

AFTER KHALID EL-MASRI, DETAILS LIKE SNOWDEN'S MIDDLE NAME MATTER

Anonymous (heh) DOJ officials have taken to the press to whine that Hong Kong delayed turning over Edward Joseph Snowden because the US got his true middle name, James, wrong (and once left it at "J").

They scoffed at the middle name mixup. The initial provisional arrest warrant request only listed his name as Edward J Snowden, a senior U.S. law enforcement said.

"Is this the best they got?" the senior U.S. law enforcement official said.

A Justice Department spokeswoman said Mr. Snowden's photo and videos were widely disseminated in the media. And when Hong Kong officials called the Justice Department to notify that he had left their territory, there was no doubt of his identity, the spokeswoman said.

"That Hong Kong would ask for more information about his identity demonstrates that it was simply trying to create a pretext for not acting on the provisional arrest request," the spokeswoman said.

Back when my official ID read "Marcy" instead of my legal name, it caused all amounts of headache and delay getting on planes; I had to go through a tedious process to change it. And airlines now insist on my full middle name.

I'm not sure why DOJ thinks Snowden should be any different than every other American flier whose name must be correct before getting on a plane.

And in an international context, there's an even bigger reason why any country would be crazy to hand over a person if the US couldn't get his name right. German citizen Khalid el-Masri was kidnapped and tortured in Afghanistan for four ~~years~~ months [I regret this error] because the US government mistook him for a guy named Khalid al-Masri.

There was no telling who Hong Kong might have unintentionally turned over to an American black hole.

Once upon a time, sure, other countries might have been able to take us at our word on something like this. But not only do we insist on even higher accuracy from their citizens when they come to the US than the US does from me and my legal name, but the US has a history of torturing people for years based on misidentification.

We're simply not trustworthy on that front anymore.