

Portrait of a Wahhabi

By: Stephen Schwartz

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My encounters with Randall Royer...and the "usual suspects."

On Thursday, June 26, I testified before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security, chaired by Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz). My topic was "Wahhabism and Islam in the U.S." I outlined the outrageous degree to which Saudi-funded Wahhabi extremists, who are supporters of terrorism, have come to dominate Islam in the U.S.

My testimony was not greeted with enthusiasm by James Zogby, the phony civil rights leader who heads the "Arab American Institute." Zogby, a Lebanese Christian once known for his moderate camouflage on Israel, but now [a shameless apologist for the Saudis](#), immediately fired off a press release. He described me and my fellow witness, Alex Alexiev of the Center for Security Policy, with mangled syntax, as "virulent anti-American Arab and Muslim critics whose writings and statements display a consistently misinformed and hurtful tone. Schwartz denigrates American Muslims by describing Wahhabism as an 'extremist, puritanical and violent movement,' " he alleged. In reality, it is Zogby who may be described with perfect accuracy as [a "virulent anti-American Arab."](#) He demanded that his supporters send e-mails to Sens. Kyl and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif), protesting against the very fact that the hearing was held.

While this was taking place, federal agents were poised to arrest six Muslim men in the Washington area and in Pennsylvania. Two of their codefendants were already in custody. Three of them have fled to Saudi Arabia. They total 11, and are charged with conspiring with a Wahhabi group based in Pakistan – Lashkar-i-Taiba or "Army of the Righteous" – to commit terrorism in Kashmir, Chechnya, and elsewhere.

The lead indictee, arrested early Friday, is a man named Randall Royer, who calls himself by the Islamic name "Ismail." He's someone I know pretty well. But I know some of his playmates even better.

Royer used to operate a "blog," which remains accessible on the net: ismailroyer.blogspot.com. Go to the page and look in the right column and you will find me described as "Washington Bureau Chief, *The Forward*," a position I have not held for almost two years. This, of course, is his way of identifying me as Jewish. And if you hit the link at my name, you go straight to [the Nazi swill of Bill White](#), the compulsive liar from Silver Spring, Md., writing in the depraved *Pravda*, organ of the red-brown Communazi alliance.

I first heard of Royer in January 2002, when I was working at the Voice of America. He had called my successor at the *Forward*, and, identifying himself as Randall, not Ismail, asked if he could talk to me about religion in Bosnia. The *Forward* reporter passed the message on, and being the kind of free-speaking person I am, I responded. But as soon as I e-mailed Randall Royer, what did I get back? From an e-mail address in Bosnia, he falsely identified himself as writing for beliefnet, a religious news website. He sent me a defamatory quote from the notorious Saddamizer and admirer of Axis seditionists, Dennis "Justin" Raimondo, proprietor of the antiwar.com website. Royer added a false description of the *Forward* as "far-right," and also referred incorrectly to my "former colleagues at the ADL," i.e. the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish civil rights organization.

So Royer had obviously done "opposition research" on me. However, the *Forward*, when I was its Washington bureau chief, happened to be the most left-wing and pro-Arab of all American Jewish publications, and I never worked for the ADL, except as a volunteer prison lecturer on Black-Jewish relations, and as an unpaid *rapporteur* on the situation of Croatian and Bosnian Jews.

In his next e-mail, "Randall" came out as "Ismail" and, now fraudulently labeling the *Forward* as "neo-con," and charged that my own acceptance of Islam reflected "infiltration" and "an attempt by pro-Israel groups to install a more compliant, Israel-friendly alternative Muslim leadership" in the U.S. His comments were framed in a smarmy, polite tone, but a threat was obvious.

The role of Raimondo in this maneuver remains extremely interesting. Raimondo has inexhaustibly assailed me because, like Royer, I have taken an Islamic name, although unlike Royer, I have never used it for deceptive purposes. Royer employed Raimondo's propaganda as a fig-leaf to cover his own attempt at intimidation. On his blog, Royer dropped the mask and directly attacked me, linking to the degenerate Nazi White. The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) and others have similarly recycled Raimondo, and some have reforwarded Bill White's *Pravda* depravities.

But Royer was not satisfied to send me a nasty quote from a scurrilous nitwit, decorated with feeble gossip. Later,

he resumed his e-mail harassment of me and my organization, the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies. One of his polemics was republished on Raimondo's site, antiwar.com.

Royer became even crazier, attacking, in his blog, another close friend and colleague of mine, Michael Sells – pilloried by Islamophobes not long ago for his book *Approaching the Qur'an*, which set off a ridiculous controversy at the University of North Carolina. In a full access of violent demagoguery, he accused Michael, one of the most sensitive commentators on comparative religion alive today, of “bigotry-fueled hysteria” because, like me, Michael has denounced Saudi-Wahhabi vandalism, under the pretext of reconstruction, of Ottoman-era mosques in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. Naturally, I was not excluded from that blast – Royer called me a “racist” for the same putative offense.

But Royer revealed his own grotesque racism in the same blog entry, when he declared that no Bosnian Muslim woman had ever married a non-Muslim man. His argument, regarding a country famous for intermarriage? Such a woman could not be considered a Muslim. He also claimed, of “the ‘wahhabi’ sect,” that its “existence is a figment of the imagination of extreme Sufis, Westerners, and others who feel threatened by authentic Islam.”

There is more to be said about Royer, but not all of it may be disclosed at present. For example, he should be asked about his relationship with John Walker Lindh, the “American Taliban,” with whom he shared the trajectory of involvement with Yemen, Pakistan, and Kashmir. But that is another matter entirely, at least at this point.

The most important things to be pondered about Royer come from the federal indictment, in *U.S. vs. Royer, et al.*

Royer and his 10 codefendants are alleged to have:

- * Supported Lashkar-i-Taiba by actions to “provide for, prepare a means for, and take part in” terrorist adventures in Kashmir, as well as in Chechnya, the Philippines, and elsewhere.
- * Carried out acts “[w]ithin the United States, to unlawfully, knowingly, and intentionally enlist and engage with intent to serve in armed hostility against the United States.”
- * Used false passports, as well as pursuing activities to “transport and receive firearms and ammunition in interstate commerce with reason to believe that such firearms and ammunition would be used to commit a felony.”

These charges are contained in 41 counts and 71 evidentiary items of information, comprising extensive arms acquisition, military training, and recruitment operations, continuing through travel to and violent acts and training in Kashmir, and including clandestine propaganda for terrorism in Kashmir and terrorist training in Bosnia-Herzegovina, among other illegal activities.

Among the evidentiary items:

“50. On or about September 11, 2001, Unindicted Conspirator #1 told YONG KI KWON to gather those who possessed firearms for a meeting.

“51. On or about September 15, 2001, at a meeting at the house of YONG KI KWON in Fairfax, Virginia, Unindicted Conspirator #1 told RANDALL TODD ROYER, KHWAJA MAHMOOD HASAN, MASOUD AHMAD KHAN, MOHAMMED AATIQUE, HAMMAD ABDUR-RAHEEM, and CALIPH BASHA IBN ABDUR-RAHEEM that the time had come for them to go abroad to join the *mujahideen* engaged in violent *jihads* in Kashmir, Chechnya, Afghanistan, or Indonesia...

“53. On or about September 15, 2001, at a meeting at the house of YONG KI KWON in Fairfax, Virginia, Unindicted Conspirator #1 told the conspirators that American troops were legitimate targets of the *jihads* in which the conspirators had a duty to engage...

“95. On or about October 15, 2001, during the meeting, Unindicted Conspirator #1 provided historical examples from Islamic history justifying attacks on civilians.

“96. On or about October 15, 2001, during the meeting, Unindicted Conspirator #1 told his listeners that fighting Americans in Afghanistan was a valid *jihads* for Muslims.

“97. On or about October 15, 2001, during the meeting, Unindicted Conspirator #1 told his listeners that *mujahideen* killed while fighting Americans in Afghanistan would die as martyrs, or *shaheeds*.”

An especially disgusting item appears as number 104: “On or about February 1, 2003, in a message celebrating the crash of the Space Shuttle Columbia, Unindicted Conspirator #1 advised his followers that the United States was the greatest enemy of Muslims.”

This tidbit is fascinating because in 2002, Royer was employed as Communications Director of the Muslim American Society (MAS), a major component of the “Wahhabi lobby” or Islamic political establishment in the

U.S. At the time of the shuttle disaster, Eric Erfan Vickers, then-executive director of the American Muslim Council (AMC), another element in the “Wahhabi lobby,” lost his job with AMC when an e-mail was exposed in which he wrote that the disaster may have been “a sign from God about America’s future.” Royer and Vickers both hail from St. Louis, Missouri.

St. Louis is not the only city connected to the Royer conspiracy.

In an interview with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, dated June 13, 2003, the untruthful Royer claimed to have fought in the Army of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus he polluted a cause I defend, and besmirched a city I love, Sarajevo. I have asked my Bosnian journalistic colleagues to investigate whether there is any reality to his claims.

Finally, the defendants’ attorney, Ashraf Nubani, also represents Ahmed Abu-Ali, in custody in Saudi Arabia on suspicion of involvement in the May 12th bombings in Riyadh.

In Randall Royer we see the naked face of Wahhabism in America: a vicious, fanatical, terrorism. After his arrest, I and others pursued by him asked ourselves if we had not come close to being fatal victims of his extremism. Was he merely harassing us, or preparing for something worse?

And there are more questions. Royer recycles Bill White and Raimondo, as well as, via White and Raimondo, the scribblings of the unhinged ultraleftist Kevin Keating, a.k.a. Keith Sorel, who paraded in the streets of San Francisco with a placard reading “We Support Our Troops When They SHOOT Their Officers.” Raimondo repeatedly recycles Sorel, even as he insists he never actually met him, an irrelevant detail in the age of the Internet. Other individuals yet to be named recycle all four. The Internet and “malicious Googling” have made them all believe they are something they will never be: serious commentators, even authors. Above all, Raimondo glories in his role as an inciter of suspicion and contempt for myself and others.

God forbid that Raimondo, who has fantasies of being imprisoned, should actually be charged as a participant in a broader effort at criminal sedition. But a libel suit, encompassing all who have republished his nonsense, is not to be excluded.

And if Royer and his friends had, say, bombed my office, or the campus where Michael Sells teaches? If my young colleagues, or unknowing students, had been killed, or if I were slain? How would the purveyors of poisonous libels react? The twisted Bill White would, obviously, celebrate; so, clearly, would the deranged Kevin Keating. They might even claim such bloodshed was reprisal for war deaths, in Iraq or Serbia, or elsewhere. But would Dennis Raimondo, the bosses of CAIR, Zogby, and others who republish pro-Wahhabi slanders on the Internet, feel no twinge of conscience about the deaths of innocents that they themselves might, in some measure, have helped bring about?

For my part, I admit such situations are frightening. But I am not frightened. I will continue my work. Democracy will prevail over terrorism, and Islam will be liberated from Wahhabism. Justice will be done, in the cases of Randall Royer and others. As always, truth is on the march.

Stephen Schwartz, an author and journalist, is author of *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror*. A vociferous critic of Wahhabism, Schwartz is a frequent contributor to *National Review*, *The Weekly Standard*, and other publications.