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## Anthrax Suspect Didn't Act Alone, Leahy Posits

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Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman [Patrick J. Leahy](#) (D-Vt.) yesterday broke a years-long public silence about the anthrax-mailing case to cast doubt on the FBI's assertion that a bioweapons researcher acted as the lone culprit in the deadly attacks.

Leahy, one of two congressional addressees of poison-laced letters in the fall of 2001, did not offer reasons for his suspicions, which could heighten calls for an independent review of the evidence that authorities gathered against [Bruce E. Ivins](#).

FBI officials and federal prosecutors last month named Ivins as the sole perpetrator of the mailings, which killed five people and sickened 17. Ivins, a researcher at an Army lab at [Fort Detrick](#), Md., died July 29; he committed suicide before he could be publicly charged with a crime.

"If he is the one who sent the letter, I do not believe in any way, shape or manner that he is the only person involved in this attack on Congress and the American people," Leahy told [FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III](#) at a hearing yesterday. "I believe there are others involved, either as accessories before or accessories after the fact. I believe that there are others who can be charged with murder."

Mueller replied that agents "had followed every lead to determine whether anybody else was involved, and we will continue to do so." He told lawmakers that "even if" authorities closed the seven-year "Amerithrax" investigation, they would vet any fresh leads that pointed to other suspects.

The unusual exchange enlivened a hearing about a grab bag of issues related to the FBI's performance. The most heated questions focused on the anthrax case.

Leahy did not comment further about the case. According to congressional sources, he was not raising questions based on new evidence that would shift suspicion away from Ivins. Rather, Leahy's doubts stem from the complexity of the crime and the scientific properties of the anthrax spores used in the letters, they said.

Ivins's defense lawyer, Paul F. Kemp, said in an e-mail yesterday, "There is no evidence he acted at all in this case, let alone with anyone else."

At the hearing, [Sen. Arlen Specter](#) (R-Pa.) said there are "just so many questions unanswered," such as why the investigation continues a month after the death of the man prosecutors called the only suspect. "Did you personally review the evidence and come to a conclusion there was proof beyond a reasonable doubt?" Specter asked Mueller.

"Yes," Mueller responded.

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Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa) called on Mueller to support an independent review of the "detective work" in the case, including witness interviews, grand jury transcripts and other information in the probe. Other lawmakers sought classified information about labs in the United States and overseas, including CIA contract facilities, that could have produced the spores used in the attacks.

Former Senate majority leader Thomas A. Daschle (D-S.D.), who received one of the letters in 2001, yesterday said that "an independent review would be useful, given the high level of skepticism involving this matter and the lack of a conclusive ending."

The congressional session is expected to end late next week, making further hearings unlikely at least until after the elections, Senate aides said.

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