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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION



DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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**13 July 2004**

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**Khalid Shaykh Muhammad:  
Preeminent Source On  
Al-Qa'ida (S//NF)**

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**Khalid Shaykh Muhammad: Preeminent Source On Al-Qa'ida (S//NF)**

**Key Findings (U)**

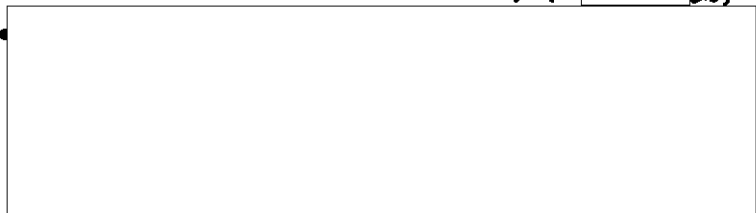
Since his March 2003 capture, Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (KSM), the driving force behind the 11 September attacks as well as several subsequent plots against US and Western targets worldwide, has become one of the US Government's key sources on al-Qa'ida. As a detainee, he has provided [redacted] reports that have shed light on al-Qa'ida's strategic doctrine, plots and probable targets, key operatives, and the likely methods for attacks in the US homeland, leading to the disruption of several plots against the United States.

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- Information from KSM has not only dramatically expanded our universe of knowledge on al-Qa'ida's plots but has provided leads that assisted directly in the capture of other terrorists, including Jemaah Islamiya leader Hambali and the "other" shoe bomber, Sajid Badat. (S//NF)

KSM steadfastly maintains that his overriding priority was to strike the United States but says that immediately after 11 September he realized that a follow-on attack in the United States would be difficult because of new security measures. As a result, KSM's plots against the US homeland from late 2001 were opportunistic and limited, including a plot to fly a hijacked plane into the tallest building on the US West Coast and a plan to send al-Qa'ida operative and US citizen Jose Padilla to set off bombs in high-rise apartment buildings in a US city. (S// [redacted] NF)

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- CIA assesses that KSM has revealed at least the broad outlines of the set of terrorist attacks upon which he and his lieutenants focused from about 1999 until his detention four years later. We judge that KSM has been generally accurate because his information tends to be consistent, and much of it has been corroborated by fellow detainees and other reporting. (S// [redacted] NF)

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[redacted] we assess that KSM still is withholding significant information on plots around the world— including inside the United States— [redacted]

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- KSM continues to provide fresh information; in recent debriefings, he has identified two photographs of al-Qa'ida operative Issa al-Hindi—who may be involved in the preelection plot—and provided analysis on how al-Qa'ida might conduct attacks in the US homeland. (S/ [redacted] DF)

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**Khalid Shaykh Muhammad:  
Preeminent Source On Al-Qa'ida  
(S//NF)**

**What KSM Has Told Us (S//NF)**



Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (KSM), the driving force behind the 11 September attacks as well as several subsequent plots against US and Western targets worldwide, has become, since his capture in March 2003, a key intelligence source for the US Government on al-Qa'ida's plots and personalities. Debriefings since his detention have yielded [redacted] reports that have shed light on the plots, capabilities, the identity and location of al-Qa'ida operatives, and affiliated terrorist organizations and networks. He has provided information on al-Qa'ida's strategic doctrine, probable targets, the impact of striking each target set, and likely methods of attacks inside the United States.

- KSM has also provided in considerable detail the traits and profiles that al-Qa'ida sought in Western operatives after the 11 September attacks, including individuals holding US status, possessing authentic Western travel documents, and being familiar with the West.
- In addition, KSM has given us insight into how al-Qa'ida might conduct surveillance of potential targets in the United States, how it might select targets, and the method of communication used

between operatives and planners.  
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It will take years to determine definitively all the plots in which KSM was involved and of which he was aware, but our extensive debriefings of various KSM lieutenants since early 2003 suggest that he has divulged at least the broad outlines of his network's most significant plots against the United States and elsewhere in his role as al-Qa'ida's chief of operations outside Afghanistan:

- *Striking the United States.* Despite KSM's assertion that a post-11 September attack in the United States would be difficult because of more stringent security measures, he has admitted to hatching a plot in late 2001 to use Jemash Islamiya (JI) operatives to crash a hijacked airliner into the tallest building on the US West Coast. From late 2001 until early 2003, KSM also conceived several low-level plots, including an early 2002 plan to send al-Qa'ida operative and US citizen Jose Padilla to set off bombs in high-rise apartment buildings in an unspecified major US city and an early 2003 plot to employ a network of Pakistanis—including Iyman Faris and Majid Khan—to target gas stations, railroad tracks, and the Brooklyn Bridge in New York. KSM has also spoken at length about operative Ja'far al-Tayyar, admitting that al-Qa'ida had tasked al-Tayyar to case specific targets in New York City in 2001.
- *Attacks in Asia, Europe, the Middle East.* During 2000-2001, KSM plotted attacks against US and other targets in Southeast Asia using al-Qa'ida and JI operatives, but after the 11 September attacks he claims that he largely regarded JI operatives as a resource for his plots against targets in Europe and

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This assessment was prepared by the DCI Counterterrorist Center's Office of Terrorism Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, [redacted]

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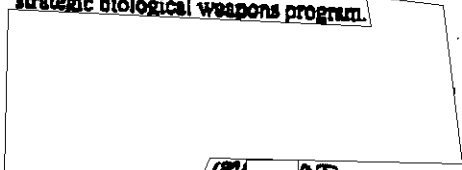
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**Using KSM To Implicate Sufaat in CBRN Plotting (S//NF)**

Reporting from KSM has greatly advanced our understanding of al-Qa'ida's anthrax program.

- In response to questions about al-Qa'ida's efforts to acquire WMD, KSM revealed he had met three individuals involved in al-Qa'ida's program to produce anthrax. He appears to have calculated, incorrectly, that we had this information already, given that one of the three—Yazid Sufaat—had been in foreign custody for several months before KSM's arrest for unrelated terrorist activity.
- When confronted with the information provided by KSM, Yazid, who had access to press reports and therefore knew of KSM's capture, expressed anger because he figured it was KSM who betrayed him. Eventually, Yazid admitted his principal role in the anthrax program and provided some fragmentary information on his, at the time, still large assistants. But it was ultimately the information provided by KSM that led to the capture of Yazid's two principal assistants in the anthrax program.
- KSM's fragmentary reporting on al-Qa'ida's WMD program, coupled with reporting from detainees captured as a result of his reporting, opened important new leads to al-Qa'ida's strategic biological weapons program.



the United States. KSM took a robust role in directing and assisting operations during 2002 and early 2003, including overseeing the Heathrow Plot, providing money to Hambali for terrorist plots in East Asia, and encouraging attacks against US targets in Saudi Arabia. He has also revealed details of the al-Qa'ida bombing of the Djerba synagogue in Tunisia in April 2002 and his role in this attack.

- **CBRN Attacks.** Reporting from several sources, including from KSM himself, indicates that from 2001, he was involved with al-Qa'ida's efforts to produce anthrax and typhoid. He claimed that fellow mujahidin sought his help in acquiring chemical and/or biological agents for use in attacks but that such materials were not available to him. Other reporting suggests, moreover, that none of KSM's operatives—including Jose Padilla, the so-called "dirty bomber"—had succeeded in producing chemical, biological, or radiological weapons as of March 2003.
- **Historical Plots.** KSM has been one of the primary sources on understanding how the 11 September attacks were conceived, planned, and executed. While KSM was the manager of the 11 September plot, he claims to lack knowledge of many aspects of the attack's planning and execution because Bin Ladin and his deceased deputy Muhammad 'Adif played a key role in the selection of operatives, and Ramzi Bin al-Shibh, not KSM, was in direct contact with the 11 September hijackers once they were in the United States. KSM also has provided a fair amount of detail on the 1994-95 "Bojinka" plot—formulated along with his nephew Ramzi Yousef—in which they conspired to explode in midair a dozen US-flagged airliners over the Pacific Ocean. (S//NF)

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<sup>1</sup> KSM has not admitted to a role in the bombing by JI operatives of nightclubs in Bali in October 2002; Hambali claims that he financed these bombings from funding provided by KSM for attacks in general in Southeast Asia.

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**KSM's Rolodex A Boon For Operations (S//NF)**

KSM's decade-long career as a terrorist, during which he met with a broad range of Islamic extremists from around the world, has made him a key source of information on numerous al-Qa'ida operatives and other mujahidin. He has provided intelligence that has led directly to the capture of operatives or fleshed out our understanding of the activities of important detainees, which in turn assisted in the debriefings of these individuals.

- Most recently, for example, KSM provided a critical boost to efforts to locate elusive al-Qa'ida operative Issa al-Hindi—who may be involved in al-Qa'ida's reported effort to attack the United States before the Presidential election—by identifying two of his photographs. (S//NF)



Similarly, information that KSM provided to us on Majid Khan in the spring of 2003 was the crucial first link in the chain that led us to the capture of prominent JI leader and al-Qa'ida associate Hambali in August 2003 and more than a dozen Southeast Asian operatives slated for attacks against the US

homeland. KSM told us about Khan's role in delivering \$50,000 in December 2002 to operatives associated with Hambali.

- In an example of how information from one detainee can be used in debriefing another detainee in a "building-block" process, Khan—who had been detained in Pakistan in early 2003—was confronted with KSM's information about the money and acknowledged that he delivered the money to an operative named "Zubair." Khan also provided Zubair's physical description and contact number. Based on that information, Zubair was captured in June 2003.

- During debriefings, Zubair revealed that he worked directly for Hambali and provided fragmentary information [redacted]

[redacted] we used the information Zubair provided by Zubair to [redacted] arrest Hambali.

- Next, KSM—when explicitly queried on the issue—identified Hambali's brother, 'Abd al-Hadi, as a prospective successor to Hambali. Although we were previously aware of 'Abd al-Hadi, KSM's allegation of his importance prioritized and expedited his capture. Information from multiple detainees, including KSM, narrowed down 'Abd al-Hadi's location, and he was captured in Karachi in September 2003.

- Bringing the story full circle, 'Abd al-Hadi identified a cell of JI operatives—some of them pilots—whom Hambali had sent to Karachi for possible al-Qa'ida operations. When confronted with his brother's revelations, Hambali admitted that he was grooming members of the cell for US operations—at the behest of KSM—probably as part of KSM's plot to fly hijacked planes into the tallest building on the US West Coast. (S//NF)

Leads KSM provided in November 2003 led directly to the arrest of Sajid Badat in the UK; KSM had volunteered the existence of Badat—whom he knew as "Issa al-Pakistani"—as the operative who was slated to launch a simultaneous shoe-bomb attack with Richard Reid in December 2001.

- Using the intelligence from KSM on Badat, debriefers queried Ammar al-Baluchi, who provided additional information about the UK operative.

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**KSM's Information Seems Credible ... (S//NF)**

KSM has recounted bits of the information he has provided, and the bulk of his reporting—such as on the Heathrow plot and operatives targeted for missions against the United States after 11 September—has been consistent with or corroborated by reporting from other detainees

- Shortly after his capture, KSM probably was willing to divulge limited information on the Heathrow plot because key Heathrow plotter Ramzi Bin al-Shibh had been detained about six months earlier. Nevertheless, KSM withheld details about the evolution of the operation until confronted with reporting from two other operatives knowledgeable concerning the plot—Khalid Bin 'Atash and KSM's nephew Ammar al-Baluchi—who were caught two months after KSM.

- KSM also provided much more specific information on al-Qa'ida's operational activities with JI and the identities of JI operatives only after he was confronted by detailed questions derived from the debriefings of JI leader and al-Qa'ida associate Hambali, who was detained in August 2003.

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**How KEM Compares With Other High-Value Detainees (S//NF)**

KEM and fellow senior detainee Zayn al-'Abidin Abu Zubaydah are the brightest "stars" among the high-value detainees (HVDs), surpassing by far the other high-value detainees in terms of quantity and quality of intelligence information. Together they account for over half of the HVDs' reporting output,  as of June 2004. In addition to the volume of their reporting, KSM and Abu Zubaydah have been pivotal sources

- A second tier of al-Qa'ida HVDs, such as Hassan Ghul, KSM's nephew Ammar, USS Cole plotter Khalid Bin 'Atash, and JI leader Hambali, have also been very useful as sources, but none of them have the breadth and depth of information of KSM and Abu Zubaydah. (S//NF)

**... But Probably Still Retains Important Information (S//NF)**

we assess that KSM still is withholding significant information, such as:

- **US-Based Plots.** KSM alleges that al-Qa'ida has neither active operatives or sleeper cells in the United States, claiming ignorance of such items as the US zip codes in his notebook, and denying the existence of "Haji Adam," who Abu Zubaydah insists served as a deep-cover operative for KSM since the early 1990s. He also says that he was never in direct contact with individuals in the United States, and he has provided only minimal information about his Muslim contacts in the United States while a student here.

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• *Plots in the Arabian Peninsula and South Asia.* KSM has stated that he lacked detailed knowledge of plotting in Saudi Arabia because he delegated decisionmaking authority to cell leaders there, but not long after his capture, he was able to provide a detailed list of the leaders and members of four cells in the Kingdom. Likewise, despite living in Pakistan from late 2001 until his capture, KSM has provided only limited information on Pakistani militants who, since 11 September, have increasingly switched from promoting local causes to focusing on hitting US and other Western targets in Pakistan and the Persian Gulf.

• *Plots in East Africa.* KSM has expressed general knowledge of planning by al-Qa'ida operative Fazul Muhammad (a.k.a. Harun) to stage attacks against US or Israeli targets in either Kenya or Tanzania. His statements about working before his detention to ship explosives to Harun suggests, however, that he very likely knows more about Harun's plotting than he is letting on. In one case, KSM provided new information on operational discussions he had with Harun only after being presented with a captured operational proposal written by Harun.

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**Appendix: Biography of Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (KSM) (U)**

Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (KSM) was born on 24 April 1963; his father, a cleric who died in 1969, moved to Kuwait along with other Baluchi relatives from Iran in the 1950s and early 1960s, when large numbers of migrants traveled to the Gulf region from across the Muslim World to take advantage of the oil boom. In a lengthy autobiographical statement made after his capture, KSM noted that he had a rebellious streak from childhood; he claimed that in grade school, he and his nephew, World Trade Center bomber Ramzi Yousef, tore down the Kuwaiti flag from their school. He also stated that he joined the Muslim Brotherhood as a teenager as an expression of his defiance against the secular world he saw around him.

- In addition to Ramzi Yousef, another five relatives of KSM are terrorists, the most notable of whom are nephew 'Ali 'Abd al-Aziz 'Ali (a.k.a. 'Ammar), a key facilitator for the 11 September attacks

[redacted]

(S) [redacted] (NF)

KSM's limited and negative experiences in the United States—which included a brief jail stay because of unpaid bills—almost certainly helped propel him on his path to become a terrorist. KSM stated in his jailhouse autobiography that, while attending North Carolina A&T State University, he focused on his studies and associated primarily with fellow Islamist students from the Middle East.



Photo of KSM from the circa 1988 wedding to his cousin. (S/NF)

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He stated that his contacts with Americans, while minimal, confirmed his view that the United States was a debauched and racist country.

- After graduating from A&T in 1986 with a degree in mechanical engineering, KSM said that he traveled to Afghanistan to participate in the fighting against the Soviet Army there. He stated that most of his time in Afghanistan during this period was directed to support work for other mujahidin. (S) [redacted] (NF)

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KSM also has identified the terrorist activities of his nephew Ramzi Yousef, along with his anger at the US Government's support of Israel, as playing a pivotal role in his decision to engage in terrorism against the United States. In 1992, KSM says he provided about \$1,000 to help fund Yousef's bombing of the World Trade Center, adding that he was impressed by the ease with which his nephew was able to operate in the United States.

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He then joined Yousef in the Philippines in 1994 to plan the "Bojinka" plot—the simultaneous bombings of a dozen US-flagged commercial airliners over the Pacific.

- After the Bojinka plot was disrupted and Yousef was caught in early 1995, KSM escaped but was subsequently indicted in the United States for his role in the plot and went into hiding.
- Years later, a detained associate reported that KSM showed him a photograph of Yousef in handcuffs, and said, "This is the man I am fighting and dying for." The associate further noted that KSM pledged to find a way to free his nephew from US custody. (S// [REDACTED] MF)

While preparing the Bojinka plot, Yousef and KSM also discussed the idea of using planes as missiles to strike targets in the United States, including the White House and the Central Intelligence Agency. KSM says that, in 1996, he expanded the idea of using planes as missiles by conceiving of a plot of hijacking ten airliners to strike simultaneously targets on both coasts of the United States. (S// [REDACTED] MF)

KSM traveled to Afghanistan in the mid-1990s to gain the support of Usama Bin Ladin and thereby hopefully obtain the resources necessary to realize the operation. The al-Qa'ida leader at first demurred but changed his mind in late 1999 and provided KSM operatives and funding for a scaled-down version of his hijacking operation. This planning culminated in the 11 September attacks.

- Before September 2001, KSM was neither a formal member of al-Qa'ida nor a member of its leadership council, but in addition to managing the 11 September operation, he headed



Photo of KSM from 2002, probably intended for a false passport. (S//MF)

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al-Qa'ida's Media Committee and oversaw efforts during 2000-2001 to work with East Asian Jemaah Islamiya (JI) operatives to launch terrorist attacks in Southeast Asia against US and Israeli targets.

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- KSM has stated that he intentionally did not swear *bay'ah* (a pledge of loyalty) to Bin Ladin until after September 2001 so that he could have ignored a decision by the al-Qa'ida leadership to cancel the 11 September attacks. (S// [REDACTED] MF)

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After late 2001, the collapse of the Taliban regime, the dispersal of al-Qa'ida's leadership, and the prestige associated with engineering the 11 September attacks combined to propel KSM into the role of operations chief for al-Qa'ida around the world.

- KSM stated that he had planned a second wave of hijacking attacks even before September 2001 but shifted his aim from the United States to the United Kingdom because of the United States' post-11 September security posture and the British Government's strong support for Washington's global war on terror.

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- In addition to attempting to prepare this so-called "Heathrow Plot"—in which he planned to have multiple aircraft attack Heathrow Airport and other targets in the United Kingdom—KSM also launched a number of plots against the United States.

- Although he was responsible for operational plotting, KSM stated that during most of 2002, he spent considerable time managing the movement and housing of operatives and their families from Afghanistan to Pakistan and then onwards to the Middle East. (S/AF)

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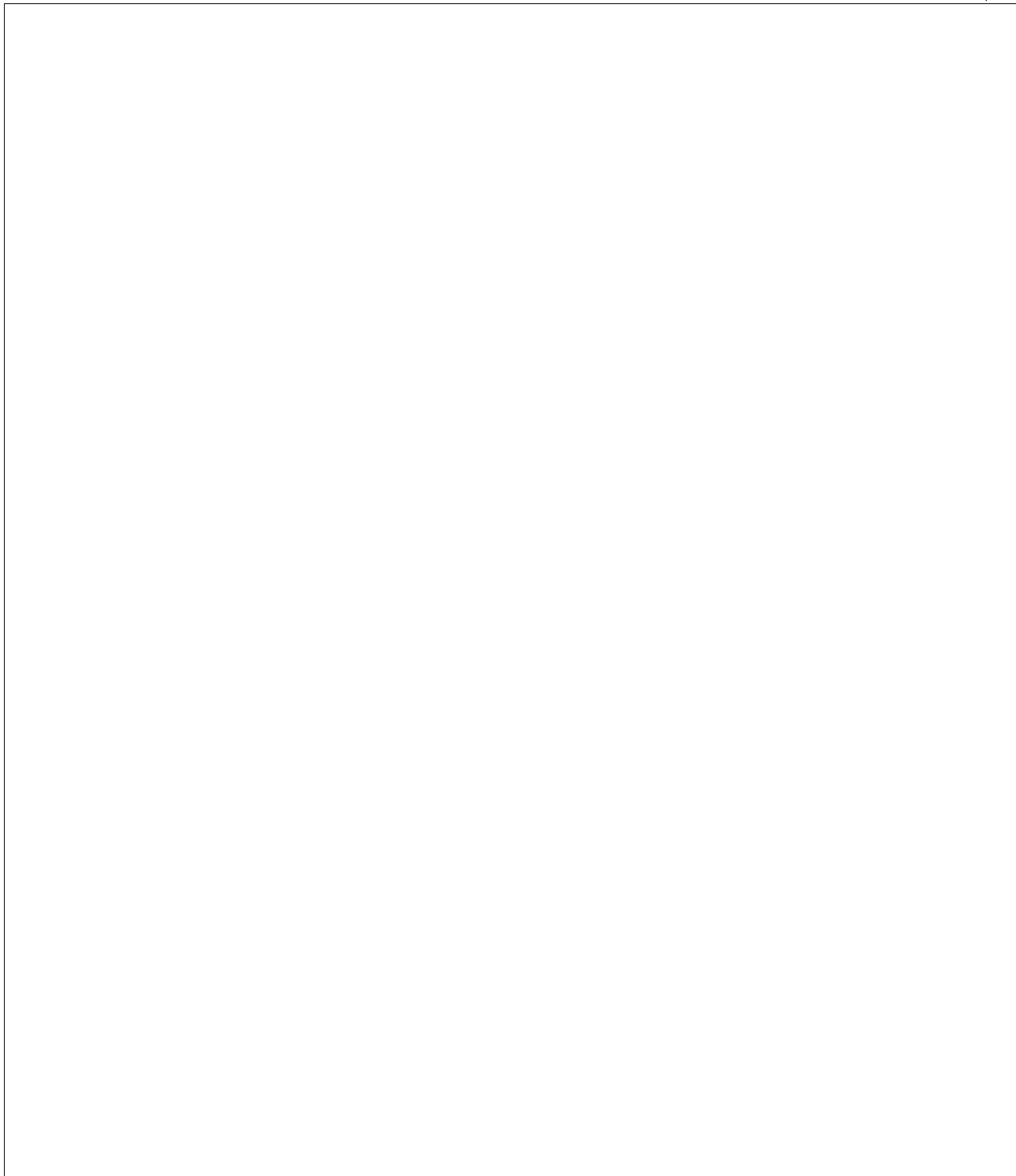
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