



Why I Went To Prison

The last time my name was publicized, I was discredited for ties to terrorism, accepting a plea bargain and serving in prison. Could anything sound worse? Finally, the time has come to undo the gag of silence and answer the difficult questions about what took place in these past six years.

Throughout my 15 years in various levels of government, I tried to make the world safer by political means. This failed. However, these experiences led me to revelations that address the needs of a dominant issue in our time—bridging the growing divide among Christians, Muslims & Jews. Over time, this work produced a model for peacemaking and problem solving in complex crises in places like Iraq, Libya and Sudan. These efforts gained traction for peacemaking with U.S. & world leaders; while my controversial book on the subject, *A Deadly Misunderstanding*, was being readied for a major release. My approach required working with both friends and enemies of our country.

Unfortunately, certain “interests” felt bridging the faiths and forging alternatives to war was a betrayal of my former associations. My success brought not accolades but disdain, and was perceived as a threat to justifying our expanding intelligence/eavesdropping apparatus and the trillions spent fighting the “War on Terror.”

To support this exciting peace and faith bridging work, we raised funds for travel, research and writing. One donor, a 25-year-old U.S. based, government approved Muslim charity, was recommended by one of my Muslim associates in the work. The charity’s principals were later indicted on grounds of supporting terrorists and misappropriating US government grant funds.

Those opposed to my work seized this opportunity to discredit me by insisting I testify against the charity. I refused to give a false testimony and was consequently indicted on outlandish charges of money laundering & conspiracy. This exploded into a media frenzy tying me with terror funding, even though the judge reminded prosecutors that the case had nothing to do with terrorism or national security. After four years of exaggerated accusations, all major charges were dropped, leaving only obstruction of justice for claiming to the FBI that I had not lobbied for the Muslim charity and not registering as a lobbyist.

So why plea and face prison if I’m innocent? Why not trust God and press forward? After four years of hyper-focus on me, it was time to refocus on my family, supporters and friends. My political life was self-centered and all about me. How long should our life and destiny be consumed by self-vindication fighting the govt that would never give up? When would it be time to yield and drink from the cup?

I feel we “trusted God” and did want was necessary. Two Muslim co-defendants, whom I had never met or even spoken to, were granted immunity from prison by testifying (falsely) I had lobbied for them. In a bizarre turn of events, weeks before my scheduled trial I fired my court appointed lawyer of 2.5 years for failing to file necessary motions on my behalf, thus placing the strength of my defense in jeopardy.

Also in June of 2010, the Supreme Court issued an interpretation of the Patriot Act, which stated that simply advising “peace” to terrorist entities constituted “material support of terrorism.” Prosecutors implied to my lawyer that if I refused to agree to their plea bargain and I won at trial, I would face indictment a second time in regard to my peacemaking “advice” in countries designated as terror nations. I would then face up to 15 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine. Finally, on the eve of trial, the Muslim charity was added to a U.S. terror list. If I had gone to trial and lost, the prosecutors would have had the power to add a decade to my jail time. The Justice Dept. has a documented 98% conviction rate.

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You can only imagine the inner turmoil of being placed in a position of having to parse the meaning of technical words in order to ‘confess’ to things I had not done. Nonetheless, my legal team, that included some of the best minds in the profession including a former US Attorney General, was unanimous in advising me to plead guilty. Not to do so risked too much.

Yes, I hated prison... but I am a better humbler man for experiencing the sorrow and degradation. Yet, I hope my actions will show that I hold no bitterness. At the end of my prison term, I was diagnosed with an extremely rare and fatal cancerous tumor. Treatment included intensive radiation and radical surgery. I am delighted to report that I am gratefully cancer free, and free of all legal obligations regarding my case.

I am ready and energized to continue peacemaking and to speak about the life altering lessons drawn from the adrenaline of a high-powered life to the humility of severe brokenness. Today’s conflicts continue to weigh on my heart. I have been happy to receive several invitations to speak in the last few months and am open to further engagements. I welcome your renewed participation as we continue on this journey.

Blessings,



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