

**Title:** CUNY scholar is accused of using grant to buy heroin for research subjects  
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Full Text:

ANSLEY HAMID, a tenured anthropologist at the City University of New York, built his scholarly reputation studying **drug** cultures. Last month, federal law-enforcement officials **accused** Mr. Hamid of being part of that culture himself.

Mr. Hamid was charged with embezzling money from a federal grant to study heroin use. Federal officials **accused** him of **using** the money to buy heroin for research subjects. The **professor** also was **accused of using** heroin while he was conducting the government-financed research and of misusing grant money for personal expenses.

After a two-year investigation, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York brought charges in federal court against Mr. Hamid, an associate **professor** of anthropology at CUNY's John Jay **College of Criminal Justice**.

Mr. Hamid, who has taught at John Jay for 15 years and has written extensively about **drug** culture and the use of crack cocaine, did not enter a plea. After surrendering his passport, he was released on \$25,000 bond.

#### HEROIN IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The trouble began in 1996, soon after Mr. Hamid received a \$2.6-million grant from the Department of Health and Human Services for a project called Heroin in the 21st Century. The purpose of the project: "to track the developmental cycle of heroin use in New York City from 1995 to 2000," the government complaint said.

According to the government, Mr. Hamid gave \$100 of the grant money to an assistant with instructions to buy 10 bags of heroin. The **professor** told his assistant that "he had junkies coming in from Connecticut to be interviewed for the project, and that Hamid was going to compensate them for their participation with heroin," the complaint said.

Law-enforcement officials also **accused** Mr. Hamid of **using** heroin while he was the principal investigator for the project. According to the complaint, Mr. Hamid's field notes contain a reference to his "month-long experiment" with heroin use. A co-worker confronted Mr. Hamid with the notes, and told government investigators that the **professor** admitted that he had, indeed, tried heroin while working on the project.

In addition to the **drug**-related charges, Mr. Hamid stands **accused** of embezzling money to pay for travel and equipment unrelated to his research. The grant was supposed to cover the local travel expenses of Mr. Hamid's research team, as well as excursions to professional conferences. But according to the government, Mr. Hamid used more than \$6,500 in federal funds to pay for trips to Florida, Hawaii, and Trinidad. None of those trips, the complaint said, had anything to do with Mr. Hamid's project.

The government also **accused** Mr. Hamid of **using** grant money to pay research assistants \$21,200 for work they did on book manuscripts unrelated to his project. Plus, the government said, the **professor** spent more than \$2,000 of federal money on stereo equipment and compact disks.

The violations carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Mr. Hamid could not be reached for comment, but he denied all of the charges in an interview with The New York Times. **life** **accused** his colleagues of cooking up the charges against him because they were envious of his professional success.

## 'A TOTAL LIE'

The accusation that he used federal money to buy heroin for research subjects is "a total lie," Mr. Hamid told the Times. "No heroin user would go for a deal like that. You can always get heroin. What is scarce is money." As for the admission in his field notes that he had experimented with heroin, Mr. Hamid said: "Field notes are confidential. People often put things in them that are not true."

The **professor** was equally emphatic when asked about the compact-disk purchases, which included recordings by Abba, Mariah Carey, the Jackson Five, Whitney Houston, and the Spice Girls. The music was relevant to his project, Mr. Hamid told the Times: "There is an uncanny correspondence between styles of music and different types of **drug** use--between the Rastafarians and reggae, between Miles Davis and Dexter Gordon and be-bop and heroin."

Mr. Hamid's legal troubles landed him in hot water with John Jay, too. Two weeks after the allegations surfaced, in 1997, the **college** removed Mr. Hamid from the research project and reassigned him to the classroom. John Jay investigated the misconduct allegations against Mr. Hamid and found them to be "credible," the **college** said in a statement.

Last November, the **professor** filed a discrimination complaint against the **college** with the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The complaint has since been dismissed. In January, the institution suspended Mr. Hamid, and "the **college** is looking to get rid of him," says Jerry Capeci, a John Jay spokesman.

Mr. Hamid's research on heroin use is continuing at John Jay, albeit under a new principal investigator. "Mr. Hamid's arrest has no effect, in our view, on the project, since he hasn't been part of it for nearly two years," Mr. Capeci said.

## Abstract:

Issues discussed concern a tenured **professor** studying **drug** cultures at the City University of New York who has been **accused** of **using** money from a federal grant to buy heroin for himself and his research subjects. Topics addressed include numerous allegations against the **professor**, including embezzlement and **drug** possession.

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