

**ACTING PATRIOTIC COLLECTION
SEPTEMBER 11 DIGITAL ARCHIVE**

**INTERVIEW WITH CARLOS ALI
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**Q. Okay. So let's start with, like with your mother,
your name and who you are.**

C.A. Alright. My name is Carlos Ali. I'm Said Ali's fa--Said Ali's son,--Said Ali is my father,-and my mother is Delilah Ali.

S.A. Okay. this is my youngest and he just wants to say hello.

Q. Hi.

S.A. This is Brandon.

B.A. My name is Brandon.

**Q. Okay. So when did you first hear about this? Tell us how you first
learned of all this and what you did?**

C.A. Well, I remember one night.. I forget where .. we were coming home from, but my Dad was talking about how he wanted to start a business of his own. This was in the car coming back from somewhere. He was saying that he was going to start a business of his own. He was trying to get out on his own, 'cause that's been always an aspiration of his. And he told me that things may get a little rough around the house, the normalcy may be lost for a little while. But I didn't think that anything like this could ever happen. And he said things might get a little tight moneywise because he was going to be starting to go out on his own. But it may have been maybe a month or two after that that I started hearing that things were happening with the partners. Then I heard that he was suspended from his job; that they weren't allowing him in his office,--and I knew everything as it was going along. I was informed of everything fully because I was kind of a leaning post a lot of the time for my Mom. She would vent things out to me, event though I know it must have been hard for the both of them trying to--you know--protect even the younger children from this. Mostly I knew of everything day by day as it happened.

Q. Okay. But so on the day that the cops arrived at your house what happened>

C.A. The day that they arrived I came home

Q2. Actually, Could you say what date it was?

C.A. The date that it was the 28th of November.

Q2. Okay. Well, just start out by saying that on the 28th of November

C.A. Okay. Well, on the 28th of November my Dad drove me to school,--he drove me to the bus stop early in the morning,--and I didn't know about anything until I believe it was half way through the day. I was picked up early from school. I was driven home by some of my Dad's friends from the company. I was actually driven home, I believe, it was after wrestling practice by some of my friends .. Some of my father's friends from the company, and they let me know that my father had been detained. I didn't know anything that was going on. We went to meet my mother near .. nearby to my school because she had just came back from the City. And,--you know--we just met her on a side road. I was ... everything was explained to me. We were brought to one of my Dad's close friend's.

One of his employees actually from the company was one of his very close friends at the time and they actually brought me to his house so I could calm down and relax and so that my Mom wouldn't have to worry about picking me up; wouldn't have to worry about where I was. And they were very courteous and everything and very careful to .. careful about our emotions at the time because it was a very delicate time for us.

When I first hear about it was just disbelief. I didn't know how it could have happened. I always looked up to my father. He was the biggest role model in my life,--he is today still,--and I just couldn't imagine how a person of that caliber could be accused of such heinous crimes. It was ridiculous. And it didn't really hit me until I would be home every day and I would be home on the weekends and it didn't hit me until he wasn't there all the time.

Q. At school kids say stuff to you or ...

C.A. Well, at the private school that I was going to at the

time a lot of the kids were really mature about it. I didn't tell pretty much any of my friends. I didn't tell anybody. I told maybe

Q. Sorry. (unintelligible sentences.)

C.A. At first I didn't tell any of my friends about the situation. I went to the school next day and I just went about my daily routine. I tried to keep things as normal as possible. I tried to keep everything as if nothing happened. Eventually I told my closest friends. I told maybe a maximum of five or six people. But then, after awhile when things really started to get bad and I knew that I would have to leave my private school due to money problems, I had to tell more people. I basically just told people that my father was experiencing legal problems at the time and we weren't able to pay for the tuition so I would just be going back to public school. Of course everybody asked me are you going to be back next year?--you know?--will you be back this year? And I told them: Well,--you know--I'm not sure. Hopefully, if things go well then I'll still see you guys. Then came the day where it was really sudden how I had to leave the school because the school either wanted the money or they wanted me out. So it was actually on a Thursday. I packed up my locker, used my big gym bag to pack up all my books. I had been wrestling at the time for the school. I had to cut my wrestling season short and I went to Suffern High School here the following week. The guidance counselor from Suffern that I had known for a long time helped me get adjusted as quickly as possible back into my old school and since I had only left the school for a year it wasn't that hard adjusting. All my friends were still there and they were all really supportive of me. I don't think that even that many people now know that something has happened to me because I tried to just keep things very calm and collected throughout the entire thing.

Q. So you never really experienced any harassment at all?

C.A. Well, I never experienced any harassment except nobody, by looking at me, nobody knows what religion I am. by my name people think that I'm Spanish. Even by my last name I've had Spanish teachers tell me that it's a Spanish name as well. By everything about me it doesn't say I'm Muslim which shocks people. I'll tell them: No, I'm Muslim, and they'll look at me: Really? Because I guess they expect me to be walking around with a tofy on my head, wearing full dress and stopping to pray in the middle of school. I think they--you know--expect me to be dark skinned, to be growing out a beard and--you know--to be prejudiced of everybody.

When people hear that it's just like they think of a sour person.

Q2. Okay. Can I just ask you what do you think would have been the reaction of your school friends if they had known. I mean, clearly you weren't telling them but if they had known how do you think that would have played out for you?

C.A. Well, the few that did know, I spoke to,-and there were some that I spoke to and I told them everything. I mean, I needed some outlet for my emotions at the time, and the ones who did know were very understanding actually. It's really surprising how all of the friends the I had that I told stayed by my side and we're still in high school. Meanwhile, all of the adults, all of the ones who I thought were mature adults that stood by my father's side, had left it and it was really weird to me how--you know-we're considered teenagers; we're considered kids, and how my teenage friends could be so much more caring than these adults who have spent their entire lives seeing people going through hardships.

Q. What .. that year are you actually in school and how old are you?

C.A. I'm fifteen and I'm in the tenth grade.

Q. (inaudible) to visit your ... your father?

C.A. Yes. I went ... I Actually only got a chance to go once. It was during on of the vacations that I had in school one of the days that I had off from school. Actually, it was after one of the days I had in school. It was on a Saturday and it was after a long time that he had been in there because at first we thought, Oh--you know--he's going to get out. So for me to go to a place like that and--you know-for us to see each other in a place like that, in that type of setting, would be awkward and probably wouldn't be for the best. And I knew that-you know--maybe I couldn't hold myself up so much; that maybe--you know--I would break down in front of my Dad and I didn't think that that was the type of thing that he would need to see. I think that my family needed to see me being strong, they needed to see me going throughout my normal every day routine just as I always have, and I didn't want to show any signs of weakness. So it took me a long time to actually get out there, but once I did it was a very ... it was a very odd experience 'cause I didn't feel that things were going bad. Once I saw that my Dad still kept faith it helped me keep faith.

Q. You must have been kind of like pent up all the time, not being able to talk to anybody?

C.A. Well, I was able to talk to a lot of my close friends. A lot of my close friends .. I have a very tight circle of friends and they were all very close to me. They were all by my side. I spent New Years over one of my best friends' houses and everybody was very supportive of me. Whenever I was feeling down they were always there to try and pick me up. and I'm glad that I had people outside of the house to talk to because I didn't want to break down in front of my family. I wanted to be strong for my mother and be strong for my family and so that they wouldn't have to worry about me. I think that was the biggest part of--you know--my job at the time.

Q. These friends of yours, are they Christian or are

C.A. The friends of mine, my closest friends are actually Jewish which any time we speak about religion my friends will say ... One of my friends said to me the other night: You know, our two religions are almost exactly the same but we fight the most. And it just shocks us that among my friends religion is not a concept that comes up at all, only when, Oh, I have to go to the mosque; could you call me later, or, Oh,-you know, I have to go to Hebrew school; can you call me later. That's the only time religion ever gets brought up. It's not like a constant discussion with my friends. They'll have their questions and they'll ask me their questions and I'll tell them outright. Most of ... as I said, most of my close friends are Jewish and Christian. I don't have too many close friends that are Muslim. Most of my . Most of the people that I hang out with aren't Muslim and they don't look at me as: Oh, this is my Muslim friend, Carlos. No, they look at me as this is Carlos, my Muslim friend. They see me as who I am first which is .. very good because I don't introduce myself: Hi! My name is Carlos and I'm Muslim. I introduce myself: Hi! My name is Carlos. And then maybe it might come up, like, two or three weeks later, Religion. and I think that's the better part because they get to know you for who you are and that kills their prejudism towards any religion whatsoever. a lot of times in history class ... We just went over the Arab/Israeli conflict; we just went over the Middle East and I was sitting down and I would hear people saying: Oh well, isn't this the right thing in Islam?--isn't that the right thing in Islam? And there are so many stereotypes, whereas most Arabs are Muslim but not all Muslims are Arab. I'm not Arab and I'm Muslim so people won't think that I'm Muslim. They think that you have to be Arab to be Muslim which is totally false.

Q. Well did you get any kind help or did you attempt to get any help or talk to anybody, like, at the mosque, I mean, (inaudible) clerics (inaudible)?

C.A. Well, I wasn't able to talk to anybody at the mosque too much because Friday prayers is our biggest prayer and unfortunately the American work week and the American school week don't permit us to go to that prayer. I did speak to the school psychologist at the .. at the private school that I went to. I did speak to some guidance counselors at my new school, but mostly I just .. I knew my religion. I knew what was going on. My father had explained to me my religion and nowhere in my religion does it say any of the things that he was accused of.

Q2. Has this whole experience --I asked your mother the same question --has it has it changed you. I mean, do you think you're a different person now or do you see things differently?

C.A. It changed me a lot. I feel like I hold onto people a lot less because it kind of makes you question who can you trust. All of my father's friends were a part of the company and that was our family. We had ... He had an employee who once told me he had quite his job at a phone company where he was getting paid almost twice as much just to work in the atmosphere--in the family atmosphere of that company that my Dad had created around him. There would be barbecues, family get togethers that would be more like company parties, but they .. it was like a family setting. I had aunts and uncles that worked for my father that we were not related to at all and I confided in them and I had trusted in them, and now it's like I feel afraid to call them just to say hi. so it's hard to know who you can trust anymore. It's hard to hold onto people and it really makes you see that in life, that friends come and go but our family has stuck by us.

Q. Okay, Carlos. That's very nice. Thank you very much.

C.A. Alright