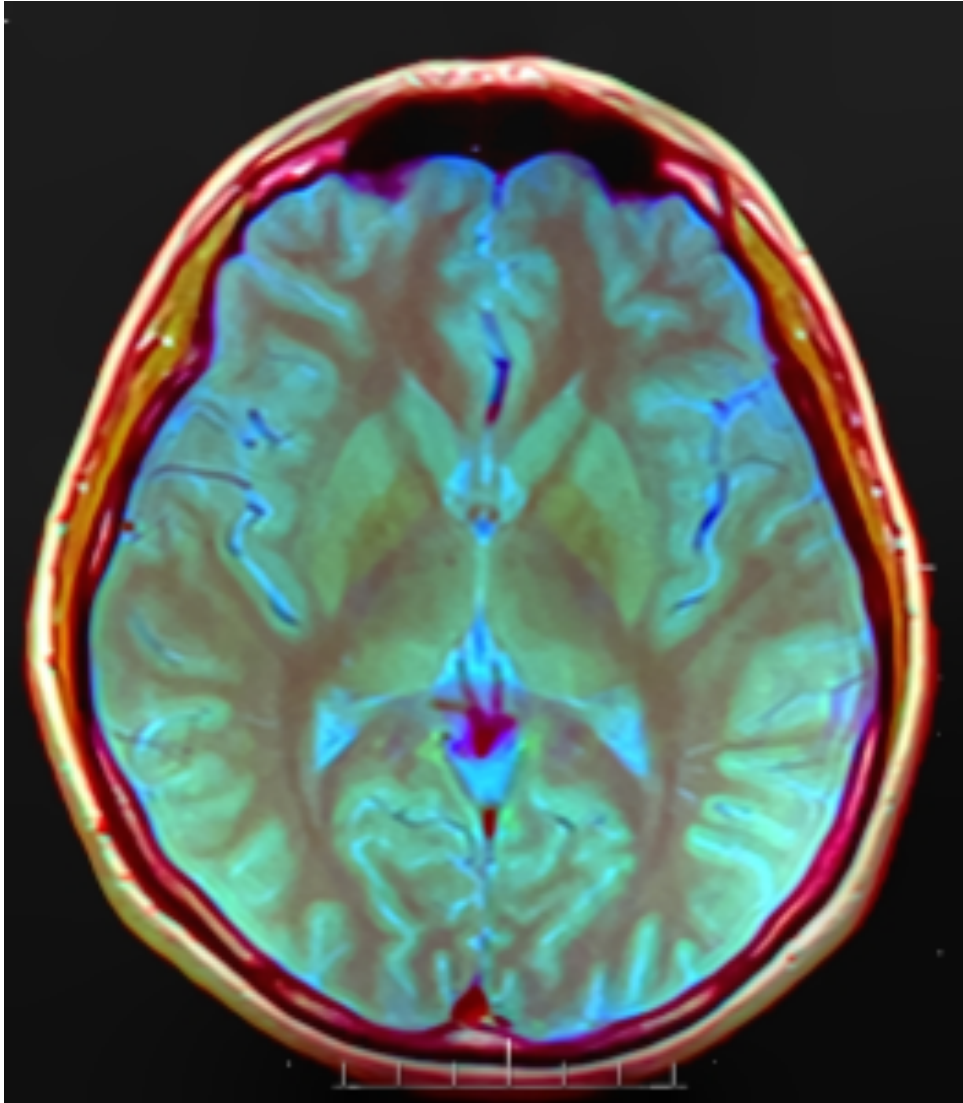


'The Government is Lying': Attorney Mark Zaid Discusses Havana Syndrome Cover-Up

Amy Elise



The attorney that represents numerous individuals stricken with Havana syndrome says that the U.S. Government is engaged in a cover-up aimed at hiding the true nature of the debilitating condition, and has been doing so since at least the mid-1990s—possibly since the height of the Cold War—a view born from his having investigated the issue for more than a decade, making use of a high-level security clearance to unearth the secrets federal officials would rather keep buried.

With three decades of experience in representing federal employees, intelligence agents and military officers, attorney Mark S. Zaid has been representing individuals diagnosed with what the government calls ‘anomalous health incidents’ (AHI) since 2013: three years before Havana syndrome started making headlines, Zaid took on former National Security Agency agent named Michael Beck as a client, who was hit with the condition in 1996 while operating in a still-classified location. At the time, Zaid said that he and Beck knew of at least one other individual affected by

AHI, another NSA agent that had presumably been attacked in Moscow.

Speaking in an interview on the [May 1 edition of Matt West's *The Good Trouble Show*](#), Zaid said that following the 2016 AHI outbreak in Cuba, he was “retained by State Department personnel, real diplomats who were based in Havana” to represent them in their efforts to have the federal government recognize their long-term, debilitating symptoms; this set of diplomatic clients was soon followed by “clients from the Defense Intelligence Agency; from the Central Intelligence Agency; from the Federal Bureau of Investigation; from USAID, the U.S. Agency for International Development,” and “from the Commerce Department.”

Zaid said that he believes that [AHI is induced by a device](#) that evolved from microwave-based surveillance technologies used by the Soviet Union during the cold war; although the original intent of this technology was to remotely power listening devices hidden in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, the deleterious effect that flooding the area with enough microwave radiation to power the bugs had on the individuals did not go unnoticed by Soviet agents, apparently leading to a weaponized form of this technology.

“My view is this technology has evolved over time, as technologies do, so that at some point in time it has been weaponized,” Zaid stated. He went on to point out that former [Secretary of State Henry Kissinger](#) suspected that the U.S. Ambassador to Russia may have been killed by exposure to the intense microwaves beamed at the embassy.

Zaid agrees with the former head of the DIA's investigation into AHI, Lieutenant Colonel Greg Edgreen, in his assessment that [AHI is being caused by deliberate attacks carried out by covert Russian operatives](#).

Regarding the victims, Zaid said that “the commonality for almost all of them, and most of the victims I'm aware of... has been Russia: some sort of Russian work that they were engaged in to counter Russian counter intelligence, counter espionage, nuclear proliferation, whatever it might have been.” Zaid went on to say that some of the victims appeared to have been attacked due to cases of “mistaken identities, they got caught in the crossfire”; for instance an individual that had taken up residence in a home formerly occupied by a CIA agent.

Although some of the incidents have occurred at the victims' places of work, “most of them have been in their residences, whether it's single family homes or condos hotel rooms” in the countries that they are assigned to, “and of course that means that very often there are family members who are present” who are affected by AHI-causing attacks, “where children, minors, some teenagers, but even infants under 12 years old have been impacted.

“I have one client, I think the child was about five or six at the time, and they went from just an incredibly healthy, normal child... to someone who has trouble literally just walking in a straight line without falling over.” Zaid also described instances where the pets of the families struck with AHI appear to have been affected as well, having “developed tumors,” as well as “dogs that, all of a sudden, their behavior is inconsistent with normal behavior” in previously healthy animals.

Zaid is also convinced that an ongoing cover up has been in place for decades—possibly extending as far back as the 1970s with the Embassy incident in Moscow—as evidenced by his work with Michael Beck. Although earlier investigations documented physical injuries being found in the brains of AHI victims, [recent reports have been more dismissive of the condition](#), saying that AHI may simply be attributed to more mundane causes.

“I will say emphatically, on this particular issue, the government is lying: the DNI, the CIA is lying,” Zaid insisted during his interview. “Now, I say that not because I'm just interpreting the same information that everybody else is; I'm saying that because I've reviewed classified information: I've

sat in on many classified briefings; I talk to my CIA, DIA, NSA, intelligence community, law enforcement clients about this.”

Zaid said that “the information I have seen on the inside contradicts, 180 degrees, what the government is saying publicly,” pointing out that the reports’ authors employed an unhealthy amount of spin to downplay the issue. However, he also pointed out that previous reports from other agencies expressed a “low-level confidence in the conclusion” that foreign adversary *wasn’t* responsible for AHI.

He also highlighted the fact that “when those reports came out the government even admitted that [in] about two dozen cases [they could not identify any alternative environmental factor](#) or pre-existing medical condition to explain the person’s circumstance.

“That should have been the screaming headline of those reports: ‘Two Dozen American Officials Seemingly Were Attacked by Something and We Don’t Know What It Is.’” Zaid remarked. “But that was, unfortunately, ignored.”

Regarding the existence of technologies capable of inducing AHI-like injuries, as part of his efforts to secure compensation for Michael Beck’s injuries [Zaid managed to obtain a declassified NSA statement](#) that said “The National Security Agency confirms that there is intelligence information from 2012 associating the hostile country to which Mr. Beck traveled in the late 1990’s, with a high powered microwave system weapon that may have the ability to weaken, intimidate or kill an enemy, over time, and without leaving evidence.

“The 2012 intelligence information indicated that this weapon is designed to bathe a target’s living quarters in microwaves, causing numerous physical effects, including a damaged nervous system.”

When asked about the potential geopolitical repercussions of these attacks being due to the actions of a foreign adversary, Zaid said that “without a doubt that could be construed as an act of war.”

“We have cases here on U.S. soil that we believe were committed by a foreign adversary; you can’t get more act of war than that, beyond dropping a bomb on Pearl Harbor, or blowing up the World Trade Center,” he added.

“The question then is, what response should we be engaged with as a result, and that’s where the conundrum certainly comes in, understandably, as to maybe why the US government is not revealing, ‘yes we have evidence that Russia, Iran, China, whomever, was responsible, but we’re not doing anything.’”

Zaid also speculated about a number of other valid reasons behind the government’s efforts to sweep the AHI issue under the rug, including the possibility that the government may be unable to protect its high-level officials and agents from this sort of debilitating attack—even on U.S. soil—a prospect that could have a negative impact on not only the morale of current employees, but also the acquisition of future recruits as well. And although he admits that he has no evidence that the U.S. has done so, Russia might also call out the U.S. for any potential attacks made by its own agents with similar technology.

Zaid says he and his firm are continuing their work toward transparency on the AHI issue, saying that their “message to the government, and those inside the government, is ‘be on the right side of history’; it will ultimately come out that we are right and they are wrong.”

To that end, evidence submitted by Zaid to Congress has already resulted in the initiation of a formal House Select Committee on Intelligence investigation into the matter in December 2023, and a letter from numerous Senators to the White House demanding more information.

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