

Some Background for (T) ERROR

Included:

- Overview of the Tarik Shah “Martial Arts” case
- *My Story* by Tarik Shah
- Resources: available reports on preemptive prosecution, book and documentary film about informants, petition for Tarik Shah

Justice For Tarik Shah

The Facts of the Tarik Shah “Martial Arts” Case

Three months after 9/11, on December 1, 2001 the FBI directed an *agent provocateur* to go to Abdulrahman Farhane’s Islamic bookstore in New York City and say that he wanted to send some money to jihadist brothers overseas. Farhane refused to help, but referred the provocateur to Tarik Shah, a well-known jazz bass player, self-defense trainer, and martial arts teacher in New York City who had played at President Clinton’s inauguration. Tarik did nothing, but the provocateur, Mohamed Alanssi, continued to try to get Tarik to do something illegal for three years. He was reportedly paid \$100,000 for his work. In a bizarre twist in 2004, Alanssi set himself on fire outside the White House.

Alanssi’s FBI handler, Robert Fuller, was also in charge of the Newburgh 4 case in 2009–2010, and was implicated in the rendition and torture of Canadian citizen Maher Arar in 2002–2003.

In 2003, the FBI assigned another *agent provocateur*, Theodore Shelby aka “Saeed,” an ex-convict and former Black Panther, to get Tarik. Shelby asked Tarik to give him music lessons and eventually moved into Tarik’s home with him, tape-recording every conversation. Shelby then introduced Tarik to a supposed Al-Qaeda recruiter (who was actually an undercover FBI agent, Ali Soufan), who offered Tarik \$1,000 a week if he would agree to train jihadists in martial arts. Tarik agreed, although he did not accept any money. Soufan then recruited an old friend of Tarik’s, Dr. Rafiq Sabir, a physician, to

provide medical assistance to injured combatants; Sabir, who lived in Florida, was in town visiting Tarik. The *New York Times* wrote that “the tapes reveal a plot that was almost entirely talk...No weapons appear to have been bought,

and no martial arts training took place.” The “plot” went on for two years, and became a joint FBI/NYPD sting operation. Tarik was arrested in May 2005.

At his arrest, Tarik was refused legal representation and was threatened with the PATRIOT Act and rendition. Neither his attorney nor his family knew where he was until three days after his arrest, when he was finally able to get some legal counsel.

Before his trial, Tarik agreed to talk in a

wiretapped conversation to a former martial arts student, Mahmud Faruq Brent, about Brent’s attendance at a training camp in Pakistan after 9/11 run by Lashkar-e-Taiba, a terrorist group designated thus by the U.S. government in 2001 that was fighting for the independence of Kashmir. However, once Tarik was wired and taken to Maryland for the phone call, he refused to cooperate.

Tarik was held in solitary confinement at the Metropolitan Correction Center (MCC) in New York from 2005 until 2007. Facing a 30-year sentence, and realizing that he could not get a fair trial and would be found guilty by association, he pleaded guilty in April 2007 to one count of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorism. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison.



Farhane pleaded guilty for similar reasons and was sentenced to 13 years; Brent also pleaded guilty and received 15 years for his attendance at the training camp. Sabir, who pleaded not guilty, was convicted and sentenced to 25 years.

Tarik, who is 47, is serving his sentence at the medium-security federal prison in Petersburg, Virginia, and is scheduled for release in June 2018. He has never in his life advocated violence. He is not a terrorist. He pleaded guilty to save his family astronomical legal fees, and to

have some life remaining to him to spend with them upon his release. Like the Virginia Paintball convictions, the government fastened on an innocent activity—in Tarik’s case, his practice of the martial arts—and said it was evidence of terrorist activity. But any such activity was suggested and facilitated only by the FBI provocateurs and agents, not Tarik. The *New York Times* wrote that “The government has acknowledged that neither Mr. Shah, nor the three others accused in the case...were on the verge of any violent act.”

Justice For Tarik Shah

What You Can Do — Sign the Petition for Tarik

Sign the petition at <http://www.projectsalam.org/tarikshah.html> to support commutation of Tarik Shah’s sentence.

Recognize that the U.S. government—in Tarik’s case and in hundreds of other cases all over the U.S.—is targeting Muslims through its unwritten policy that preemptive prosecution of Muslims in the “war on terror” is the way to keep the country safe. The FBI has made extensive use of agents provocateur to create contrived crimes to entrap innocent or unaware Muslims who have no interest in terrorism. The provocateurs almost always have a criminal past and are eager to erase their own sentences and make some money. Then the government prosecutes the Muslims, saying that they might become terrorists. But the Constitution prohibits prosecution of a crime before any crime has been committed. And the government operates under the assumption that because Muslims are automatically predisposed to terrorism, they might commit such a crime simply because they are Muslim—a racist stereotype, and a legal Catch-22.

Contact the National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms (NCPCF) via its website: www.CivilFreedoms.org. NCPCF is a not-for-profit coalition that educates the public about the erosion of civil and political freedoms in our society and the abuses of prisoners within the U.S. criminal justice system, especially after 9/11; advocates for the preservation of those freedoms; and defends human rights according to the U.S. Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its related UN Conventions, and the Geneva Conventions.

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www.CivilFreedoms.org

My Story

by Tarik Ibn Osman Shah

Muslim, student of knowledge, bassist, music teacher, professor-level martial artist, son, husband, father

When 9/11 happened, concern was raised in my heart for Islam and Muslims domestically and internationally. So I proceeded to warn brothers about the need for investigation due to the inconsistency in what was said to have been spoken by Osama bin Laden in the media interpretations that were played. Also, everything about the way in which the buildings came down looked to me without doubt to be scientific demolition, and George Bush was talking about a “crusade,” so I continually suggested in our discourse that we must use discretion in believing what the media was saying.

There was talk and concern after 9/11 that many Muslim brothers were disappearing. I had a strong inclination that law enforcement was responsible—it would later be confirmed that this was true. Indefinite detainment and kidnaping were taking place, many Muslim families were scared, and all were not foreign, some were American citizens. The Muslim community was frightened and concerned, especially those with foreign family ties, and this was due to harassment, their assets being frozen, and difficulties in wire transfers to their relatives, who relied on them.

I met a man in a Brooklyn bookstore owned by my co-defendant, Abdul Rahman Farhane; this was the first C.I. [confidential informant]: Mohamed Alanssi, who I believe was scoping Farhane. Almost two months’ discourse took place, and during this time he discussed with me the politics surrounding September 11, what was happening to Muslims, and the desperately needed money to be sent overseas to Afghanistan and other Middle Eastern countries—which was extremely difficult at the time due to assets being frozen and wiring becoming almost impossible. But Alanssi was adamant about me helping him to find a way. I tried to give some advice, as well as speak to some of the foreign brothers in the community as to how they were sending money to their families. I was deeply concerned, but to no avail: Alanssi was adamant in trying to get me to do these transactions for him.

Our relationship ended around December 2001 due to me having a healthy amount of paranoia about him, his pushiness, and what he was pushing. I did not have a passport; it had been revoked because of non-payment of child support, but Alanssi said that he had one and could travel, so I simply suggested that he carry whatever monies that he had to the families in those countries himself, and thereafter I stopped answering and returning his calls.



* * *

Around August 2003, I received a phone call from a man who said his name was Saeed Torrez, about taking bass lessons. Saeed claimed to have heard me perform in Brooklyn with [singer] Rachele Ferrell, where he received my business card. I told Saeed that I would be willing to teach him after he purchased a bass to learn with. About a month later he called me back to inform me that he had purchased one and to set an appointment for a lesson.

I picked up Saeed on the day of his lesson at the Metro-North station at Beacon, New York. He gave a bit of his history, i.e., Black Panther, B.L.A. [Black Liberation Army], impersonating transit cops for robbing the transit money trains, and spending time in prison, but he immediately shifted the conversation to the Middle East and politics. We seemed to connect on many views. This marked the beginning of the “Scripted Falsified Relationship” that built the case against me.

Saeed’s bass lessons continued. He did not apply himself, so his learning was slow. Our conversations on world events also continued. I bonded with him due to his being older than me and his supposed

civil rights activism. This was around the time when I opened up and informed him of my child support debt and how it was crushing me financially and mentally, and how I was constantly threatened with jail and travel restrictions, which greatly decreased my income. Saeed mentioned some possibilities as to how I might increase my income; one that he mentioned was martial arts. So I spoke to some music colleagues and old students who were desirous of advanced study, but I needed a place to teach them.

Saeed offered his help and took me to check out a warehouse where he said he rehearsed with the African dance group he drummed for. I expressed to him that I had long wanted to train my Muslim brothers exclusively to protect themselves from oppression and potential hate crimes, using alternative methods of weaponry and, for those who were able to obtain Executive Enforcement licenses, to protect family and community. The warehouse was located on Long Island, and the distance was too great for my client base, thus I passed up the “opportunity.”

* * *

Yonkers, 2004: Saeed said to me that he knew “someone” who helped a friend of his make extra income, and that he might be able to help me supplement my income. This “someone,” Ali Soufan, turned out to be an FBI agent. Saeed set up a meeting in Plattsburgh, New York. We

traveled by Amtrak to meet Ali, who was there to pick us up. We all had dinner and very little about the “opportunity” was discussed.

The next day, I met with Ali alone and we discussed global politics and Islam. I felt like this was an interview and was somewhat concerned. The offer from Ali was for me to teach martial arts to some brothers, with a specific emphasis on knife fighting—which Ali code-named “white weaponry.” He questioned me about traveling internationally and I responded that I could not travel due to my passport being revoked. He said it was easy to get papers, so I told him to fix the passport if he wanted me to travel, because I did not have those kinds of connections. He told me to reapply for a passport, Allah would make a way, but I never did.

We spoke about terrorist suicide bombings, and I told him that they were unlawful in Islam. Then he proceeded to tell me that whoever was sent on a suicide mission was given a complete psychological exam to ensure that they were of sound mind and not suicidal. This made no sense to me at all, so I told him that whoever takes his own life will reside in hellfire eternally, killing himself perpetually in the way he killed himself on earth.

Ali asked me how much this project would cost, and he instructed me to start preparing a training manual and instruction video. I told him that I needed at least \$1,000 a week plus room and board. He asked me what I might desire to learn while at training. I told him that I wanted to learn about the AK-47 and demolition/explosives. He opined that I would be a good leader. I disagreed and told him I was no leader nor did I desire a leadership role. Ali asked me to keep all details of our conversations confidential, and like a fool I trusted him and did.

The next morning we all had breakfast, then Ali drove Saeed and me to the train station to go back to New York City. Saeed continued his bass lessons and continued to keep our conversations about the world vs. Islam political. He attended some of my performances and informed me that Ali wanted to meet with me in Florida.

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April/May 2004: At Ali’s expense through Saeed, I met Ali in Orlando, Florida. I had another aim for going to Florida: my oldest sister, Renee, lived in Orlando and I hadn’t seen her for many years, so the trip was convenient for me to visit her, and I did. Ali and I went to a restaurant to talk, but we waited until we were done eating due to my paranoia. Then we proceeded to walk and talk in the parking lot of the strip mall where the restaurant was located.

Ali said that his people had accepted the offer for me to teach, after which he asked if I had completed the training manual and instructional video. I lied and told him that I was still working on them, and I tried to direct his attention to videos of my previous classes, which I thought was sufficient reference to witness my skills. I was afraid of making a manual and video, because how would I reference its directives/purpose, which he knew better than me, or so I thought? He also asked if I had reapplied for my passport; I replied no, due to my history of child support difficulty. Ali proceeded to try and convince me to reapply regardless. I made it clear that it was not going to happen (it should be noted that my ability to produce income was greatly hindered as a result of this restriction of my passport, which did not allow me to travel overseas venues, where I made significantly more money than I could in the U.S.A. I also presented this fact many times in Family Court, but to no avail.)

Around this same time I took on Ronald Drayton, a devout Jew and a guitarist for [singer] Lalah Hathaway, as a private martial arts student. I taught him in a park near my apartment in Yonkers, and law enforcement would often watch. Throughout the end of spring and through most of the summer, Saeed continued his bass lessons and Ronnie continued his private martial arts lessons.

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Around the end of August ’04, my wife, Zakkiyah, had some vacation time, so we planned a trip to Arizona to spend time with an old friend and classmate, Chris Washington. I trained with his dad, the late Gerald Washington, in San-Do-Kan Ryu. Chris is a police officer in Mesa and has a martial arts school in Phoenix. My wife and I were there for about a week, and while we were there we also went to Sedona.

When I returned, I let Saeed know that I was back. Saeed wanted to set up a social gathering in the form of an art gallery show with some jazz as entertainment. But the turnout was not promising, and it bombed. My relationship with Ali was becoming tedious and seemingly useless, because the initial reason that Saeed had introduced him to me was the supposed business opportunity with regard to removal of my child support debt.

* * *

One day in October/November ’04, I left my apartment in Yonkers and headed to a performance in New Jersey. As I was turning onto Yonkers Ave., the Yonkers city police stopped me, and within a matter of seconds there were about six additional law enforcement vehicles surrounding my car. They claimed that they stopped me for running a stop sign.

The officers got my information, presumably ran my info, let me return to my vehicle, and then instructed me at gunpoint to step out of the car, saying I was under arrest for a warrant in Beacon, New York. I was truly and most definitely amazed. I got out of the car slowly, was patted down and cited. My main concerns while being cuffed were to inform my wife, to inform the person who I was to perform with, and to look out for the safety of my instrument, because from the look of things it seemed like they were going to tear up my car and its contents.

They took me to the Yonkers police station, booked me (prints, etc.), informed me that the warrant (filed by Michael McKensie) was for petit larceny of some space heaters, and that the Beacon City police were en route to pick me up and transport me to Beacon. Michael McKensie was the owner of the property where I resided in Beacon before I moved to Yonkers. We did not get along, and I had previously taken him to court due to the basement being full of mold, which affected my wife’s breathing. When the Beacon police arrived, the Yonkers police brought me into an open area at the entrance to the station, and I found it peculiar that I was surrounded by at least ten law enforcement officers, as if I were a high-risk offender who had harmed law enforcement in the past.

The Beacon officers changed cuffs on me and transported me to the Beacon police station, where I stayed until the next morning, when I was taken next-door to the courthouse to go before a judge. I was granted an O.R. [“on recognizance”] bond and scheduled for a court date.

I told Saeed what had happened and of course he acted surprised and supportive of me. I don’t remember the specific details of what happened in court, but I think the warrant was thrown out due to lack of evidence and because McKensie seemed to personally want to harm me. So shortly thereafter he changed up and sued me for damages to his property.

* * *

Around the end of ’04, things started to get better financially for me due to steady performances with various groups. A friend and musical colleague, Reginald Woods, an executive with a booking agency that booked a variety of musical events, started to hire me for his group. I did a video with a husband-and-wife group for the agency as an advertisement tool in preparation for future bookings. This was a springboard to make the kind of money I needed to pay off my debts without having to travel internationally. It was the only concrete, viable option for me.

At this point communication between Ali and me had diminished to almost no communication at all. I felt that there was no real substance to me being able to function internationally in that period. But Saeed began to value the subject of Ali more frequently, asking if I had spoken

to him...I would answer no and then try to change the subject. This was all I could do because of my mixed emotions and recognition of my own paranoia concerning him. I observed that Saeed was making more appearances at my performances. I wasn't completely sure why. Constantly asking the same question—"Ali?"—and saying that I should call him.

* * *

Around February '05 I moved from Yonkers to the Bronx, new address 953 Grant Ave., Apartment 3, a building owned by my family that I had previously lived in twice, in '87-'88 and in '96-98. Then I'd lived in the second-floor apartment; now I was moving to the 3rd/top floor, which had just been newly renovated. Saeed was still on board taking sporadic lessons, and as a friend. But Ronnie Drayton's martial arts lessons were on hold due to location. I was avoiding communication with Ali, since my musical opportunities were in motion and picking up momentum.

Saeed was looking for another place to live, since his wife was pregnant. So I told him that the ground-floor apartment of my family's building was vacant but needed work, and I arranged for him to get the apartment. (At our initial meeting, i.e., his first music lesson, he had told me that he was a paralegal and chef.)

* * *

By May '05, I had just about finished the renovations on the ground floor apartment and Saeed moved his belongings in. About the same time I received a call from my friend Rafiq [Dr. Rafiq Sabir, a physician], informing me that he was coming into town from Saudi Arabia to renew his visa.

Around the second week of May I received another call that showed international numbers, and I thought it was Rafiq, but to my surprise it was Ali. I had not spoken to him for many months. He asked how I was and why I had not called him. I told him that I was busy working and finishing renovation on an apartment in the building I had moved into in the Bronx. The call was short and I think he sensed my disinterest.

On about the 15th of May, Rafiq arrived at my Bronx apartment to stay with me. Up to this point I had never mentioned Ali to Rafiq at all—to protect the integrity of Ali, who had told me not to mention our meetings to anyone. I did not even mention them to my wife.

On Friday, a week before Memorial Day weekend, Saeed knocked at the door of my apartment. I answered and he told me that there was someone downstairs who needed to see me. I went downstairs and entered Saeed's apartment—and Ali was standing there. My heart started to race when I saw him because of all this secret swirl, the hush-hush, the meetings in Plattsburgh and Florida, which seemed feeble, and because I felt uncomfortable with his knowing and being at my address where I lived with my family, since I had not divulged this information to him. I muddled through these feelings, thinking that he was my guest and my Muslim brother, even though he was uninvited and unwanted. This was the day that the fake pledge/Beyah [supposedly to Al-Qaeda] took place, and I am not able to relate word for word what was said, because Ali spoke mostly in Arabic. I have not much to say about that day, other than that I was weak and started to sell myself to him again, and unfortunately my friend Mahmood [Mahmood Faruq Brent] got caught up in this evil spiderweb.

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The following week, May 28th, 2005, around 6 a.m., the police and FBI banged on my door. I opened it, they arrested and cuffed me, and took me downtown to FBI headquarters for interrogation. They told me that it would not be beneficial for me to call a lawyer or anyone and that they were going to charge me under the PATRIOT Act under the guise of terrorism for taking an oath to Al-Qaeda. They took me to a computer and played the part with this false oath, and I felt terrified and like the

biggest jackass with his head on the chopping block.

They took me back into another room and continued tag-teaming me with questions. They showed me pictures of Rafiq, Farhane, and Muhammed Ya'qoobi [an Islamic scholar who wrote a book on the Hadith; when he visited the U.S., Tarik went to see him]. The picture of Muhammed Ya'qoobi really frightened me because he looked disheveled, like he had been physically tortured. They were grilling me about what jihad meant, and I kept telling them it meant struggle and striving against oneself. They seemed not to want to hear this and told me that was not what it meant, so they continued tag-teaming me with this question and others. They made me feel like I would not see the light of day or my family ever again if I did not cooperate and do what they wanted me to do. They told me that they knew that my friend Mahmood had gone to a training camp in Pakistan, and all they needed to know was the name of the camp, where it was, and who was the group, and if I could give them this information they would let me go. I could not answer them because I did not have this information. So they suggested a meeting with Mahmood at a hotel outside the Baltimore/Washington, D.C. area to get this info.

I was reluctant and scared, but at that time I saw no other way out, and unfortunately I agreed to trust these liars. They rushed me back to the Bronx to get me some clothing and then drove like madmen to the motel. They had me call Mahmood to say that I was coming to the area to do a gig at a club in D.C., that I would be staying at a motel, and that I needed to meet with him that night. Of course, being the sincere friend that he is, he agreed to meet me.

Then I was taken for food to a McDonalds or a rest area on the New Jersey Turnpike; they asked what I wanted to eat and I said a fish sandwich, but miraculously all the places they stopped at were out of fish, so all they would give me was water, which ran my bladder and I constantly had to urinate.

On the way to Maryland I kept falling asleep in the car and they kept on waking me up. I needed some sleep because I had worked two jobs/performances and I had only arrived home about half an hour before they banged on my door and arrested me. Surely they knew that.

We arrived in Maryland at around sunset and we went to what seemed to be an FBI building. They put me in a room with some of the officers from the "task force caravan" and cuffed me to a chair. They allowed me to use the bathroom—supervised, of course—and they allowed me to pray. They continually briefed me on what to ask and told me to act natural and kept assuring me that it would all be over soon. They had me call Mahmood again to give him the name of the motel and the address and room number.

The feds took me to the motel and to my room, which was adjoined to another room by a door. I used the bathroom again and lay down on the bed for a very short nap, since I was exhausted.

When Mahmood arrived he called me and told me that he had some brothers with him who also wanted to see me. Now I was terrified and fearful for the safety and well-being of more than just myself and Mahmood. I didn't know what might happen. I imagined the worst and hoped for the best, and I had to compose myself before they came up to the room. My palms were sweaty and my heart was racing. I was angry, exhausted, humiliated, scared, confused, frustrated, and baffled by these people, i.e., the feds, who at every point they had the opportunity to lie, lied.

Mahmood and the brothers entered the room (the feds were in the adjoining room). We greeted each other and embraced, but my brain and heart were in hyperspace wanting to warn everyone of the impending danger. We sat down and spoke about how everyone was, but I did not talk to Mahmood with all the brothers present. I had to do a collateral damage assessment, and so I asked the brothers to leave because I had to talk to Mahmood about a personal matter. They all went into the hallway.

I think that all I managed to ask was how the training camp was—which the feds didn't tell me to ask—and where it was. I couldn't figure out how to warn Mahmood. Shortly thereafter the brothers came back into the room and then they all left. I believe it was around midnight.

The feds re-entered the room, angry and scolding me for not pushing and asking more. I failed! And yes, I FAILED my friend and brother! And I failed the feds. But since 6 a.m. on May 28, the feds had played games.

They said we would be staying at the motel but quickly changed their minds, cuffed me, and took me to a jail nearby where I was housed overnight, cold and hungry. The next morning they picked me up and drove me back to Manhattan to FBI headquarters. My wife, Zakkiyah, brought me some food and gave me the number for Erika McDaniels, an attorney friend of my sister, Kalimah. Up until then I had not spoken to any legal counsel nor seen a judge.

* * *

At some point during that Memorial Day weekend I was taken to M.C.C. [Metropolitan Correctional Center in Manhattan], strip-searched, and stripped of all my belongings, including my Qur'an, which the feds had said I would be able to keep. After having my bodily crevices scoped, I was taken to Isolation Unit 10-South and put in a cell there. This is where I remained until December 20, 2007.

[Tarik was held pre-trial for thirty-three months in solitary confinement. He wrote the following account about the M.C.C. in 2011.]

From the first moment that the F.B.I. dropped me off at M.C.C., I felt a humiliation and loneliness that I cannot describe. First was the taking of everything that I owned, i.e., my shoes, pants, shirt, jacket, underwear, socks, and Qur'an, and then the standing naked in front of strangers, baring my private parts and having to comply with lift your balls, squat, cough, and whatever else. Then the C.O.s gave me a set of clothing: underpants, tee shirt, socks, bus shoes (orange decks), and an orange jumper, so that a lieutenant and some other officers could handcuff me and transport me up to 10-South.

The elevator let us off on the 9th floor. We went through one door to enter the SHU (Special Housing Unit) and walked to a staircase that was the entryway to the double doors for 10-South. It is an isolation unit with only six cells of different sizes. All have cinderblock beds and cinderblock walls covered with plate steel; a stainless steel toilet/sink combo; a stainless steel two-push-button hot/cold shower stall in which, depending on the time of day, you might get burned or frozen; a cinderblock/concrete desk with a cube concrete chair-box design; a plastic gray chair bolted to the concrete floor; and large windows covered with a white frost so that you could not see anything or anyone on the streets. The windows were barred with a heavy screen, each strand of its weave about half an inch thick.

Two of the most important and intrusive elements of the cell were that in each cell there were TWO cameras opposing each other, so that there was no privacy, even when showering or using the toilet. The cameras also recorded audio. The other element was a bright light on constantly for twenty-four hours.

Some days were slow and some were fast. I felt helpless and realized the realities of being a creature who was weak and constantly in need. So I turned away from asking people for help and turned toward prayer and supplication to Allah, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the Sustainer and Creator of all that exists. All of the steel, cinderblocks, and locks could not stop His mercy from reaching me.

I remember receiving letters from people telling me to "stay strong," but all I could remember thinking about was my weak state, and my replies to them were about what I was doing to maintain my sanity and what they should do about their lives. I was EXTREMELY PARANOID and hurt by what had happened—being set up by a bass student/friend

and an FBI agent posing as someone sincere to get me to teach martial arts to "some brothers." I think I was in a state of shock for most of my time in isolation. Where it seemed that the government (DOJ, FBI, BOP, AUSA, judge) was trying to get a negative reaction from me through the C.O. lieutenant and captain, the Unit Team, the A.W.s [associate wardens], and the warden with their denials of just and equal treatment and their comments and their mind games—they could not do it. I only made it through all that by Allah's protection and mercy. Daily I would pray the five obligatory prayers and I would offer the night prayers and sunnah prayers. As I said before, I would make much supplication throughout each day. I would also read the Qur'an multiple times daily and other books, mostly on Islam, that my family would send. I would strive and struggle against myself to not become desperate, angry, lazy, bored, vengeful, or useless. I put my trust in Allah; I relied on Allah.

10-South was kept extremely cold throughout the year, and we could not purchase hats, gloves, extra sweats, or extra thermals, so I wore an extra pillowcase on my head, three pairs of socks on my feet, and a pair of socks on my hands for gloves, as well as a set of thermal underwear, sweatpants and shirt, two tee-shirts, and the orange jumper just to be somewhat insulated while in the cell. I also would pace back and forth in the cell. We were locked in for twenty-four hours a day, and laundry was only done once a week—imagine that!

I tried to memorize the Qur'an and found that my memory had eroded greatly. This was frustrating and still is frustrating. I would attempt to exercise like everyone else, since I did not want them to harm me or my family any more than they had already. In the beginning of my time in isolation I started to express myself by writing poetry, and to my surprise my attorney told me to stop. Also, in every letter from my mother I was told "silence is golden, so keep your mouth shut." My emotions and feelings began to close in on me, and I've never dealt with anything like that before, so I think this resulted in me just writing what could be dubbed Islamic letters. But even this became more and more difficult. It would take me days to finish just one letter, and it was so mentally exhausting that I would sometimes sit with the pen directly above the paper for hours, but nothing coherent would be written. My situation only seemed to get worse, and I would not have minded if the government had saved its money and spent it on only one bullet in my head. At least my family's suffering and mine would have been over.

Something I forgot to mention is: how do you stay warm in an already cold room/cell surrounded by steel, cinderblock, and stone? Today my arthritis is acute and I have numbness in my right foot and my left hand. It's difficult to focus for long periods of time. This is not normal for me; that's why I read so many books in isolation just to keep my mind active, and recently I've taken up the study of chess to try to spark my memory through the puzzles and positions.

I'm grateful to my ex-wife and my mother, who made sure that I had weekly visits from my family and whatever else I needed while in solitary.

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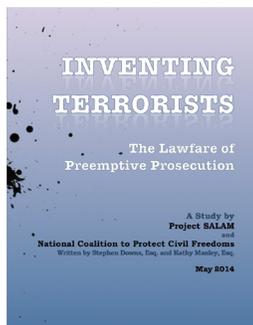
What makes this whole government scheme so diabolical is that I was a jazz musician just trying to find a means to pay off a debt that was punishing me, and that means was not me searching the globe to become a terrorist: Saeed and the FBI presented that! And now I have the stigma attached to me for life of being part of and supporting Al-Qaeda. Very strange for someone who does not even know anyone involved in that organization.

Is it a crime to despise injustice? Or is the villainization of innocent men and women, who only say that they believe in Allah, a crime?

From the poorest slave in need of Allah's mercy,
Tarik Shah

political prisoner # 53145-054, FCI Petersburg // 2013

For Further Reference



Inventing Terrorists: The Lawfare of Preemptive Prosecution

(Project SALAM and National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms, 2014)

Free download at: <http://www.projectsalam.org/Inventing-Terrorists-study.pdf>

“Preemptive prosecution (also called preventive, predatory, proactive, pretextual, or manufactured prosecution) is a law enforcement strategy, adopted after 9/11, to target and prosecute individuals or organizations whose beliefs, ideology, or religious affiliations raise security concerns for the government.” [page 10].

“Stings” (entrapment)

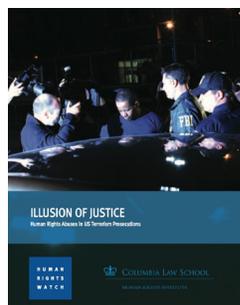
The government uses *agents provocateur* to target individuals who express dissident ideologies and then provides those provocateurs with fake (harmless) missiles, bombs, guns, money, encouragement, friendship, and the technical and strategic planning necessary to see if the targeted individual can be manipulated into planning violent or criminal action. Ordinarily the law prohibits the government from entrapping innocent citizens into crime, but the law provides an exception when the target is ‘predisposed.’ Although the term ‘predisposed’ usually describes someone who was already involved in similar criminal activity, or where evidence shows he or she was inclined to do so without any government inducement, in preemptive prosecution cases the government has successfully claimed that the term can mean that the target ‘readily responded’ to the inducement and did not subsequently withdraw from the plot...

So far, this ‘ready response’ theory has been upheld by the courts, and so in all practical respects the entrapment defense no longer exists. Moreover, it appears that based on Islamophobia and ignorance about Islam, Muslims are often considered to be predisposed to terrorism simply due to their religion, especially if they are religiously conservative.

Stings are targeted at a particular person and play upon the particular weaknesses of that person. For example, the target may be very poor and is offered large sums of money to engage in criminal conduct; or the government may use the target’s ideology to pressure and shame him or her into doing something illegal; or it may bring other pressure to bear to force the target to engage in criminal conduct. The target is typically presented with a test of whether he or she can withstand the inducements of the government to engage in illegal acts, whereby the government applies as much pressure as possible and uses the vast resources at its disposal,

based on the premise that the targets may be recruited by highly persuasive, manipulative terrorists. (In reality, true terrorists would never recruit most of these people because they are too vulnerable and therefore unreliable.)

One of the best signs of a preemptive prosecution by sting is that the targets were either uninterested in or unable to develop any plot without the government’s involvement. In many such cases, the government provided not only the resources but also the plans themselves...”[page 24]

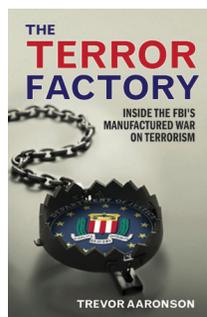


Illusion of Justice: Human Rights Abuses in U.S. Terrorism Prosecutions

(Human Rights Watch, Columbia Law School, Human Rights Institute, 2014)

Free download at: http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/usterrorism0714_ForUpload_0_0_0.pdf

Mentioned in the film:



The Terror Factory: Inside the FBI's Manufactured War on Terrorism

by Trevor Aaronson

(Ig Publishing, 2013, 272 pp.)

A groundbreaking work of investigative journalism, [the book] exposes how the FBI has, under the guise of engaging in counterterrorism since 9/11, built a network of more than 15,000 informants

whose primary purpose is to infiltrate Muslim communities to create and facilitate phony terrorist plots so that the Bureau can then claim it is winning the war on terror.



Informants [Documentary]

(Al Jazeera, 2014, 47:49)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMRns4ViuEY>

Al Jazeera’s Investigative Unit takes you inside the shadowy world of FBI informants and counterterrorism sting operations. Following the 9/11 attacks, the FBI set about to recruit a network of more than 15,000 informants. [This] investigative film tells the stories of three paid FBI informants who posed as Muslims as they searched for people interested in joining violent plots concocted by the FBI.

Interactive: <http://webapps.aljazeera.net/aje/custom/2014/fbiinformants/index.html>