

**ACTING PATRIOTIC COLLECTION
SEPTEMBER 11 DIGITAL ARCHIVE**

**INTERVIEW WITH SAID ALI
CONDUCTED BY JAMES RIDGEWAY
APRIL 03, 2002**

Q2. Okay, whenever you're ready, Jim.

Q. Okay. So first of all tell me your name.

A. My name is Said Ali. I'm from Pakistan and in this country for over twenty years, married to a American lady who I fell in love with, for over ten years and we have three wonderful kids. I've been in this country for over twenty years.

Q. What do you do?

A. I was part of a business. For the last fourteen years I was the executive. I was the Vice-President of a private security firm.

Q. What sort of work ... What did you do?

A. We did private security contracts where we provided security officers, security professionals, and different kinds of security services like cameras ad access systems, private investigations. We are established in the metropolitan area and we had over a thousand employees in the company. The company was established for over twenty years.

Q. And where is it headquartered?

A. It's headquartered right here in Manhattan at West 29th Street.

Q. What were you doing on September 11th?

A. September 11th I was getting ready to go to work. Actually, I was just ready to step out of the house when I saw this happen on ...on TV and I couldn't believe it. I Got on the phone right away with my office because we had--you know--buildings and employees that worked in the area, and just shot down to ... to my work and picked up some ... some of my managers to respond to our main office because we knew that there's going to be a lot of people that would be affected by this, especially the people that worked right around the corner from the site, our employees. So we got there as fast as we can.

Q. Did you lose any employees?

A. We didn't lose any employees, no. We had some employees that were hurt and one particular individual who was in the area, his car was totally damaged and destroyed. No, we didn't lose ... thank God we didn't lose any employees.

Q. So were you there before the Towers went down or right afterwards or ...

A. Right afterwards, actually. I couldn't even get close to the area because it was just swamped with emergency vehicles and law enforcement vehicles. You know? The closest I got was a little south of 14th Street. I actually met with some people from work and tried to get some people down there who were -- you know -- still securing buildings even though they had evacuated it. But we had some clients that needed the buildings to be secure before we got out of there.

Q. Okay. Now, when did your troubles really start and exactly how did they start?

A. My troubles actually started right after September 11th where I felt that my partners, their attitude towards me had changed. There were more of these innuendoes and ... and taunts like, -- you know -- what are your people doing? Why did they do this? Hopefully everybody's going to get bombed out of that part of the world, and this and that, and I felt that -- you know -- for no apparent reason, unwarranted, I was always on the defensive and trying to explain the ... the Islamic stance from a ... from a Muslim point of view. During that time ... Prior to that, my partners were going into a negotiation for a ... a share holder's agreement -- a updated shareholder's agreement -- in which moneys that were owed to me were going to be questioned and how my partnership role was going to be enhanced. The ... the biggest effect on me was that that negotiation didn't go anywhere. One morning I come to work, which was roughly about a month after September 11th, and I was handed a letter from our attorney that the ... the two partners are looking into all the moneys that are owed or not owed and they're investigating that, and until that is finished I'm asked not to come to work. Subsequent to that, I contacted my attorney and we started legal proceedings to bring this to court because the matter had gotten out of hand. That ... after that maybe a month went by, and one morning I was at my attorney's office, and my wife called me and she said that there is about twenty or twenty-four cops at the house from the Manhattan District Attorney's office -- and we don't even live in Manhattan; we live in the suburbia, up in Rockland Country -- and they are searching the house looking for nuclear, biological and chemical warfare. At that point, my attorney contracted Manhattan District Attorney's office and they said yes, that is

true. What we want him to do is surrender himself to the District Attorney's office right now because there is a arrest warrant out for him. When we asked what was basically the problem we were told, well, it's a dispute between him and his company and -- you know -- they are saying that they didn't know that I made that much money on my salary. To make a long story short, we went down there, I surrendered myself. And I figured, this was in the morning, 11:30, so, I should be arraigned somewhere in the afternoon. I have never had an arrest or any kind of law enforcement infraction in this country, so it shouldn't be a problem. I mean, I felt very confident that once anybody hears ... I mean, obviously, they went in and got an indictment which I didn't know how they did that -- but anybody hears that this is -- you know -- about a money dispute, a civil dispute -- I've sued these two individuals and the corporation for moneys owed to me -- it should be a fairly simple thing, and having no prior criminal record, I should be out within the afternoon. Well, unbeknownst to me that I did not see the judge till next morning and the reason for that was that I was put in a holding cell in Manhattan, where at first my attorney couldn't find me. After that, he did find me it was too late. The judge couldn't see us. So the next morning we went in front of the judge, and at that point the District Attorney notified the judge that I'm being ... I'm being investigated for terrorist activities and terrorist links. And I have traveled extensively throughout the world. I have links in the Middle East and I have traveled with individuals to Europe, specifically to France, to Paris, to Sweden, to England, and they're investigating me being part of a terrorist organization because the people that I worked with are saying that I made this much money, they were not aware of it, that money must have been used for some terrorist activity. Right down to that they found flight simulator software, which is my son's video games. The people that I traveled with, which was my family, my three kids and my wife, they said that I was at the World Trade Center two weeks prior to the incident, where I had taken my wife's friends to the site with my son, to show them the World Trade Center because they had never been to New York. Everything in my life that was sound and that was above board was used in a very twisted way, and the launching pad of that I was from Pakistan and I'm a Muslim, so I must have something to do with something. Hearing this, I mean, I ... I could just hear my wife ... she was sighing in the back of the court and I could just hear that the entire courtroom was just hissing and I could ... I could sense there was a certain amount of hatred that was coming out of people. And what I heard at that time was my attorney who looked at me and I think I remember him saying that if Mr. Ali is the most dangerous man in New York City, as the District Attorney is painting him, we should stop the war in Afghanistan. We've got our guy. Here is our guy. Needless to say, I got all my assets, everything frozen. Everything was taken out of my house, every family picture, every family video, anything that you could imagine had remotely to do with any kind of paperwork, right down to our E.Z. Pass tags were ... cars were taken,

everything, because it just was a nightmare. I thought I was in a bad Twilight Zone episode. I was arraigned. I could not make bail. My wife did not have any money. We could not use anything that we owned, and I was sent to Rikers Island where I was put in ... in the most high profile jail that they have in Rikers. It's called NIC, where some of the most highly publicized criminals and hardened criminals go. And this is not really even a detention center because I was next to some people in a dorm of thirty people, where some of them were on their second murder trial. I was there for a hundred and five days, during which time my wife and my kids probably really felt the wrath -- and I can't look for any other word than the word wrath. She had to move in with my mother-in-law. My kids, my eight year old and my five year old, who did not actually see me get arrested, did not know where I was but knew that they were not in their house. They were not in their home. My wife had to take them and ... and bring them to a neighbor's house. It was ... the way she described it, it was ... was basically she felt that the world was ending. She didn't know which way to turn. She didn't know what to do, and especially after the arraignment she didn't know what ... what was going to happen, because the way they ... they read these accusations against me, it sounded like that if I'm lucky, I would get a life sentence. The worst would be that I would get the death penalty. During ...

Q2. How were you feeling at that time? Like, when you heard that, what were you feeling?

A. I'll tell you exactly how I felt. I felt like there was a big slab on my chest, and actually I ended up in the infirmary right there in the detention center because I was totally ... just totally not -- you know -- just was in shock. I won't even use the word flabbergasted. I was just totally in shock at what ... what was just about to happen to me. I ... I was in there and then all of a sudden I was put in an isolation. Ironically enough that I was in the detention center, and a lot of people that worked ... the corrections officers worked for me and they recognized me. They said what are you doing here? At that time they didn't know. And all of a sudden I was talking to somebody, and all of a sudden the word came down that don't talk to him. He's accused of something ... Just don't talk to him and I was in total isolation. I remember this ... this ... this fellow that I was talking to just stopped talking to me right away. He said I can't talk to you and .. and he just walked away. It was like that I've developed some horrible disease. And what my wife tells me that that's what she felt like. You know? Initially friends were there, but once they heard that I'm accused of something like that they ... they just all left us. Actually, there was a very close friend of mine, his wife told my wife when she called there that please do us a favor and don't ever call here again. This is somebody that -- you know -- my kids were close with. This is somebody that we helped during their marriage problems. He was having marriage problems, he would come

and stay with us overnight because he's not getting along with his wife. And -- you know -- it was just ... it was just totally, totally absurd. For the next three days, that I didn't really see my wife, I felt like this ... this was the end of my life. I felt like that I've hit ... I'm in an abyss, and I will never come out of it. And the hundred and five days felt like that. Every single day felt like that. Every time that I went to court and I heard them say that, well -- you know -- "we're investigating, we're investigating." And ironically enough, I never spoke to a single federal agency, never got charged with any terrorist activity, crime, or link. My family, who ... who's resourceful in Pakistan, spoke to the government officials there, who in turn spoke to the Embassy officials here, who then wrote a letter to the judge that they personally -- the government of Pakistan vouches for me that I'm not involved. That still wasn't good enough. The District Attorney felt that he had to go to Washington and talk to them personally unless he felt that -- you know -- maybe they were under pressure or something. And when he spoke to the First Secretary, whose name ... name is Dr. Imron, he said: "We know his family. His uncle is one of the advisors to the President of Pakistan. We're the seventh largest country in the world, we're the second largest Muslim country in the world and we are your biggest allies. And we're vouching for this guy and that's not good enough?" And I was still ... Basically they ... they kept going, "well, they're still investigating." Then they asked me to answer their questions; if I would be willing to wave my rights and sit down with the District Attorney's office, and I did that. I answered every single question that they had for five hours, right down to how much I spent on my dog and the training of my dog, which, by the way, we lost our dog, because I couldn't bring the dog to my mother-in-law's house, and the kids are devastated over that. I mean, it was everything was taken away from us. Finally, the judge -- and I have to believe, you know -- I have a stronger faith in God now than I ever did before -- said that here is an upper class person -- upper middle class person -- he's got ... he's well educated ... why are we holding him? Where is the investigation? And this was on a Thursday. And he told the District Attorney that he has till five o'clock Tuesday, which was March 12th, to present any kind of correspondence or a letter or any interest that the federal government might have in investigating me. After that was not done, the following day I was released.

Q. Well, when ... when they ... when you waved your rights and went and talked to the District Attorney, what kind of questions did they ask you?

A. They asked me where did we spend the money? How did we spend that money/ what is our spending habits? Where do my wife and I like to go out to eat? What kind of shopping do we do? Why were we in England? Why were we in France? What was I doing there? I explained to them every single time that all these travels were with my family. They had a question that ... They had a card of

a guy, in Pakistan, that I had hired to show my son, my oldest son, some historical sites. He's very much into archeology and we went on a tour. They said who is this guy? Why do you have his card? And the card says he's a tour guide. They had a card of a New York City police Department inspector, a full inspector, they said why do you have this card? I said the guy works for me. Well, who is this person? That's my uncle. I mean, these were certain things that I was kind of amazed that after a hundred days they didn't even have the -- I don't know -- the sense, I would have to say, to even call that number of that New York City inspector and say do you know this guy? So I don't know. It ... it scares me that at this day and age when we're at a guarded sense of awareness, I'm kept for a hundred days -- did they really investigate? What did they investigate? Or they were just keeping me in there, knowing full well what the truth was from day one.

Q. Now, politically, you ... you're ... you have a green card ... you don't ... 'cause you're not a U.S. citizen yet?

A. Yes.

Q. You've applied for your ...

A. Correct. I have applied for citizenship, yes, in 1998.

Q. Okay. So that's just pending. There's nothing

A. Nothing ... nothing ... It's just pending. It's just paper work delay. I've been a green card holder since 1987.

Q. And through your company you have contributed to various political campaigns?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you like to tell us about (inaudible)

A. It was ironic ... and it's funny that you asked me that question. They asked me why did I have President Bush's picture on computer in the house and correspondence. The correspondence states that me and my ... my wife and I were invited to the inauguration ... which we were there with President Bush. The Republican Party ... was somebody that I -- you know -- contributed money to, just like I've contributed money to the Democratic Party. That was actually used in the arraignment, that I had a picture of President Bush on the computer. And ... and I remember my attorney saying that how does that relate to terrorism? There's about a hundred million pictures of President Bush out there. Is it related to terrorism just because I'm from Pakistan and I'm a Muslim and that means -- that probably means something? I could get his picture from a newspaper.

TAPE BREAK -- missing text

which his partners don't know that he made. So he made too much money, which they don't know about, so it be used for terrorism.

Q2. could I just back up a little bit and just ... just tell me about your par--. Like, who were these partners? Are they American born?

A. Yes.

Q2. And can you just talk a little bit about that and what kind of relationship you had before and ... and ... and just a general ...

A. The partners that I had, one of them is an Italian-American and the other one is a Jewish-American partner. They both actually are related to each other, because one is married to the other guy's sister. The relationship we had was ... You know, people used to say that it's amazing that the three major religions are running a company: there's a Muslim guy, there's a Jewish guy, there's a catholic guy. And it used to be actually a joke in our ... in our Christmas parties or any other functions. My kids were close to my ... my one partner, Gary, who is the Jewish gentleman, his kids, they ... we ... we went on vacations together. We were at each others' houses like there was no tomorrow. There was no -- you know -- there was no barrier or invisible barrier that kind of differentiated us. You know? We used to talk about that maybe one day, if things are great, my oldest son might marry his oldest daughter because they had the fondness of each other and they were constantly on the phone or email and stuff like that. And September 11th changed that. September 11th to me changed everything because that's where we became different from them.

Q2. On a daily basis ... Like, did you meet them on a daily ... Like, how long had you known them? How long had you been in partnership with them and ...

A. Fourteen years. We knew them fourteen years and daily basis it was great. I mean, if ... if somebody had a problem we were there for each other. We were very close, like ... like I said. I mean, the ... the comment even to our clients were that these are three guys that represent three religions and look how great they get along.

Q. How did you meet these guys?

A. When I started in this ... in this industry it was with another company, and somebody came to Elite. Elite was a very small

company at that time. And they asked me to join them, they felt that I could bring something to the table and that was in 19--1988. And since then we just ... we just grew in business. We were very successful.

Q. And what do you actually do? What ... What?

A. I was the Vice-President of ... of the company. I was in charge of the operations, the administration, sales. I was in charge pretty much of all the aspects of the business. I was the so-called work horse. And that's why I was offered the partnership when I had showed a lot of in-put into the business and by making the business grow, which I helped tremendously. So the incentive for me was to become a partner and then -- you know -- progress with the business. It was a great relationship. It was a great partnership.

Q. So they ... they're basically accusing you of stealing money?

A. They're accusing me that the moneys that I made on my salary they were not aware of, which is very hard for me to believe, but that's what they said, because we had a dispute prior to that on moneys that were owed to me.

Q2. Before September 11th?

A. Before September 11th. And I, when the dispute ... After September 11th, which I had mentioned that on October 19th they said, well, we're still ... want to find out what money is owed to you and what is this? You know? Why don't you take a little hiatus and let us -- you know -- investigate this, how much money is owed. I said fine. When I got this in a very unceremonious way, I consulted my attorney who said: "Look. At this time we should sue them," which we did. We dropped the civil law suit in ... in response to this where I felt that there was a serious amount of money that was owed to me and they were just kind of dragging their feet. And they were dragging their feet with the new shareholder's agreement which -- you know -- now we know that they had, after September 11th, no intention of signing.

Q. So they ... they're the ones that went to the DA?

A. Yes.

Q. They didn't find you (inaudible)

A. They went to the DA ... They went to the District Attorney's office though a private criminal defense attorney that they ... they had hired. This person took them down to the District Attorney's office and said, "well, listen, we feel that this guy had made all this money. We didn't know how he made this money.

But more seriously, we feel that he might have used it for terrorism."

Q. How, the suit that they had against you, was that put into court before September 11th?

A. The suit that I have against them was put in ...

Q. The legal ...

A. Yeah. The legal, law suit that I put in against them was after September 11th.

Q2. Can you just go back to ... You say September 11th changed everything in that relationship. Can you just talk a little bit about how you interacted with them after -- you know -- how you began to notice the change and what happened?

A. I mean, I ... I ... I said before that after September 11th I started to get these comments -- these taunting comments -- and I always felt that I was on the defensive, trying to defend the Islamic point of view or the Islamic stance, so to speak. And I know that in the morning we usually used to have coffee together. Subsequent to September 11th we stopped having coffee together because they would just come in ... Instead of stopping in my office, which was on the first floor, and we had the entire building, they would just go directly up and never stop at my office. And actually I felt very -- you know -- awkward about that. We used to sit there and we all had -- you know -- satellite TV's in our office and we would just sit there and watch the news usually early in the morning and shoot the breeze and talk about the business. That ended abruptly after September 11th. As a matter of fact, Gary had his birthday party -- his fiftieth birthday party exactly one month after September 11th, and I remember him making a comment which he made sarcastically, that: "Oh, and -- you know -- I want to thank our Ali, my partner, or who knows? He might be a terrorist but I'll thank him anyway." And at that time my wife actually took a note of that of that comment. We still have the videotape somewhere at the house. And I said: "Ah, he's just ... You know him ... He's just kidding around." Never knew that he actually had some sort of that feeling which came out actually eight days later.

Q2. Is your wife born in this country?

A. Yes. My wife is Italian-American, born in this country, is a very Brooklyn girl, I mean, that's the best term I could put it ... all my kids are born here.

Q2. (inaudible) inquiry. Just ... You know, you say your friends changed, like that one friend. Like, how was ... Your friends, were they from all walks of life and ...

A. Yes. They were all from ... I mean, a lot of them worked for me ... worked with me. The way that my friends changed ... when my wife didn't even have a dollar to get in a cab to come and see me, I mean, outside of her own immediate family, her mother and her sister helping her, she ... she picked up the phone and she started calling: "I need help," and this ... this just changed everything. People didn't want to talk. People didn't want to help. She said: "Look. Ali needs help ... we're going to have to bail him out." "Well, we can't help." We don't know what the truth is, just because everybody heard the terrorism word, and they basically said ... like, this one woman said: "Do us a favor. Don't ever call here again." And this is somebody that we helped tremendously, not only financially. You know? We helped them in ... in moral support in their time of need. And my wife -- you know -- she ... when you talk to her you .. you would see that she breaks down. It's very hard for her to finish that conversation. Her own aunt that lives in Florida said: "Well, we really don't know what the truth is," and she was devastated. This is somebody that we new for years. This is her own aunt. So, she saw that everybody just kind of left, because they heard this thing that I might be linked to something.

Q. Now, what about inside your immediate family?

A. My immediate family was very strong. They ... Like I said, when my wife reached out to my family back in Pakistan, they reached out to the government officials and they said: "Look. He's being accused of something that he possibly can't do." I mean, my uncle used to call me time to time when these crises developed and ... who's ... who's ... who's a high ranking political leader in Pakistan, and I advised him on ... on this, that this is the one time that Pakistan and Muslims should show what Islam is. They should ... I mean, one of my comments was that you know what? The real Islamic way would be that Muslims go in Afghanistan and root them out, not wait for America or anybody. This is a problem that we should ... we should definitely -- you know -- take out of our Muslim community or our Muslim world. You know, if somebody asks me that what do I think about Osama Bin Laden, I don't think there's been a more detrimental thing to Islam than Islam ... Osama Bin Laden. Here's a guy, he has all this money in the world and you want to do an Islamic way in a place that has now given you sanctuary? I just ask you one question: what happened to the Islam with ... that the kids are boiling grass and eating grass and eating bread crumbs out of the street and women are begging on the street? What happened to that part of Islam? What happened to that you are somewhere creating your own little jihad and ... and abusing ... The best way to describe it -- and this is my analogy: Islam is going through its dark ages. Because of the lack of education, we are experiencing the dark ages were five, six hundred years ago.

Q. Now, you mentioned before that the cleaning woman actually

helped you?

A. One of the people that did ... stood by us, our house keeper. She was a live in house keeper. When she saw what was going on, she went in and whatever little savings she had from the money that we gave her, she gave all of it to my wife, crying that . she said: I can't see that. I saw more humanity in that than I saw from people that we knew for fifteen, sixteen, twenty years. This woman who was -- you know -- from a poor country, she's a poor woman, basically gave everything to my wife. My wife said that that was the most emotional thing that she had ever experienced in her life.

Q2. Where's she .. Where is that woman from originally?

A. From Argentina.

Q2. And where any of your friends ... did you have any, like, Pakistani friends in

A. I had very few Pakistani friends. I had barely ... I mean, I ... I had one cousin, she lives in Chicago, and her husband and her helped my wife as much as they could. But ironically enough, I was not the ... the mosque going and community driven guy. I was ... I never had that much links. But sometimes I think, God, if I had links maybe I'd be there serving a hundred year term.

Q. Had you ... Would you mind telling us sort of in ball park figures how much money you did make? I mean, ...

A. I made .. I was in the top two percent of the -- you know -- income earners in ... in the United States. Last year I earned over half a million dollars in taxable income that I paid taxes on -- You know -- It's not like we were somebody who-you know -- average as far as our income was. We had everything that you could ask for in life and more, and -- you know -- we were very generous with it too. But this one incident just turned this upside down for us.

Q. How -- you know -- all your assets have gone? Everything is gone or

A. Everything, I mean, right down to ... If I had sports memorabilia in my office, which I had some of the very, very expensive sports memorabilia, all of that is gone. I mean, at this point, we have some of the clothes that were left, because a lot of the stuff that when we ... when she left the house she couldn't even take with her. We don't even have home videos that we had, all of that was taken. Because of the nature of the search warrant was such that they were looking for nuclear weapons. It's the most severe kind of search warrant that you could have executed on you. I mean, I can't even imagine ... I can just imagine what my wife explained to me that nothing was ... I mean, I know that the ... the

District Attorney's office has all the computers, all the telephone handsets right down to the cradles. She didn't even have a telephone to call on. They took every single thing. Every single paper that was in the house: every single credit card receipt, every single ... every single thing that you could imagine.

Q2. And do they still have all those?

A. Yes. And -- you know -- we're moving to get that all back. But the damage is so ... so much done that -- you know -- it's like you're ... you're at the bottom of the pit and you've got to crawl out of it.

Q. Do you ever think of ... of picking up and leaving the country?

A. It's not something that I didn't think about. My wife, who actually loves being in Pakistan, has talked about it. I always think that this is the best place to bring my kids up. I love this country. I have ... I mean, I still love this country. I just feel that two people decided to take advantage of a very bad incident. I don't put those two people far away from the people who did cause the incident. They terrorized my life, they terrorized our home, they terrorized my kids because of a money dispute that I have with them.

Q2. Do you think they knew perfectly ... Like, do you think they suspected in their ... like, when you think about it, had they any ...

A. I think that this was .. this was actually this came into being because we were having discussions and the discussions, without going because this ... this is part of the law suits and stuff so I ... I just want to share that, but we were having discussions that, okay -- if you owe me two dollars, why don't you keep the two dollars and let me buy you out? And these ... these were buy out conditions. And all of a sudden I think this ... this happened -- this September 11th happened, and -- their view about me changed -- their view about me as a person changed, and I think ... I honestly believe that day they didn't want to be associated with me. And it's not as easy as, okay -- you know -- you leave. Okay, I leave. You owe me money. It's not as easy. What's the best way to do it? And I think somewhere the darkness in them came out and they said why don't we just point a finger at him and maybe he'll go away.

Q. Now, who is the ... you said that hey had hired a criminal investigator of some kind.

A. They ... they hi--- ... they went to ... the first day that ... that this thing started, I mean, they went to a ... a very powerful

criminal defense attorney named Alton Ogramowitz, who then contacted my attorney and they were negotiating. But while they were negotiating they felt that they were not going to gain any ground in negotiating in reference to the law suit and everything else, so they said this would be better. And one of the comments he made was: "Oh, how would you feel if we just turned him into the District Attorney's office?" And my ... I remember my attorney said that "why don't you do that?" Not knowing that this would actually become a reality. Not knowing that people would -- you know -- cash in on the hysteria and say: "Yeah, that guy, he might be involved, 'cause, look, he fits the profile. He's a young Muslim guy who's in this country. Maybe he's ... he's involved."

Q2. How many times, while you were in jail, how many times did you talk to the FBI or the District ... How many people did you talk to?

A. I have never spoken to a single FBI person. Nobody ever came down to talk to me. Nobody ever asked me any questions. The only time that I voluntarily went to the District Attorney's office was once, and I interviewed with them for five hours, which ... which they didn't leave any stone unturned about my personal life. And I answered all the questions that they had, and -- you know -- I was ... I was hoping that that day they would have seen the light and said: "Look. You know what? This is really absurd."

Q2. And the other times it was done through the lawyers, right? Everything you were hearing was through your lawyer?

A. Yes, correct.

Q. Were there any people beside the housekeeper who stood by you?

A. Yes. There were certain ... there was ... Well, there was one ... there were two friends that stuck by me and -- you know -- they ... they're not ... they're not the richest people in the world, but whatever they could do, they did. You know? There was another friend who basically -- you know -- he was out of a job himself. He lost his job due to September 11th, but he did more than I can imagine ... than ... more than anybody could do for somebody, and they're regular American -- you know -- friends that we have. I ... I feel awkward by saying they're American, and I feel like there ... there is this need for me to say it, because the question would be "Are they Pakistani or are they American? Who helped you?" And that to me is ... is ... it makes me feel awkward.

Q. What did they do?

A. They helped with ... as simple as groceries; as simple as just taking my daughter and my son to a movie, 'cause they were

asking for me, and they didn't know what happened to Daddy and -- you know -- my wife said: "daddy's gone. He's on a business trip," so ... because she didn't want to explain ... she ... she told me ... she says: "I didn't know how to explain to our eight-year-old what happened to Daddy." Ironically enough, when I got back one day we were watching CNN and she says: "You know, Daddy, they're arresting a lot of Muslim people because of the war." I said, "what war?" "You know, the war that -- you know -- they're fighting with the Muslims and this was her anatomy(inaudible)?. And I ... I tried to explain it to her that -- you know -- yes they are, but it's it's not anything that you have to be worried about right now. And my mother-in-law and my ... my wife were standing there, and she had tears in her eyes and she says: "Oh, I hope they don't take you because I'd be very upset." And this is after I had gotten back a hundred and five days later. So she still doesn't know.

Q. Your mother-in-law didn't know?

A. No. No, my daughter.

Q. Oh, your daughter. Yeah.

A. And they were all standing there when she made that comment that I hope that they never take you because I'd be very upset.

Q. What about your other child?

A. My ... my oldest son did know and he did come to visit me at Rikers.

Q2. He was eight then?

A. Excuse me?

Q2. Is he eight?

A. No. He's fifteen. she's eight and I have a five-year-old. And he did come to visit me and I ... I ... that was also very tough day for me. I've always tried to be a model for my kids that they look up to and they feel that this is how we want to be, even ... I ... I took on education ... Even though I completed most of my education prior to ... but I took it on in the later part of my years to show my son that -- you know -- you've always got to keep trying, and I was lucky enough to get a Ph.D. in criminal justice. Ironically, it didn't really help me in this situation. But he ... he was always inspired, and he still is. And that was a tough day for me when he came to visit me. He was very emotional. He ... he just ... he didn't know what to say and what to make of this.

Q2. Did other kids Like did they know in his school that .. about you (inaudible)?

A. Some of his close friends did know. And when he ended up leaving his private school, because we could not afford the fee anymore, pretty much everybody knew. And his wrestling team, at some point, even tried to raise money, but he told my wife that it's ... it doesn't matter if he's not in private school. This is something that he wanted to be part of. He was in a very good private school called Dwight Englewood in Jersey, and we feel he's very gifted and we always felt that -- you know -- he's .. he's got a great future ahead of him, so we wanted to put everything into that. But once this happened, she couldn't afford to pay the fees and he ended up leaving and going to a public school.

Q. and did they know there, the other kids there?

A. Yes, they did know. And -- you know -- he felt that most of them were sympathetic ... they ... because they knew me. We ... we were at his football games and we were at his -- you know -- wrestling matches and ... and his practices so they .. they were in shock. But there was really nothing anybody could do. And when I still talk to him I can just imagine for a fifteen-year-old how traumatic and how rough it was going to school when your father is also accused ... is ... is a Muslim, and you're a Muslim, and your father is accused of probably the worst or the most hideous crime that anybody could think of.

Q. Now, what ... what do you do now? You're out of a job?

A. Right now I'm out of a job. I ... This is where ICNA came has been very generous to my family. They have paid some of my legal fees. They've helped my wife by giving her money. I have not even the document with me that if I was to go and apply for a job somewhere. Believe it or not, the other day I was looking at the paper and hoping that maybe I would drive a cab somewhere and just to ... just to get enough to -- you know -- to make the ends meet.

Q2. Sorry. Just to go back to --'cause I ... I want to ... because I was wrong, I jumped in ahead, but how you got out eventu -- like, what happened, just to finish the story.

A. After ... after it was over a hundred days and I had said that ... I think I explained that the judge said that on Tuesday ... by Tuesday, March 12th, there should be a letter on his desk stating that there was a federal agency investigating me for terrorism. If it's not there, then I would release this person and then the only charge we have to deal with is grand larceny and -- you know ... My attorney said at that time that if he was to be even found guilty of that charge he would spend a day in jail. I've already done over a hundred and five days in jail that I wouldn't do if I was to be convicted of the charge that they're accusing me of initially.

Q. So what was it like in jail? What did you do?

A. Rikers is tough. Riker's is ... is ... is a very tough place to be in. I was in a dorm with thirty other inmates. Some of them are accused of some of the most hideous and high profile crimes in the city. I mentioned that this was the most high profile building and it ... it was tough. But I was able to find a lot of strength with my faith. I was able to help a lot of people because of my education, and I was able to write letters to their attorneys and correspond with their attorneys, and show people that some of the ones that are accused are just accused of crimes that they did not commit. And the reason they did not commit is because the evidence is there. It's just because they're either very poorly educated or they have very poor legal help. After helping a couple of people, the word got around that -- you know -- this is somebody that you could rely and talk to. That helped me. But initially, it was very rough. I ... I used to hear this ... this chanting of: Oh, here's Mohammed ATA. I remember the first day I was placed in jail everybody just looked at me, and one person comes to me and says: "if I'm you I wouldn't sleep that deeply at night". But I was able to, like I said, keep my faith and I left everything in God's hands. I ... I had really no choice. And I was able to -- you know -- survive there in a very, very tough environment where people just -- you know -- they ... they lose their temper at the drop of a dime. They're frustrated. I could not believe that I was -- you know -- with them. I could not believe that -- you know -- I was in a place with people who are just career criminals. I could not believe that, but I was. I was in the most high profile building at Rikers. I was ... You know, sometimes the ... the treatment of the correction officers weren't the best. I initially ... I remember everybody taunting me; everybody saying: "I saw your picture on the ... on TV last night," and I said, "No you didn't." "No. No, I did. It was you. I guarantee it was you." Because of that, I received some harsh treatment, but it's something that makes me think. At least I was able to communicate. And this is one of the things that I told Adam from ICNA ... that, you know, whatever I could do to help some detainees that are out there that can't even communicate; they're ... they're ... They don't ... they don't know how this country operates, because they're so new here. They just came here looking for an honest dollar, so to speak. That's why I ... I ... I want to give all my time right now ... or ... even after things get better for me, to them, because I feel that they ... they're like, they're like sheep around a pack of wolves.

Q2. How much contact did you have on a daily ... Like, were you able to ring your wife every day or did ... Was your phone at home cut off?

A. Well, the phone at home was slowly cut off and everything so to ... to get in touch with my wife, who was then at my mother-in-

law's house, I would call there. She was deathly afraid to talk on the phone. She was ... she thinks that she was being followed. She thought that everything she was saying was being taped. I was allowed sixty minutes in an entire day to talk to my wife and the most I could get on the phone at any time was twenty minutes. So I had three phone calls in a day, twenty minutes each. I had two visits a week, maximum, one hour visits. It is tough when you have so much to say and you want to give somebody hope on the other end, because I thought that sometimes my wife was just -- you know -- devastated. And try to talk to her for twenty minutes at a time to tell her to hang in there. Things would get better. And -- you know -- to meet with her and all she did was ... she was emotional and she was crying and she was afraid and she was scared. Just to come to reicher's to visit is an ordeal. You get searched fifteen times. You know? You're ... you're treated with such indignity that it's scary to be a visitor even at Rikers. And here she is. She's ... she's never dealt with that kind of a situation before and she had to go through it to meet with me. She would travel all the way from Rockland County, travel two to two-and-a-half hours each way to meet with me for an hour. That's where -- you know -- that's where it was tough. My youngest son is asthmatic. I mean, there were times that he had asthma attacks and she ... she -- you know -- she said she couldn't really make it because he needed his treatment. And she -- you know -- she would either leave it with somebody and ... It just was a rough thing.

Q2. (inaudible comment) You can turn the radio on now. You didn't turn your radio on? Well, it must be next ... downstairs.

A. I think it's over there.

Q2. Is it over there? Probably near the window.

(Female voice) Should I close the window?

Q. Yeah. I would ... I would close it if it's ...

Q2. It's just that these mikes pick everything up.

Q. Are you going to go back into security work?

A. Yes.

Q. So you're going to start your own company?

A. I ... I ... I want to start my own company. I have actually -- you know -- thought about it. But this ... at this time I definitely don't want to give up my ... my dream that I had. Somebody had asked me a question that -- you know -- do you want to just leave? I don't want to leave. I like living here. I love the country that I'm in. I ... I want my kids to be brought up in this country and I

want them to learn the values. If I run away I feel that people who caused this to happen on September 11th would win. And the American in me says they shouldn't win. And I don't want them winning.

Q. Well, did ... did any of the ... The Jewish charities or Christian charities did they ever, beside Muslim charities, help you?

A. The person that I would want to give the credit was my mother-in-law's pastor. He's ... he's a Christian pastor and he did come to visit me a couple of times and he ... he said if there would be any -- you know -- need for a letter or something of reference he would do it. So he did. But other than IcNA nobody else really helped. My wife had called Senator Clinton's office -- Hillary Clinton's office -- and she was not able to help. There was a Congressman, Congressman Gillman from our district, he is ... he was helpful, and I did speak to him after I got out, in the sense that he said he would look into it; that ... why is it that somebody was detained for a hundred and five days and nobody even spoke to the guy for .. for an accusation of terrorism.

Q. Well, what did Clinton say?

A. Well, she said she couldn't really get involved. She's not ... You know -- she's the Legislative branch of the .. of the government and this is the judicial branch and she can't get involved, and she sent a letter to my wife stating that. And this was after my wife had been on the phone with them and told somebody in her office what was going on who felt that maybe she should go to Senator Clinton, but that was the response we got back. We did not get any call backs from Governor Pataki's office or, for that matter, President Bush's office.

Q. So who is your brother-in-law's pastor? He's a Catholic priest?

A. No. He's a Christian priest. He's a born again Christian priest.

Q. What church?

A. It's a church in Paulman, New York, in Rockland Country.

Q2. Was there ever any question amongst ... in your wife's family ... like, was ... apart from the aunt, the hurtful aunt, was there anybody ... like, did anybody else ever doubt, do you think?

A. Nobody else. My mother-in-law was amazing. You know -- she's a ... she's a woman of a strong Christian belief, but she came to visit me. And she's a heart patient and she's on disability, and she was amazing. And she -- you know -- whatever little money she had,

she ... she didn't even think twice. She actually went out and drew out a personal loan of a thousand dollars to help my wife. My wife's two sisters, especially one, Gloria, who is married to my best friend, she was amazing. She was just ... she would come in early in the morning, there were certain visits that my wife could only come at eight o'clock in the morning so she would leave the house at six o'clock to come and visit me at eight and -- you know -- she would be there. And they ... they helped enormously with the kids and whatever little money ... They're not -- you know -- they're not affluent. They both work, my brother-in-law and my sister, Gloria. They did whatever they could. They have their own family. They have a little child of their own. But whatever they could ... that's how my wife was able to survive; was able to give my kids food and -- you know -- put a roof over their head because these were the people that helped.

Q2. Just to go back to inside -- you know -- how did you feel, like, when you were hearing all this stuff about ... Can you take us back to that time and try and remember what you thought was going to happen or whether you ... Like, your whole world must have been totally upside down.

A. I went ... I mean, I was in shock. I was ... My body was numb and I was ... I could not look around ... look back and look at my wife, because I was in hand cuffs and there was, like, four ... four officers around me. And all I could ... I could hear very clearly her ... her sighs and her cry ... she started crying. And one of my friends was with her. And she came there thinking, okay, he's spent one night in jail so he's got to get out now. This is ... this is .. this is too much, 'cause she told me that later on. She said "okay, I ... I figured they'll ... they'll ask for some bail." You know? John, my friend, was there. He'll help out and either ... you should walk out on your own recognizance. You know, it's a funny thing. She said something to me later on, that Sister Hail who got indicted under this Hail House, she had an indictment of seventy-two counts. She was accused of stealing millions. She walked in and out of court. My bail was set like Jason William's bail for two hundred and fifty thousand dollars cash for killing a person. My bail was set with no money that I could use. Might as well not have a bail. That's why I spent a hundred and five days. It ... it is amazing that that ... that time when I heard what they were accusing me of and they were taking everything, there was .. and initially there was anger and then after that it was just total shock. How could they take my ... my kids' video games and say that I was training ... or I was ... I was attached to some terrorist organization? How could they take -- you know -- correspondence and pictures of ... of ... of President Bush and say, "well, he's ... he's got to be linked with a terrorist organization?" I mean, somewhere ... you ... you have to read the entire print, and say: "Okay, he went to Pakistan but he went to Pakistan with these five people. One is at that point, four years old, the other one is six years

old and the other one is twelve years old." It's ... You know, it's very clear. But how do you not say that, but just say he went ... and he went to Pakistan with individuals.

Q. And then your partner -- two partners who were certainly responsible for all of this in the beginning, did they make money off this?

A. Oh, the biggest money they could make out of this is they don't ... they haven't paid me yet. That money that is in dispute, I'll just share it, it's ... it's a little over two million dollars. So I could see what the motivation was. If it was -- you know -- ten thousand, twenty thousand, fifty thousand, is one thing. And what I feel is owed to me is over two million dollars. That's what was in dispute. That was what the law suit was about. So they ... they, according to the language of the law suit, it says I'm just enrichment. I think that's what they mean by it.

Q. So what's the next step in this law suit?

A. The next step is that we've -- you know -- we're going to go through the motions of the law suit. We have now added defamation. We've now added malicious intent. We have now added certain things. That -- you know -- I used to sit back and say "what is pain and suffering? Why do people sue for pain and suffering?" I think I ... I learned the hard way what pain and suffering is. My lawyer was trying to explain it to me. He says -- you know -- imagine one day your wife went though, with you being inside and not knowing if you would ever come out. You know? Where is this going to go? So, I .. I feel very confident ... I still feel confident in the system in the sense that at the end there was a judge who saw that this is ... this is totally absurd. Yes, it was after a hundred and five days. I think I will get those ... those things that are owed to me back. I think I would get the ... what is justly and rightfully mine, I would get it back. Would I get the hundred and five days back? I don't think so. Would I ever get anything back that what my wife and my family and my kids went though? I don't think so. I just hope that they learn something good from this.

Q. So there are two ... I'm sorry. There are two suits. You've got a suit which is a civil suit. Then they've ... were is this criminal suit for?

A. Well, the criminal suit is that they basically said that the money's that I made were not due to me.

Q. Right.

A. So we're ... let the court decide. Let the court decide that this is my agreement with you.

Q. Are there any criminal charges against you?

A. Yes. There are two criminal charges against me.

Q. And who brought those charges?

A. My two partners

Q. Can you bring criminal charges?

A. They went to the District Attorney's office and ... all you have to do is go and testify in front of a Grand Jury. I could go -- and this is ... this is something which is ... if you want a critique of the system, yes. I could go to the Grand Jury and say "you know what? You just took twenty dollars from me by force." And they go in your pocket and they find a twenty dollar bill. Now, it's my word against you. I'm supposed to be innocent until somebody proves me guilty.

Q. You never went before a Grand Jury, did you?

A. No. I was denied my right.

Q. (inaudible)

A. I ... I was denied my right to go in front of a Grand Jury and it was said on court record that because I was being investigated for terrorism.

Q. So the District Attorney, though, he's brought this criminal charge against you?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

Q2. On the larceny thing?

A. Yes.

Q2. I have just a couple ... just ... when the judge said that ... when the Judge said -- you know -- if you don't have a letter saying he's being investigated on Tuesday, what ... how long ... how much further ...

A. The next morning I was released.

Q2. Did you know that you were going to be released?

A. I was not sure. I knew ... I was pretty sure that I would be, but I didn't know that maybe the District Attorney would say,

"Oh, well last night we didn't have the letter. Now we got some letter." I didn't know what to believe until I went in front of the judge the next morning and he said: "Well, there's nothing here, so he's got to go home. And now we've just got to deal with -- you know -- whatever criminal charge you have on him in reference to taking money from his own company."

Q. Do you have any more court dates? Do you have ...

A. Yes. My next court date would be April 12th.

Q. And this is before a Supreme Court? State Supreme Court.

A. Yes.

Q2. I have just one other question. I'm not sure if the tape or ... Just ... just what ... what has this ... how do you feel about humanity? Like, has it taught you anything about human nature?

A. Sadly it's an equilibrium. There's good parts and there are bad parts. The goodness is the goodness of my housekeeper that she says whatever I have it's yours. The worse it people accusing me of taking money that I ... that is owed to me.

Q. Sorry. Just to go back to how you feel about human nature and what this taught you ...

S.A. Yes. It's ... Like I said, it's an equilibrium. I see the goodness ... I see the goodness in ... in a person like Maria, who's our housekeeper. She's from Argentina. She has no money. But whatever she had saved, she offered my wife. She says: "I can't see that this is happening." And then there is, on the other hand, the ... the prejudice that I ... I felt through these two people that I was associated with for over fourteen years ... would say: "Okay -- we don't want to be partners with him. We don't want to do anything with him any more, so why don't we just take the opportunity of this incident and accuse him that he took this, we didn't know, and he might have used it for something horrendous. And just by using that terrorism word, that T word, maybe he'll go away. Maybe that's ... that's how we'll respond to him for having a dream." So is it good? Yes. Is there bad? Yes. What I learned from it? I do learn one thing: you can't lose faith in good. You can't lose faith in some of the humanity, the good people that are out there, and you can't lose faith in God. You've got to ... you've got to let that come through.

Q. Is there any doubt in your mind that ... that ... that that wasn't ... like, that you think they were totally cynical in terms of ... That was evil essentially, what they were doing?

A. There's ... there's no doubt in my mind because, I mean, I know I haven't done anything wrong. We were just going about our lives. One day you wake up and ... You know, many disputes happen in business all the time. I might feel you owe me two and you might feel I owe you one, and -- you know -- that is not to be worked out this way. I couldn't have written something like this if I was to sit down and start committing myself to paper, and to come up with a novel. To accuse somebody of something that is ... is now and probably in the future would be the most hideous thing.

Q. We ... we were talking before about -- you know -- this might turn out to be something like what happened to the Japanese in the Second World War. Do you ... do you think that's true?

S.A. I think it is very true. I think at that point at least the Japanese were kept in concentration with their families. In ... in some ways it's worse because I was not with my family. In some ways -- you know -- that was a ... some sort of an legitimate war. This is not a legitimate war, so you're accused of a crime which is very, very ugly. It's not like one nation loading up planes and dropping bombs on you. These are ... these are rats that are just ... they came out of the sewer and they bit people and they ... and they destroyed lives, and you're being accused of being part of those ugly rats. So it's ... in a lot of ways it's different. In a lot of ways you have such a stigma that is put on you -- you're tainted in such a way that it's very hard to change that -- you know -- that you're ... you're ... you're associated with ... you're ... you're associated with lowest form of human beings. I don't think the Japanese ever felt they were associated with the lowest form of human beings. They were associated with an enemy nation. I feel ... I mean, disgust is a very light word, and I'm associated with people the likes of all of those people who sat in some dingy little hole and ... and came up with the scheme of blowing up innocent people.

Q2. How about all those friends who turned against you? How are they ... How ... how are they now?

A. Well -- you know -- I don't ... I don't want to use the rat analogy again, but it seems like -- you know -- a couple of people are poking their heads out again through indirectly or directly: "Look. We want to talk." Even though there are parts of me that I want to talk and explain: "Look! What you did was wrong but you should..." My wife -- I have to give her credit and I have to give her respect -- she is totally against it. She doesn't want to see or hear from them, because there was only one time of need in your life ... this ... this is probably even worse than me dying. If I would have died, maybe there would be some resolute or there would be some consolation that, okay ... this ... this was worse than that. This was ... you don't know if ... what's going to happen, and these people

abandoned her. So -- you know -- I have to ... I have to ... at this time I have to, live by her wishes, basically keep my distance.

Q. In that dorm in prison were there other Muslims?

S.A. There were ... At some times there were a couple of Muslims. There were black or Hispanic Muslims, and one of the things I was able to do, because I have a good religious upbringing, I was able to teach other Muslims and I was able to -- you know -- lead them in prayer, so there were other Muslims. But the most I ever had at any given time was three.

Q2. And just to ... You said you con -- you were a con -- were you a contributor to the Republican Party and to the Democratic Party?

S.A. Yes.

Q. Can you just say that?

S.A. Yeah. You know, one of the things that they asked me is Why did ... President Bush's picture was there, and I explained to them that my wife and I were at the inauguration. We contributed money to the Republican Party, just like we contributed money to the Democratic Party. You know? There are ... there are certain elected officials in the City now that I personally donated money to. So -- you know -- when you're ... when you're living a nice corporate Dream, and a nice American dream, these are part of those dreams. You know? You give money to charity. You give money to ... to whatever -- you know -- is good for your business and your livelihood. And that's what we did.

Q2. Do you think if you hadn't been as educated and as -- you know -- able to speak English and explain yourself as well and kind of answer for yourself that ... that you might still be in jail?

S.A. Definitely, and that was one of my reasons for helping with ICNA, not only because they helped us, but I want to do that 'cause I ... I could just see if somebody who does not have the communication power or cannot explain, or maybe he's in this country illegally, the ... the fear and ... and the amount of stress that they're dealing with, it's got to be tremendous. And on top of that, they're being accused of being linked with some organization or being in the mosque too many times in a week. It could be devastating. And I don't know how that person would deal with it ... if it -- you know -- if he doesn't get any help from the outside. Because just to survive in jail if you don't have communication skills is hard. And then you ... you're an immigrant and you're from the part of the world that's under scrutiny and ... and has gone through this prejudicial cloud, it could be ... it would be a tremendous, tremendous ordeal. I can't even imagine. I know it was hard for me,

and I've ... I've been in this country and I ... I ... I kind of know -- you know -- what people mean when they say certain things. But somebody who's not from here and, let's say, has been here a very short time and they could ... they could ... they could really be in a lot of trouble, especially in jails.

Q. Okay.

Q3. Could we do a few cut aways. I'm going to talk, just ... you can ... if you stay sitting there and I just do it.

S.A. You (inaudible)

Q. So can we ... can we talk to your lawyer at some point?

S.A. Yes. I could give you the information.

Q. And ... and we could talk to your wife?

S.A. Yes. She would ... she would have been here today, but I ... I think ...

Q. What about, like, this ... like, this ... like, this housekeeper woman?

S.A. She's in Chicago right now but I'll be more than happy To -- you know -- if she ... she ...

Q. Is she going to come back here?

S.A. Yeah. I'll ... Hopefully once we get things together definitely.

Q. Oh, I see. And

Q2. Is .. is there a way we could ... we could do any stuff with you in your neighborhood or would that be awkward, or wherever you're living with...

S.A. I ... I have no problem with that. I mean, if you want to just tape by where we live right now or -- you know -- in the area that we live, I ... I have no objection to that.

Q. Well, could we go and, like, see your old house?

A. You definitely can. I don't know if I can.

Q. No. we could drop past.

A. Oh. If you ... if you take a look at it, it's a beautiful house. It was ... it was a five bedroom, over an acre -- you know --

the whole thing, with a swimming pool in the back and -- you know -- the ... the horse shoe driveway, the ... It was ... it was a dream house and we custom made that house, my wife and I.

Q. Does ... Somebody ... somebody else owns it now?

A. No. The corporation has the hold on it and -- you know -- the DA has their hold on the assets.

Q2. You're going to get that back though. Right?

A. Yes.

Q3. I don't see how they would think you have any money left over for anything.

A. Listen. I mean -- you know -- they ... they took everything. When ... when I mean everything ... my wife -- you know -- she couldn't even find anything. Luckily, we ... we had our rings just put it into place. I was wearing my ring; she was wearing her ring and then this is the only thing we ... we have left really, our rings and the watch that I was wearing. But we -- you know -- we lived a very, very good life. We didn't ... We built a custom house. We built it ... I mean, if you see this house, this house is unbelievable, everything custom. We ... we loved art. We went throughout the country buying art. I mean, it was ... it was ... it was ... It's a nightmare. It's absolutely a nightmare, because right now we're in one room with my son, and my wife sleeps on the top bunk and I sleep on the bottom bunk from where ... we went from a room ... To give you a idea, our bedroom was maybe about a thousand square foot. It was ... it was custom designed. I mean -- you know -- it was ... this was ... this is ... Like, people used to come to our house and say you know what? This should be on like, some home show. We ... we ... we named the car. We had the car. You know? If she was driving a BMW, I was driving a Mercedes. We had a ... we had a -- you know -- a family truck, and we had a ... a sports car. We had four cars. Now I can't even borrow a car, so it ... it goes from one ... one end to the other. It's ... it's just a amazing.

Q. Now, do you still ... do you have your driver's license?

A. I still have my driver's license ,but I had to go and get another one from DMV.

Q2. So you have no documentation at all that you ...

A. No.

Q2. Just the driver's license.

A. Now I just have the driver's license and -- you know -- a

couple of the credit cars that they haven't touched. We're living off the credit cards.

Q. What about your ... your older son? Do you what ... would he talk? Would you let him talk or no?

S.A. I don't have any objection to it. I think if he .. if he talks then probably it would be very good. You know? He's ...

Q. Do the other kids know about it now?

S.A. No.

Q. I just don't remember having ...

Q2. And all three of your kids are Muslim? Are brought up Muslim?

S.A. Yes.

Q. But don't they think it's a little odd that you went from this great house into ...

S.A. They think that because a lot of people lost their jobs and Daddy's business suffered and -- you know -- that's what happened. That's what my wife ...

TAPE BREAK - new conversation

S.A. I was telling them that Carlos was about six years old around Christmas time. We were driving around Manhattan just looking at the lights and the tree and everything, and we passed by the Warner Brothers store that used to be on 57th and Fifth and then we passed the Disney store. And Carlos says from the back of the minivan, he says, " You know, Dad, what would be great? And I said "what?" He says: "If Disney and Warner Brothers were to merge." And I just stopped the car. I said: "What did you just say?" He says: "Yeah. Wouldn't that be great? If they merged they would own everything." I was shocked that ... I knew right then and there he's not going to be a policeman or anything else. He wants to be a lawyer. I think that's better cut out for him. But he's very articulate in that way. You know? That's why we put him in a private school, too. We thought that, you know, he's ... I'll tell you an amazing fact about him. He took an SAT exam about a year and a half ago, maybe even more, two years ago. It was a SAT sponsored by John Hopkins for the school district. And they gave them about a week's notice ... They wanted to see the aptitude of the kids. He scored the highest point. He scored a thousand on his SAT so it gives you an idea of what kind of a kid he is, very much tuned in.

Q2. I can tell.

S.A. It's just been a traumatic thing for everybody.

Q. So your...your...your best friend that you grew up with married your wife's sister?

S.A. Yes. It was a funny story. He got divorced and he wanted to settle in the United States. So he called me up, he says: "Look...I think I can get immigration here and what do you think about me moving there?" I said: "Just come on down, just, you know, move in with us. It's not a problem." We've been friends since sixth grade. She was married to somebody and was living in Albany and she got divorced. And when we found out she's getting a divorce, she was afraid and scared and I said: "No. Come on down. You're going to live with us too." So everybody just came down and both of them met. And one day they came to us, they came to Delila and I, and said "we really like each other." I said: "Oh, this is just perfect," and they ... they got married. They got a beautiful little two-year-old daughter and it's just been peachy since.

Q. Can you talk to me a little about this ... about this neighborhood right here?

S.A. This is a very, you know, nice neighborhood. I mean, this is what you call a typical suburban area -- You know -- an average home here is about three fifty to four hundred thousand dollars. When we first moved here in '98, according to the ... the agreement I had with my company, with my partners, they said: "Okay. Part of your compensation, we'll buy a house for you." So Delila and I, you know, really wanted to look around, and we found this particular house that you're going to see. And, you know, it wasn't that much, so we had to put a lot into it, but we saw that we could do a lot with the house. So we purchased this house. This is a great area to live in. This county, Rockland County, has been just, you know, booming and busting at the seams, so to speak, because this is ... this was, like, the best kept secret for years till, you know, people started moving here from New York City and even from, from Jersey, because it just is situated in such a way that it's on the crossroads for New Jersey, New York and upstate New York. So, the schools were great and we felt that if we move out of the City, we were living in Staten Island at that time, in a two bedroom coop, that this would be the perfect move for us which, you know, it was. We had a great time in this house. And if you look at the ... the neighborhood, it is what you call the traditional suburban slash country look. It's well set in and we like quiet. We had deer just walking right down ... up and down the street ... the kids loved it.

Q. And basically this was kind of like a ... just tell me again that it was a compensation deal ...

S.A. It was part of my compensation package. It was part of my moneys that was owed to me according to my agreement with my company, with the two other partners. And one of things they did at that time, they said: "Why don't we get you a house? You want to get a house? Let's go get a house. We'll get the -- you know -- the mortgage for it and -- you know -- you ... you would have the house." And that was the perfect thing at that time because we didn't have to worry about down payments or anything else. The ... the company was going to take care of it so ... so that's what we did. I haven't been down this street since the day I surrendered, by the way. That was October 28th, the day that I left my house that morning to meet with my attorney after I dropped Carlos off. The house is right there at the corner. We're

going to go by it. It's the house with the stucco front and the big driveway which you will see right now. This is the house on the right.

Q. Can you say where you're living?

S.A. We're not sure yet.

Q. They put it for sale?

S.A. Supposedly they ... they wanted to sell it but they haven't put any signs up for sale. As you can see, this was a little over an acre. It had a beautiful in-the-ground pool, five bedrooms, two living rooms. That was the jungle gym for the kids in the back that we had it custom made so ... The flag is still there that we had put up.

Q. Can we get out and have a look or...

S.A. Sure. All right. I'll just park right here and

Q. So do you want to get this house back?

S.A. I don't. We talked about it. Delila and I talked about it and...

Q. Can you guys just get off this spot for a moment? I'm sorry.

S.A. Once ... once everything works out okay maybe we ... we wouldn't live here. We would get another house because it'll be hard for her to explain it to the kids. I mean, I just see it just by the furniture inside and everything that nobody has been there. We had put an extension in and it's been ... it's just been a tough thing for us to go through.

Q. And ... and that flag was flying when you left?

S.A. Yes. That flag was put up, actually, by Carlos. That was subsequent to 9-11, he ... he put the flag up. Everything that we did in the house is unbelievable. I mean, I see the swing sets that my kids played on. The pool is right in the back. And it's a weird feeling 'cause I haven't been here since the day I went ... went away, so it's just been very tough for me.

Q. So what do you think just looking at it now?

S.A. I look at it and I see that this ... this was our dream and somebody stamped on it. Somebody shattered it. It's there but it's ... I can't step inside of that premise and that to me, just is hard because everything that you see there was ... was done by my wife and myself. You know? We designed the whole thing. This is ... this is not the house that we moved in it. We changed everything in that house, the entire outlook. I mean, the ... the kids' names were engraved in the back in cement and ... that tree house has our name on it. It was the Ali Family tree house. Everything ... everything was picked by us, you know? Delila and I, right down to those light fixtures and the ... and the plantation. It's a tough thing, very tough. I can see why she don't want to be here because it's really hard.

Q. Did you know any of your neighbors around here?

S.A. Yes, we knew neighbors and I see a for sale sign. I haven't spoken to any of them. I haven't spoken to them or I haven't spoken to anybody after November 28th. But sometimes I wonder what they think 'cause while we were doing the construction on the house everybody used to just stop and say: "My, you guys are just doing unbelievable work." They used to compliment everything that we did. And now it's, you know, now it's ... it seems like such a long time ago. That's it. I don't want to ... It's hard to see it. You know? The property goes all the way back. It's got a beautiful swimming pool, a kidney shaped pool. The swing set on the right hand side's got a custom made grill that we had it made which is, like, thirteen by five. We liked to entertain people. We like to have our guests over and everybody else so constantly ... I mean, this driveway was constantly filled up with people -- you know -- It's ... it's a tough thing to look at, believe me. It's just ... that was Raymond's room, that was Danielle's room, that was our master bedroom. Carlos's room was in the back

[long pause] imperceptible talking?

to...to enrich themselves unjustly. That's the way I look at it ... that's what I teach my kids.

Q. How long were you in business with those guys?

S.A. Fourteen years, and that's fourteen years down the drain because somebody didn't want to be part of, I guess, me, because of whatever my beliefs are. My beliefs are not like what people did on September 11th. My beliefs are the true Islamic beliefs, which is peace and harmony. I guess that was too hard to swallow for them.

TAPE BREAK

You go about quarter of a mile and you're right in (inaudible)

Q. Suffern ... Suffern is famous for something. Isn't it?

S.A. Suffern was a gen -- was a general. And George Washington stayed overnight in Suffern.

Q. But isn't there a park or something around here, or a monument or something?

S.A. There was ... I mean, downtown Suffern is ... I think there is a monument of General Suffern and that's why it was named that way. But according to the history that I read, George Washington slept here. I think two nights he stayed over here and then there was actually still a restaurant still in ... in Rockland County.

Q. I think Franklin Roosevelt came to Suffern. See, I ... I grew up ... up in a place called Garrison, New York.

S.A. Yes. I've heard of Garrison.

Q. It's up ... It's up opposite West Point.

S.A. Correct.

Q. And they always used to talk about Suffern has ... there's something ... something famous about Suffern ...

S.A. So -- you know -- it's just ... just as hard. It's hard because you work very hard to establish a dream. And this ... and this is actually Brandon and Danielle's school right there. You work very hard, you believe in the morals that you were brought up with. You believe in -- you know -- so to speak, brotherhood of man because these guys, like Carlos had said, were like my brothers. I mean, there was nothing I wouldn't do for them and I always believed there was a nothing they wouldn't do for me. I don't think religion or a political incident would cause a divide. I mean, Gary came to me, Gary Wexler who was one of my partners, came to me and said: "Look - - you know -- if something was to happen to me..." This was, like, one of the conversations, "would you look after my kids? Would you make sure my kids get what they deserve and what they should have?" It's one of those conversations that -- you know -- I guess somebody decides to have in their life with somebody that they trust. And we talked about it. And I came home that day and I said to Delila, I said: "You know, this guy is like a brother to me. I mean, he came to me today and he asked me something which I was really very honored." And I said to him, I said: "There ... There's nothing that I would have more honor and pleasure in than making sure that your kids get their rightful -- you know -- share." And we ... we went on vacations together. We were -- you know -- we would go to Disney World. We would go to his house. He would come to my house.

Q. Excuse me. Like I said ...

S.A. (talking on cell phone) Hello. Who? The guy got there? Okay. We will. We'll do that. Bye. The guy is there.

Q2. Okay. I'm sorry.

Q. Couldn't things ... I mean, I presumed you've talked about it, but when did things begin to go sour between you and your partners?

S.A. Things went sour right after September 11th. We were going through a shareholder's agreement, an updated shareholders agreement, that was going to give me more control of the company, and would -- you know -- enhance my position in the company. And it was all drawn up and we were just waiting to execute it and sign it. And I remember having a conversation right before September 11th, you know, what day would be a good day that the three of us would be in the office, and Gary said: "Oh, probably this day we'll do it." And, you know, we were just trying to pick up a date. And September 11th happened and we got very busy because we had work in that area. We were in the security business and we had buildings that were effected by ... by the incident and we were working long hours. I mean, I was working seventeen, eighteen hours a day and ... we didn't get around to it. But there was an attitude change which I ... I remember telling Jim about it, that -- you know -- early in the morning it was like, almost like a ritual that the three of us would sit down in my office and have coffee or tea and just discuss and shoot the breeze and

talk about what are we going to do today and, you know, future planning, whatever you want to call it. And the three partners, all of us had TV and satellite dishes -- you know -- in our offices so we used to watch TV. We always were -- you know -- discussing news and stuff like that. So all of a sudden that stopped. That stopped, like, the next day -- nothing was there. I mean, I ... I didn't pay any mind to it, because the world was going crazy and we were running around. But I sensed that there was a little bit of a change. There was not that cordial conversation, and actually, at some point I felt like I had to ... I had to defend myself, you know? Almost unwarrantedly. "Oh, you know, look at what they did! Look at what your people are doing!" And that was one of the comments. I said: "first of all, they are not my people and second of all, this is no different than any other person twisting their belief to raise his own ego." I mean, I ... I ... and I honestly believe that and that's what I've taught my kids. "Ah, look at this!" -- you know -- "this is Afghanistan, Pakistan, same thing." I mean -- you know -- there's ... there's a lot of, I would say for the lack of a better word, ignorance that exists, you know? These are all the same people. And I ... I felt that they were just a little too strong in their opinion. And then when we talked about the next time: "Look! What are we doing with the shareholder's agreement," which was now about ... maybe about three weeks later: "Yeah, we'll get to it. We'll get to it." And then October 19th they said: "Look -- you know -- we have looked at it. You know, We don't believe that we owe you that much money or that is owed to you and, you know, we've got to look at it, and this and that, and it'll be better that you don't show up here" and this was done not by a verbal communication but by a letter given to me by our corporate attorney who actually, was my attorney too, in a sense. And then when ... when this didn't go well, I dropped a lawsuit on them because I felt that they just ... they were just ... just looking to force me out of the company. Before this, I had had a discussion that, you know, the moneys that are owed to me, we could take that and I could, probably through an investor, buy a big portion of the company or maybe the entire company out from you guys because you feel like you want to retire. They were much older than me, and that was ... discussion was just, like, okay, we'll think about it ... think about it and then just ... I got ... got to work that Friday morning and -- you know -- later on in the afternoon I got this letter handed to me that -- you know -- we want to see what's owed to what and this and that, and it'll be, you know, we're exercising our right that you shouldn't come to Elite till we figure it out. Basically kind of suspending me. So I called ... contacted my attorney and, you know, subsequent to that we ... we had dropped a law suit on them. But that law suit was ... was not a big number. We just wanted to get what was owed to me according to an agreement that we had. And then, you know, that all hell broke loose and from being a trusted partner, associate, in the company I became a terrorist.

Q. Listen: You actually sort of like did the grunt work in that company. Right? I mean, you kind of ...

S.A. I did everything. I was ... basically, I ran the entire operation. One guy, he was more ... he had political aspirations, which is Gary. He actually thought that if Hevassy would ... was to get in as Mayor ... Gary ran a lot of fund-raisers for Hevassy -- he would become Police Commissioner. And Joe ... Joe was laid back. Joe liked to go to Bahamas and take his trips and, you know ... you know, basically enjoy his life that way. So me being the ... the younger part of the company, you know, they ... they felt, "Oh, that's good." And most of the business was built up by me, anyway. People used to kid around. I think I remember saying that to you, Jim,

that, you know, people used to say -- because Gary was Jewish, Joe was Catholic and I'm Muslim, that -- you know -- the three major religions run this company. And it just got ...

Q. So how did you get in with these guys to begin with?

S.A. I came in ... when I had ... I was working in another company and a Vice-President ... Executive from that company came to Elite. They kind of sort of drafted me because they felt that I was the young executive look that they should have in the company. The company was, you know, was solid, so I made the switch. That was in 1988. And ever since I was there and I just ... I mean, at that time the company was very small. It was actually about a hundred and fifty employees. When I left we were close to about two thousand employees.

Q. My God! How ... many clients did you have?

S.A. We had, I mean, over a hundred clients, but these clients were, like, Fortune Five Hundred companies. Let's say, if you were to have a ... a retail account you would have their retail chain throughout the country going from the East Coast all the way to the West coast. I was able to form strategic alliances with other competitors to house our business with them and -- you know -- build our revenue. I mean, these other competitors were working for ... for us. We had signed contracts with them. I mean, it was ... it was done in a way that the company grew pretty much overnight. From one year to another we had, like, a growth ratio of twenty ... twenty-eight percent.

Q. Well now, look, you also ... So you employed a lot of former cops and stuff and ...

S.A. Former cops and active cops and a lot of law enforcement worked for me -- you know -- I think Delila mentioned in the interview, and I had said it to you before, that when I was in the jail cell two guys recognized me. They said -- you know -- "we work for you." I said: "I don't know who you are." He says: "No. Look!" And he pulled out the ID card. He said: "Look! We work for your company. What...what are you doing here?" You know? We ... we were a very strong company in New York. It just is a shame that prejudice ... and that's basically the word we're all looking for -- has caused this. This is not caused by anything else but just in some way, people have developed this hatred and they say "how can we be friends or partners with this guy?"

Q. Did you think -- apart from prejudice -- do you think ... I mean, do you think 'cause, I don't know, it seems to me from the outside without knowing as many ... much of the details as you guys know ... was not just greed and prejudice do you think?

S.A. Oh yes. I mean obviously I ... I would have to say prejudice came before and then came greed. You know, how could we deal with ... with this guy? Cause I don't think they were greedy. They were willing to work with me. They ... they gave me an opportunity. I'd never invested in the company except for my efforts. But they went as far as saying: "Look, this guy is the guy. This guy is our future" ... so there was no prejudice at that time. I was a Muslim then. I was a Muslim after 9-11 but

they felt, I mean, this is the same guy. Gary, who's Jewish by his belief, coming to me and saying if something was to happen to him in life would I look after his kids?

Q. This is ... now wait. This is Wexler?

S.A.. Yes.

Q. My God.

S.A. This is ... this is him coming to me and saying that to me and this was ... Wexler was the guy that my kids called uncle to and his kids called me uncle.

Q. And he's the one you think went to the cops?

S.A. Well, he was a retired lieutenant so he ... It's a combination of him and Joe who was never a cop, who was just basically came from a very humble background in the Lower East Side. They just, you know, one day the ... the political part of it, which is ... is the prejudiced part of it.

Q. It was just rank opportunism?

S.A. Yeah, and ... and that's ... They just basically said: "Look, we don't want to be with this guy. We don't want to tie our futures with this guy because of where he's from." And that's the hardest part to understand.

Q. So they figured they'd get more money out of this if they got you in jail. Then they ... they'd split the cash.

That's it. They don't have ... they don't have to pay me and -- you know -- basically they will taint me and this would be a perfect scheme to just get me out of the ... the business. So, you know, once I get in some sort of a criminal -- you know -- I get tainted criminally and then I ... the pie ... the cherry on the pie is, "hey, look! He's a terrorist so everything is negated. We don't have any contract with him. That's it."

Q. But doesn't that hurt their company in the end run -- I mean, if they think that there is a terrorist associated with them?

S.A. It might but you know what they would probably do, James, is say: "Look. We didn't know what he was. Look: we got rid of him."

Q. All right. We caught him.

S.A. Yeah.

Q. They probably want the award.

S.A. They probably do. This is the worst from our end, what we're dealing with. They basically took, I mean, you know, an opportunity to enrich themselves unjustly. "Hey, look. This is an opportunity. Let's get rid of Ali. We don't care what happens to his family. We don't care what happens to him as long as he's out of our way and, good; we get a piece of the pie back."

Q. I thought you said we were walking up towards the house (inaudible)

S.A. We get the piece of the pie. Now we don't have to share anything. And -- you know -- the ironic part is they never faced me. Even when they said "well, look, you made all this money. We didn't know about it." Okay, so face me. Come and sit down and talk to me and I'll explain it to you. Obviously there's nothing for me to explain. They already know the answer. But they did this. So, you know, we'll ... we'll beat the drum hard enough, timing is right, cry wolf. He's got that same hide. They'll take him as the wolf. There's no other way for me to -- you know -- rationalize with that.

Q. Could you walk us to the house?

Sure.