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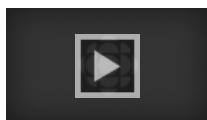
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Canada BC

Man carrying \$800K in gold freed

CBC News Posted: Nov 12, 2009 5:18 PM PT | Last Updated: Nov 12, 2009 6:51 PM PT

Saudi man carrying
\$800K in gold freed
2:27

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- Canadian border guards nab Syrian with \$800K in gold

A man held on suspicion of being a national security threat after trying to bring nearly \$1 million into Canada secretly has been released from custody and now says he's the victim of profiling.

Agents with the Canada Border Services Agency said that when Khaled Nawaya arrived at the Canada-U.S. border south of Vancouver last month, he told them he was carrying \$10,000 cash.



Some of the gold coins seized CBSA agents say they found with Khaled Nawaya at a border crossing south of Vancouver. ((RCMP))

But a search of his vehicle found more than \$800,000 in

Canadian gold coins, \$80,000 cash and other paraphernalia that agents deemed suspicious. The money has been confiscated.

Officers said the search also turned up a pro-Palestinian scarf, DVDs about Sept. 11 conspiracy theories and a ring featuring the insignia of Hezbollah.

Hezbollah is a Shia Islam group based in Lebanon and is listed as a terrorist organization in Canada.

An Immigration and Refugee Board adjudicator released Nawaya on Thursday on the condition that he provide documentation on the source of his money.

'Money from lawsuit'

Nawaya, who was born in Saudi Arabia and holds Syrian citizenship, said most of the money came from a lawsuit he won in the United States, where he had lived since 1993.

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"I'm still in a shock and trying to digest everything and thanks God for everything," Nawaya, 35, told reporters later.

Nawaya declined to comment on the politically related items the CBSA found or his decision to mislead border guards about the money.

"I want to tell everyone who's suspicious [of me] there's no reason to be suspicious, and not everyone who comes from the Middle East is a bad person."

Nawaya's Canadian lawyer admitted Nawaya's behaviour at the border did not serve him well. "He raised their alarm bells, needlessly," Phil Rankin said.

Nawaya's conditions for release require that he provide an address to authorities and check in monthly with the CBSA.

Rankin said Nawaya still faces the possibility of charges for not declaring the money, which he may never get back.

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