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AN ACCOUNT OF THE ARREST AND INTERVIEW OF ZACARIAS MOUSSAOUI

Harry Samit†

INTRODUCTION

On August 16 and 17, 2001, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) Senior Special Agent John Weess and I interviewed Zacarias Moussaoui following his arrest in Eagan, Minnesota. To my knowledge, we remain the only two law enforcement officials who have ever had a substantive conversation with Moussaoui regarding his reasons for being in the United States and his background as an Islamic extremist. Although Moussaoui lied to us extensively, we were able to learn essential facts regarding his religious and political views, his travel history, and his background. Moussaoui invoked his right to counsel on the afternoon of August 17, 2001, and has not been questioned since.

The FBI investigation of Moussaoui was opened at ten o’clock in the morning on August 15, 2001, after the FBI office in Minneapolis received a call from an employee at Pan Am International Flight Academy in Eagan, Minnesota. The employee called to pass on reports from a flight instructor at the school that a flight student was behaving suspiciously in connection with his training on the Boeing 747-400 passenger aircraft. The following day, after our investigation accumulated a significant amount of increasingly alarming information, Weess and I made the decision to arrest Moussaoui on an immigration violation. Moussaoui was arrested at 5:10 p.m. on August 16, 2001, at the Residence Inn in Eagan, Minnesota by two FBI agents and two INS agents working together as members of the Minneapolis Joint Terrorism Task Force.

† FBI Special Agent Harry Samit is assigned to the Minneapolis Joint Terrorism Task Force. He was the case agent for the FBI investigation of Zacarias Moussaoui in August 2001. The views in this article are his own, and do not necessarily represent the views of the FBI.
At the time of his arrest, the investigation of Moussaoui was thirty-one hours old. Given the relatively short timeframe of the case, much investigative work had already been accomplished before the interviews of Moussaoui began. Agents had queried U.S. government systems for information, conducted physical surveillance, and interviewed Moussaoui’s flight instructor at Pan Am. Immediately following Moussaoui’s arrest, Hussein al-Attas, Moussaoui’s traveling companion, was also interviewed.

While the database checks were inconclusive, the witness interviews certainly were not. The flight instructor set the stage by describing behavior wholly inconsistent with any previous student he had known. Moussaoui had informed him that he owned an import-export business in the UK and was pursuing his dream to become a pilot in the United States. This was not the normal pathway for students to come to Pan Am. The normal student at the school was already a rated airline pilot with considerable flight experience.

Al-Attas’s statements were even more compelling. Interviewed minutes after Moussaoui’s arrest in the hotel room they had been sharing, al-Attas described his friend “Shaqil” as a strict Muslim who
espoused violence in support of radical beliefs, and who was preparing for combat through martial arts training. Al-Attas claimed to know Moussaoui only by the name Shaqil—and stated that he was very secretive indeed.

Al-Attas, an undergraduate math major at the University of Oklahoma, was authoritative and credible on the subject of Islam. A Yemeni citizen who grew up in Saudi Arabia, he served as the second imam at a mosque in Norman, Oklahoma, when not attending class. While al-Attas proved willing to reveal certain details about Moussaoui, he did not tell us everything. Nonetheless, we learned enough to know that Moussaoui was an Islamic extremist who spoke often of violence against non-Muslims.

Because al-Attas presented Weess with a transcript from the University of Oklahoma showing he had been registered as a student for spring 2001, he met the requirements of his student visa. We were unable to find grounds to arrest al-Attas because he indicated an intention to register for the upcoming semester, which began in two weeks.

Since al-Attas indicated that he planned to check out of the

Photo by: Tony Vu

The Residence Inn in Eagan, Minnesota where Moussaoui stayed while training at the flight school.

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hotel the next day, we offered to take all of Moussaoui’s belongings to him at the INS office. Al-Attas informed us this was all right with him. Weess then telephoned agents who were with Moussaoui at the INS office. Moussaoui agreed to allow us to bring his documents, clothing, and computer to the office. Moussaoui had previously denied our request to search his belongings, so we were unable to do so without a search warrant, but we were at least able to bring his belongings to the office to preserve any possible evidence should we later obtain a search warrant. We were not about to let those items go with al-Attas if at all possible. Since Moussaoui had given permission, al-Attas helped us determine which items were Moussaoui’s and assisted us in loading the various bags into Weess’s vehicle.

After we finished with al-Attas, Weess and I returned to the INS office in Bloomington, Minnesota where Moussaoui was being held. We examined documents that had been on Moussaoui’s person, including his French passport, UK driver’s license, and documents pertaining to a Norman, Oklahoma bank account in his name. The passport was very interesting in that it bore a Pakistani tourist visa and corresponding entry and exit stamps indicating a two-month visit to Karachi in late 2000. The passport also showed Moussaoui spent most of June 2000 in Malaysia. The bank statement revealed that Moussaoui deposited $35,000 upon opening the account in February 2001. According to the passport, the opening of this account corresponded with his arrival in the United States from the UK. The driver’s license indicated he had a residence in London, which confirmed what he’d told his flight instructor.

DAY ONE, INS OFFICE—BLOOMINGTON, MINNESOTA

It was about eight o’clock in the evening when Weess and I began speaking to Moussaoui. The delay between the arrest and the interview had given us time to interview al-Attas and thoroughly review Moussaoui’s documents. It gave Moussaoui the chance to relax and get something to eat. We observed when we arrested him that Moussaoui had quickly gone from mildly annoyed to extremely upset in seconds. By the time he had been placed in handcuffs and seat belted into the back of the car which would transport him to the INS office, this tantrum progressed to where he claimed he could not breathe and told us he was going to be sick. Although I tried, attempts to engage him in conversation at the scene of his
arrest had proven unsuccessful.

Since his arrival at the INS office, Moussaoui had been given a veggie sub from Subway (per his request) and had become much calmer. As Weess and I brought Moussaoui from the holding cell to an office in the INS administrative section, Moussaoui began asking us questions, wanting to know when we could clear him to resume his "very expensive" training.

While we were walking and talking, I was able to observe Moussaoui closely for the first time. He was approximately five feet six, and stocky, with a shaved head and goatee. He looked African-American, an impression I formed when I first saw him walking to al-Attas' car from the hotel room. The "normal" American impression was enhanced by his American-style dress: khaki cargo pants, a blue t-shirt and sandals, a leather jacket, and a Nike ball cap.

The image was only dispelled when Moussaoui spoke, his
heavily French-accented English with a distinctive lisp marking him clearly as someone from overseas. I also noted Moussaoui had a very decisive, even forceful way of speaking, not at all like someone who'd made a mistake with their visa and just wanted to clear things up. It revealed an anger that was certainly not typical. The mistake in overstaying his visa waiver was Moussaoui’s, not ours, and while he was ostensibly appearing to cooperate, it was obvious he was intensely hostile towards us.

Once we were seated at a desk in an empty office, we informed Moussaoui that we were interested in speaking with him about his background and activities in the United States and elsewhere. Moussaoui agreed to speak with us and to sign and date an advice-of-rights form. By doing so, he acknowledged that he had been informed of the voluntariness of the interview, his right to an attorney, and his right to stop answering questions at any time—his Miranda warnings. We slid the form across the desk and Moussaoui read it. He then added his distinctive signature.

The interview began.

Weess and I decided in advance that the goal of the initial stages of the interview would be to get and keep Moussaoui talking in order to allow us to hear his whole story. We agreed not to push or confront him (yet) on any point in the interest of maintaining his willingness to continue participation in the interview. The primary purpose behind this strategy was to leave the door open for a second interview the following day. By doing so, we would have the opportunity to check Moussaoui’s story against information provided by witnesses, especially al-Attas. We would also be able to run any names or other information Moussaoui provided through databases so we could use any new facts on the second day if that became necessary.

An interview on day two would also allow us to follow up with Moussaoui on any interesting information that might emerge. We did not want to close the door on a later interview because Moussaoui would almost certainly have the impression we’d checked on the information he provided. Any guilty knowledge might make him more likely to reveal additional details on the second day if he believed we’d found something about him through checks that he knew we would conduct.

This is not to say that we would be completely indulgent of Moussaoui, no matter how fanciful his story became. We would certainly challenge him and be constantly probing for facts. We
would just do so without direct confrontation or accusation.

As we began our conversation, Weess and I observed that Moussaoui’s manner in the more formal setting of the office interview had become controlled. He seemed to be trying to appear cooperative and calm but underlying the veneer of agreeability was tension, mistrust, and anger.

A common theme that came through was Moussaoui’s desperation to continue his flight training. He mentioned this throughout the interview, even offering to return to immigration custody when finished, if he were permitted to complete instruction at Pan Am.

Moussaoui informed us that he had long dreamed of becoming a pilot. For this reason, he traveled to the United States for flight training. Moussaoui claimed that he chose the United States because the cost of obtaining a license in the UK was several times higher. He admitted that he had not been progressing in his training at the school in Oklahoma, primarily because the instructors were too young. Moussaoui stated that he had been told by his instructors that he was not cut out to be a pilot.

For this reason, Moussaoui decided to “follow his dream” of flying a big airplane. That was why he came to Pan Am for the 747 simulator training. Moussaoui indicated that, after this training, he intended to resume flying real airplanes. Obvious by its omission was Moussaoui’s lack of explanation as to how this type of advanced flight training would assist him with obtaining his private license. It made no sense for someone not progressing in his training in a Cessna 152 (at a cost of forty dollars an hour) to fork over nearly $9,000 for training in a 747 simulator. This could in no way assist Moussaoui in his goal of becoming a pilot, nor would any serious flight instructor ever recommend such a course of action.

Moussaoui informed us that he was a French citizen, born in the city of Saint-Jean-de-Luz to Moroccan parents. He stated that he was educated through the secondary school level in France, before moving to the UK for university. Following graduation, Moussaoui remained in the UK, where he claimed he worked various jobs.

When asked about his employment in the UK, Moussaoui was very vague, indicating he’d worked a variety of jobs. When asked to specify, Moussaoui indicated that he had worked for a short time in telemarketing for a company whose name he could not remember. Moussaoui also claimed he started a business initiative with an
Indonesian company involving phone cards, but told us that this had not worked out. He could not name the Indonesian company.

Moussaoui did not mention owning an import-export business in his initial reply. This stood out to me and Weess since this is the employment he’d described to the flight instructor. When we asked about this, Moussaoui indicated that he had been trying for a short time to establish a business to import grape leaves from France to Saudi Arabia, but stated that this had not worked out. He could not recall any other jobs he’d held, indicating only that he’d worked “here and there.”

This made the $35,000 Moussaoui had deposited upon arrival in Oklahoma suspicious, to say the least. For a person who was unable to name a single company for which he’d worked, $35,000 cash was a significant amount of money.

We pointed this out. Moussaoui’s reaction was pronounced. He became extremely angry, declaring that he had been working his whole life and saving money, and the $35,000 was the result. Weess and I then asked again for the names of his employers, a question that seemed to make Moussaoui angrier. He began to state in a choppy, halting manner that he had been working since the age of sixteen at a variety of jobs, all the while saving his pay. Moussaoui claimed that this was not unusual or suspicious. Even after repeated (gentle) prodding, he still proved unable to name any previous employer.

During this rant, Moussaoui worked in a description of his academic qualifications, to include a master’s degree in international business from Southbank University and an advanced degree in commerce and technology from the “Institute of Export”, both in the UK.

Since he mentioned the UK, we took the opportunity to discuss his life there. Moussaoui was asked about his residence in London, 23A Lambert Road. He replied that he lived there with other Moroccans who were primarily restaurant employees. As with his employment history, Moussaoui claimed to be unable to name any associates, not even roommates. He did state that he attended the Brixton and Finsbury Park mosques for worship, but claimed not to have the names of any fellow worshippers.

Moussaoui indicated that his family resided in France, including his mother, older brother, two sisters, and his father. Moussaoui informed us that he was estranged from his father, brother, and one sister. He would not tell us why this was but
indicated that it was for personal reasons.

Moussaoui was also asked about his foreign travel. He replied that he had traveled to Morocco and all over Europe. He also advised us that, in connection with the Indonesian telephone card venture, he visited Malaysia for approximately three weeks, Indonesia for approximately one week, and Pakistan for two months. He indicated that he was in Pakistan approximately six months before, and at first claimed that he was there in connection with the Indonesian telephone card venture.

When asked why the Malaysian and Indonesian visits were so much shorter than his trip to Pakistan, he explained that his reasons for being there were both connected to the business venture as well as personal. After being pressed to provide a reason for the personal component of the trip, Moussaoui indicated that he was in Pakistan attempting to get married, but that this did not work out.

Moussaoui stated that he traveled to Karachi, Pakistan, and that he stayed in hotels in that city the entire time. When asked whom he contacted in Pakistan, he indicated that he was in touch with the brother of a close friend of Pakistani origin who resided in London. Although he was unable to recall the brother’s name, he stated that his friend’s nickname was Talil. When asked for something more descriptive, Moussaoui stated that he could not recall his friend’s last name, but that his first was Ahmed.

When asked if he traveled outside Pakistan to another country during this trip or if he had visited any other cities in Pakistan, Moussaoui did not answer directly but instead became very angry. When we asked why he was so upset, Moussaoui claimed that he was aware of our accusations as a result of his having “watched television.” This line of questioning caused him to become extremely agitated and he refused to discuss the matter further. Because Weess and I were being careful to not cause Moussaoui to end the interview, we dropped this, but the Pakistan travel was highly interesting. We resolved to circle back on this during the next interview.

Our review of Moussaoui’s French passport showed that he entered Pakistan in December 2000 and exited in early February 2001. There were no visas, entry or exit stamps for Indonesia or Malaysia in Moussaoui’s passport. When asked why these did not appear, he indicated that this document was a recently issued replacement for one that had gone through the washing machine.
This was another important clue to us. We were well aware that terrorist operatives routinely destroyed or reported their passports stolen in order to obtain new documents which were free of tell-tale travel stamps. Given the weight of suspicious information piling up against Moussaoui, the washed-pasport story was a significant data point.

Moussaoui indicated that he attended the Regent's Park Mosque in London and a small mosque near the University of Oklahoma while in Norman. He stated that he met al-Attas, who is the "second imam" in Norman, while attending mosque and that the two became friends. He advised that he considers himself a religious Muslim and that al-Attas is as well.

Moussaoui denied that there were any particular Islamic scholars he followed. He claimed he was able to think for himself and thus did not need anyone's guidance. He stated that he regularly prayed five times per day and always helped his Muslim brothers. He indicated that with regard to studying fatwas, he was unable to read Arabic, only to speak it, and he does not understand what any of the fatwas say.

We then asked Moussaoui if he ever spoke openly about hurting people based on the way they treated Muslims. In contrast to some of the other questions which seemed to shock or throw him off balance, Moussaoui may have been expecting this one and was able to remain composed. He replied that he had to think about that question. He never gave us an answer.

Moussaoui told us that he had avoided being drafted into the French army as a result of "family problems" and the fact that he was studying for a degree at the time he reached military age. He informed us that he had no weapons training of any kind, but he had shot handguns once or twice in France with friends whose names he could not recall. Moussaoui stated that he would like to learn to use weapons as he is curious about them, but he repeated that he had never previously been taught to use one. Weess and I had the same opinion on this: Moussaoui was lying when he claimed he had never been trained in the use of weapons.

Moussaoui informed us that upon completion of his flight training in Minnesota, he and al-Attas planned to travel to New York City to “see sites,” including the Statue of Liberty, the “Empire State”, and the “White House”. He also advised that he planned to travel to Denver to do some unspecified business with United Airlines. Following this travel, Moussaoui indicated that he
planned to return to Oklahoma and fly back to the UK.

Weess and I then looked at each other and, by previous agreement extended an offer to Moussaoui to “look into” some of the facts he had just provided us in order to see whether it might be possible to resume his simulator training. We told him that he would have to spend the night in custody, but that we would like to bring him back the next day to resume our discussion. Moussaoui agreed to meet again and put in another pitch to be allowed to go back to Pan Am.

DAY TWO, INS OFFICE – BLOOMINGTON, MINNESOTA

It was the early afternoon of Friday, August 17, 2001, before we were able to resume our interview of Moussaoui. We were now completely convinced that Moussaoui’s reasons for seeking flight training were nefarious and involved a terrorist plot of some kind. The trick was getting him to admit this and reveal details and associates sufficient to allow us to stop the plot.

Much investigation had occurred that morning, including another interview of Moussaoui’s companion, al-Attas, who, as requested, had reported to the INS office at nine o’clock in the morning.

We had been hoping to convince al-Attas, whose cooperation the day before had been equivocal at best, that Moussaoui had revealed the details of a terrorist plot to us when interviewed the previous night. We hoped this would convince al-Attas to confess any details that he knew.

We did not succeed.

Al-Attas repeated his acknowledgement that Moussaoui was an Islamic extremist who espoused violence, even agreeing to sign a sworn statement to that effect. However, he remained adamant that he did not know details of any plot to harm others.

One mistake al-Attas did make was admitting that he worked part time at the mosque in Norman, Oklahoma. Weess’s skillful questioning led al-Attas to inform us that he taught classes at the mosque, for which he received a salary. During a short break, Weess checked al-Attas’ immigration file and determined that he had no employment authorization. This made him subject to arrest. He appeared quite distressed when Weess announced this to him. Very gently, al-Attas was led away to be processed.

We were disappointed. We had not learned anything more from al-Attas and our checks of Moussaoui’s information had not
yet yielded anything new. Weess and I decided that today’s interview would be much more direct. We would press Moussaoui on his lies and vagueness and do so for as long as he was willing to continue talking. We were prepared to accept the risk that Moussaoui might end the interview that day, but we considered the chance that he would admit what he was actually doing as worth it. We understood that when it became obvious to him that he was not going to be permitted to return to Pan Am to resume his training, Moussaoui would discontinue his cooperation anyway.

Moussaoui was brought in after his night in jail and began the interview with a very neutral demeanor. He informed us that he had never been arrested before and that his criminal record was clean. Moussaoui started off in a subdued manner, as if attempting to control himself and maintain the impression that he was legitimate.

The problem was that Moussaoui was unable to answer any number of reasonable questions on the previous day, casting significant suspicion on himself. Once we began probing for information on his reasons for being in the United States, travel history, associates, finances, and employment, Moussaouï’s temper flared, and by the end his anger and hatred of us and the United States in general again became apparent.

Moussaoui did acknowledge that his father, a builder, may have been in legal trouble in France but stated that he himself had never been under investigation. Moussaoui also gave us the name of his older brother, Abdsamed, and indicated he was an engineering professor in France. When I remarked to Moussaoui that his parents must be proud to have a son with such academic achievements, he glared at me and replied that he did not know what his parents thought.

We then began to press Moussaoui for information on associates—specifically telling him that he had not answered many of our questions satisfactorily. Weess and I explained to Moussaoui that we were looking for names and phone numbers of people who could verify his story regarding employment, residence in the UK, travel history, and interest in flight. We made it clear that we could not and would not release him to continue flight training unless we could confirm what he was saying.

Moussaoui considered this and then indicated that he had a friend in the UK named Talil, who was his primary source of income and whose name he had not been able to recall the
previous day. Moussaoui indicated Talil’s full name was Ahmed Atif and stated that he worked as an executive for a Dutch company whose name he was unable to recall. He could not provide us with a phone number or any means to contact Talil. Moussaoui also indicated that he had a friend nicknamed Habib who resided in Germany. He was equally unable to put us in contact with Habib, having no address, phone number, or e-mail address. When pressed, Moussaoui stated that he did not know the name of the city where Habib resided and could not explain how they met or stayed in touch.

These descriptions were obviously so weak and rang so hollow that we pointed this out to Moussaoui. We explained that normal people employed by legitimate businesses could name a few friends and provide their phone numbers, especially if this meant the difference between their being deported from the United States or allowed to continue some “very expensive” flight training.

Without addressing this issue directly, Moussaoui began what seemed to us to be a rehearsed reply about how his interest in learning to fly in the United States was genuine. Moussaoui explained that he had researched numerous flight schools in the United States with this goal in mind, and indicated that all of the schools involved advertised on the Internet. Moussaoui offered to show us their websites if we would allow him access to a computer.

We capitalized on this statement immediately by asking him if any of those websites were on his laptop computer which we’d brought to the INS office with us after he was arrested. Moussaoui quickly answered that they were not and told us that there was nothing on his computer. He again denied us permission to view the contents and shut down this line of discussion quickly. Weess and I both sensed extreme concern on his part at the mention that we might access his laptop.

It was time to go for broke.

Weess and I called for a short break during which we took time to discuss our strategy. We both agreed this would be the time to push Moussaoui on his lies. At best, we could be successful in getting him to admit he had been untruthful. Even if he didn’t, his reactions to our accusations might be useful.

We stayed out of the room for longer than was necessary, just to get a break from Moussaoui. Conversation with him was tiring since he was such an argumentative, quarrelsome person who challenged our need to know the answer to every question we
asked. We needed the few extra minutes away from him to regroup. The delay was also good from an investigative perspective as we wanted to give Moussaoui the impression we had received some additional incriminating information while we were out of the room. If Moussaoui thought we had been able to learn what he was planning by some other means, we reasoned he would possibly admit it. Weess and I intended to make this pitch from the strongest position possible, and we were doing our best to ensure we had every advantage.

Moussaoui looked up at us expectantly when we entered.

We began, not with questions, as previously, but by explaining that much of what Moussaoui had told us had not checked out or had been too vague to verify. We informed Moussaoui that it was obvious he had not been telling us the truth about his business connections, his past employment, his associates, his reasons for being in the United States, and his true purpose for flight training.

Moussaoui, as expected, responded angrily and began shouting at us that he had been telling us the truth. He started repeating that he was a legitimate businessman who was simply in the United States to learn to fly.

Since this was the first time we were directly accusing Moussaoui of lying, it was a key point in the interviews. Moussaoui’s response said it all.

It is an axiom taught to new investigators in “Law Enforcement Interviewing 101” that a person who is telling the truth reacts very angrily at being accused of lying. While individual responses vary widely based on the person’s temperament, mood, and relationship/rapport with the accuser, no one likes being called a liar when they are not lying, and it shows. Even if the person does not flip out, the signs of anger are there. As a survival instinct, humans are very adept at sensing the mood of others, especially when that mood is anger. This is especially true in the case of an interviewer engaging in behavior which should elicit an angry response. When it doesn’t, it’s obvious.

Someone who is actually lying, on the other hand, generally does not become as resentful at being accused of this but instead changes their approach in an attempt to convince the accuser that they are telling the truth. They feel a need to persuade the person of their truthfulness and do not usually react with anger because they know it is a lie, and therefore that the accuser is really correct.

Because Moussaoui’s baseline demeanor throughout the
interviews had been angry already, he should have been enraged at being told by us that nothing he'd said over the previous two days was true. When we began itemizing his lies to him, he responded quickly and in a loud voice as expected, but careful observation showed he was not really angry. Despite the histrionics and gestures, Moussaoui was in full control of himself—his muscles were not tense, his jaw not clenched, and his eyes were alert and continually searching ours to see whether we were being persuaded. In short, he was not really mad—he was lying.

Weess then smoothly transitioned to direct accusations. He informed Moussaoui that we were aware that he was participating in flight training in order to conduct a terrorist attack. Moussaoui began denying this, but now plainly looked very concerned at what was being said. I jumped in and informed Moussaoui that his suspicious behavior and obviously false story made it clear that he was a terrorist. I hinted that our checks on his name, (which, in truth had not yielded anything at that point), showed his connections to terrorism. Moussaoui now looked very concerned.

I then explained to Moussaoui that we were aware that others were involved in his plans and reminded him that they remained at large. I informed Moussaoui that if his associates were successful in carrying out their plan and this resulted in the deaths of Americans, that he would be the one held responsible by the American people. I pointed out to Moussaoui that he was the one in custody, and I told him I thought it would be foolish for him to take the blame for their actions all alone. I thought this might work—it didn’t.

Moussaoui had been looking back and forth between Weess and me as each of us spoke in turn. He had stopped yelling at us in response to our accusations and was clearly listening—and thinking.

Weess resumed the discussion. He leaned towards Moussaoui and informed him that we were aware that he was a member of a group planning to carry out an attack in the United States using airplanes. Weess asked Moussaoui to describe the plot to us, to name the members of his group, and to tell us which Islamic scholars provided justification for the attack. It was a great line of questioning, and one which was calculated to show Moussaoui that we knew what he was up to. We did not yet know these details for sure, but Moussaoui’s suspicious behavior and his statements and actions, which had convinced us he was an Islamic extremist, made
it a worthwhile gamble. Weess was basing this question on our knowledge of how terrorist groups (including and especially al Qaeda) worked, hoping that this would persuade Moussaoui to talk.

At the mention of the word “group” Moussaoui became visibly alarmed. Even though Weess continued talking for thirty seconds or more after telling Moussaoui we knew he was a member of a group, Moussaoui was clearly no longer listening. The word “group” had shut him down.

What Moussaoui did do when Weess paused was open and close his mouth a few times without speaking, his eyes wide with fear. When he finally spoke, Moussaoui swallowed and said, much more quietly and deliberately than usual, that since we believed he was a member of a group, he wanted to speak to an immigration lawyer.

We then immediately ended the interview, as required by law.
The Advice of Rights form signed by Moussaoui while in the FBI's custody.