13

OPERATION HAYMAKER

GEOLOCATION WATCHLIST

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