

23 Sep, 2001

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[REDACTED]

To: Central Intelligence Agency
CST Division
PO Box 4605, Dept. Internet
Reston, VA 20195

Re: Arabic Speakers/ Middle Eastern Specialists?

Dear Sir or Madam,

I would like to learn more about, and explore the possibility of, working for the CIA as an operations officer.

I am fluent in Arabic, having grown up, and attended school (1st through 12th grade) in the Middle East – specifically, the Sudan.

I am a US citizen.

I have a BA in history (with honors) from George Mason University, in Fairfax, VA, from which I graduated in 1997 with a 3.78 GPA.

I also have a JD from the University of Virginia School of Law, in Charlottesville, VA, from which I graduated in 2000 with a 3.2 GPA.

I took and passed the Virginia bar exam in July of 2000. I am licensed in Virginia, with a waive-in application before the District of Columbia bar.

I am a practicing attorney, specializing in complex civil litigation – to wit, consumer class actions.

Working for the CIA or other government intelligence agency (I am also exploring the NSA and Army intelligence) had not crossed my mind before September 11th. However, media reports have been rife with accounts of the intelligence community's need for those with knowledge of Middle Eastern culture and languages. I know enough of both to where I could pass for a native – I *was* a native. I would like to lend a hand, hence, this letter.

Attached is my resume. I live and work in the DC region, so it would be relatively easy to arrange a meeting if you are interested enough in following up on this with an interview.


Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Khalid A. Elhassan

Qualifications Supplement

Khalid A. Elhassan



Education Information

1. Why did you choose your major and what GPA did you receive in it?

I majored in history - I have been a history buff since childhood, so it was relatively easy to accumulate a 3.78 GPA. It was a lot of fun, but with the job market saturated with my fellow history buffs' B.A.s, coupled with the absence of any burning desire on my part to enter the real world at that time, I cast about for a plan B. That took me to law school - the best three years of my life, so far. I got my J.D. with a 3.2 GPA. I love being a lawyer, but I am still a history buff. If circumstances permit, I plan on taking one or two evening classes every semester, starting this fall, with an eye toward accumulating enough over a few years for a history master's or PhD.

2. What courses did you like best? Least?

In undergrad, I liked all the history courses, but were I to choose a favorite, it would be the Roman Republic. Least liked were my two biology courses. In law school, my favorite courses were torts and complex civil litigation. Contracts was the course I liked least. I now make a living destroying abusive contracts.

3. Did you pay any of your expenses while attending college? If so, elaborate.

I worked full time while attending college full time - combining 50+ hour workweeks with 15 credit semesters. It was rough, but that, plus student-loans, took care of my college expenses. I did well enough in college to win a decent academic scholarship law school - to be a student, exclusively, without the distraction of a 50-hour-a-week jobs, or any job for that matter other than summer internships, contributed to making law school so enjoyable.

Personality and Interests

1. Why do you wish to work for this organization?

At the risk of sounding hokey, patriotism - that and a sense of duty or obligation owed an adoptive country that has been pretty good to me. Post 9/11, there were many reports in the media to the effect that our intelligence agencies were in dire need of Arabic speakers and people otherwise familiar with the Middle East. I was born and raised in the Middle East, so I fit the bill as far as that go. Under those circumstances, I think it would be dishonorable if I did not volunteer.

2. What other careers have you considered?

Law and litigation - what I am doing right now. I love it, think I have a natural knack for it, and so far, things seem to point that way. Other than that, I plan on teaching college-level history some day - maybe in 20 years or so.

3. How do you usually spend your leisure time?

Lately, I have had relatively little free time - the caseload keeps me busy. Most of my free time is spent reading, or on occasional socializing - or with whatever special friend I have at the time. If I had more free time, I would probably devote much of it to hiking, spur-of-the-moment road trips, or travel. One thing I am looking forward to this year is the soccer world cup tournament this summer - I am saving my vacation time and sick days for the second half of the tournament.

4. What is your principal asset?

If by asset the question refers to character traits,¹ tenacity/ doggedness is what first leaps to mind. I also think I have a somewhat decent mind.

5. What is your principal shortcoming?

I am sure I have many - tenacity and doggedness can easily morph into stubbornness. I am also overly optimistic at times - my benign spin on pie in the sky-ism. Finally, a harsh streak rounds off the list of shortcomings I can think of right now.

6. How would you describe yourself? *(One page or more.)*

¹ If it refers to financial assets instead, the principal one would be the equity on my car.

Probably as the kind of person who dislikes emoting, thinks an entire page (or more) of describing oneself to a stranger is excessively emotive, but who would write such a page because it is required.

My grandfather probably played a greater role than any single person in shaping my view of the world, life, and what is expected of a man. He was a retired soldier, on and off politician, general eccentric, author, and a great raconteur - I used to ceaselessly hound him for tales about his life, especially stories about WW2 (he had fought for the British in East Africa, with the 8th Army in North Africa, and finally, in Italy). He had a decent sized personal library - a huge one by Sudanese standards. The first non-kiddie book I read was a five or six volume collection I snuck out of that library a volume at a time - it was his favorite collection, somewhat rare, with the author's signature on the first volume, and I was 10. They were Churchill's WW2 memoirs, and 18 years and a thousand plus books later, they still rank high on my list of favorite reads.²

I never had a role model, but my grandfather probably comes closest to one. He was a stoic, and some of that rubbed off on me. He despised cowardice, and that rubbed off on me too - while I am nowhere near fearless, I can act in spite of fear. By the standards of his time and place, he was also an iconoclast - for example, unlike most of his countrymen who accepted religion as literal truth, he was an avowed atheist who never tired of denouncing religion in general as a sham, and religious leaders as charlatans. I think some of that is reflected in a tendency of mine to question things.

That is the formative background. As to the present package it helped create, I would describe myself as multifaceted, with a few contrasts: somewhat intelligent, obtuse, well-read, contrarian, and, depending on various variables, I could at turns be pleasant, abrasive, kind, cruel, sympathetic, devoid of empathy, sacrificing, selfish, romantic, cynical, helpful, spiteful, generous, opportunistic, smooth, rough, open minded, bigoted, forgiving, vindictive, and a conservatively liberal right wing socialist revolutionary.

There are a few constants though, and from those I almost never depart: tenacity, humility³, loyalty, self reliance, and a fierce independence.

² I read his *History of the English - Speaking Peoples* recently, and thought it was so-so - maybe the memoirs were also so-so, and I found them fascinating only because it takes relatively little to fascinate a 10 year old. I plan on reading them again to find out.

³ A rare superstition I entertain is the belief that boasting of good fortune or success invites a fickle fate to step in and jinx things.