

The Next Bradley Manning? Not Necessarily

The case of a U.S. Army police officer arrested on espionage charges in Alaska over the weekend immediately got compared to Bradley Manning, the Army intelligence analyst currently facing charges of leaking documents to WikiLeaks, but so far there's just no solid evidence to support that. Like Manning, 22-year-old William Millay faces charges of espionage, but that is as far as similarities go for now. The only comment that federal investigators have given about the case was a firm denial that it had anything to do with WikiLeaks. And the connections others have made between the two cases are tenuous at best.

Millay, who was arrested on Friday, remains in custody in Anchorage on suspicion of espionage. According to the Army Times

, he's being charged under the Uniform Code of Military Justice

, not in federal criminal court, just like Manning. But the outward similarities stop there. Unlike Manning, Millay didn't have access to lots of classified intelligence. A member of the 164th Military Police Company, 793rd Military Police Battalion, 2nd Engineer Brigade, known as the Arctic Enforcers, Millay stayed in Alaska as part of the company's rear detachment -- the small group of soldiers that remain behind -- when the Enforcers were deployed in Afghanistan in March, the Anchorage Daily News reported. The military police company is tasked with training Afghan police officers.

The speculation of a WikiLeaks connection seems to come from the site Military Corruption, which reported that "sources" had said investigators were "looking at links between the MP [Millay] and PFC Bradley Manning." But they didn't explain what those links might be, nor did they cite evidence beyond the unnamed source. Salon pointed out that WikiLeaks had tweeted the news of Millay's arrest on Monday. But WikiLeaks hasn't said anything on the case beyond tweeting the link to this Military Times

story. And while WikiLeaks promotes its own causes via Twitter, it also promotes plenty of others to which it's only related in spirit, not fact, such as this propaganda video from Bahrain. Then there's the fact that WikiLeaks' electronic submission system has been out of commission for about a year now.

Manning, an intelligence analyst, allegedly gained access to huge amounts of classified information through the Department of Defense's Secret Internet Protocol Router Network, leaking thousands of documents to WikiLeaks in late 2009. By contrast, those in a position to know about the Millay case said it was unclear how much classified information he had access to. Greg Rinckey, an attorney specializing in courts-martial

, told Army Times that it was "possible Millay had access to sensitive information as a military policeman, but the case does not appear to be as serious as Manning's." Friends also told the Army Times that espionage seemed out of character for the "really patriotic" Millay. And on Tuesday, FBI spokesman Eric Gonzales told the Anchorage Daily News that "This has

nothing to do with WikiLeaks." But investigators from both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Army counterintelligence service haven't elaborated on the nature of the charges against Millay, which are expected to be read later this week. Until they do, or somebody uncovers a charging document, it's too early to lump Millay with Manning, except to point out (as Rickney does) that the Army is cracking down on leaks in general in the post-Manning era.