

STATEMENT BY FORMER IPT STAFFER

My writing is dry, objective, matter-of-fact. An editor once asked what my point was in a particular piece. I said there was no point. I am a reporter, telling what happened. I wrote for local newspapers and other news gathering organizations. When the 1993 World Trade Center attack occurred, I was working for a Times Square news service, Video Monitoring Services of America, writing summaries of live news broadcasts. That was perhaps the most honest reporting that I ever did – just the facts.

Years later, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, I joined the Investigative Project on Terrorism, a Washington-DC think-tank founded by Steven Emerson. In my position, I prepared summaries and transcripts of recordings of events and conversations that frequently included Muslim American leaders.

I also personally covered various events in the New York tri-state area: recording video and audio at mosques, Islamic centers, rallies, an Islamic bookstore, an NYPD Shield meeting with then-CIA Chief John Brennan, a Tunisian presidential candidate at Yale University, former Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) official Corey Saylor, Imam Mohammad Qatanani from Islamic Center of Passaic County, former Consul General of Egypt Ahmed Farouq, Muslim Legal Fund of America's Khalil Meek, Al-Awda activist attorney Lamis Deek, the Islamic Center in Jamaica Queens, and others.

As years passed, I incrementally realized that some of the criticism I had heard across about the organization that I worked for could have merit. I feared I had been naïve as to our mission. On a global level, it also pained me to see the broken and deceased members of the American military, fighting for a cause I began to question, and angered me that a contingency (including neo-cons) seemed to have little or no care about the troops.

Going through the huge volume of work I had done in the mission of supposedly unmasking extremists, I came to the conclusion that we at IPT wore a false mask ourselves – righteous superhero fighters of terrorism. I had been a participant in something deceptive. I understood that the narrative I was involved in was pretentious, unfair, and unrepresentative.

For me personally, something I have known all along is that there are good people with opinions that differ from my own. I have interacted with a fair number of Muslims at this point, and they have all been kind, polite, and respectful. Call me whatever, but I admire modesty in dress and attitude. I never heard vulgarities from Muslim speakers (well, maybe once). Aside from all of that is the question of the morality of casting aspersions on the larger group, social canceling, because of mostly spoken words, not even real threats to national security.

For 12 years I betrayed my journalism education and former practice of reporting objectively. My original motivation in working for IPT was the terrorism perpetrated against the United States on September 11th, but much of the work we did was not related to terrorism nor to the United States.

I came to realize that IPT's main concern was not protecting our nation from legitimate threats, but protecting a foreign government—Israel—from legitimate criticism. We were essentially being used as an Israel lobbying organization. Demonizing people who simply have opinions we may not agree with has become sport, yet I was doing it as part of my job.

Attempting to think with objectivity offers a person the possibility of evolving. A bit of modesty in our beliefs allows us room to grow. That's how I was able to change.

I do not want to end on a negative note, because so much of what I did over those years was seeped in negativity. But, in the event I receive blowback from anyone attempting to label me as “disgruntled” employee, I will remind any potential respondent that I have the receipts to tell much more than I have here.

Lastly, I hope it is clear that I am not apologizing for my love of country or emphasis on national security. My thinking has simply evolved to a view that American Muslims have been unfairly treated, as subjects of aggressive targeting. I was tricked into believing we were working for a patriotic cause. Instead, we were dividing and hurting people. In the crass and polarized society of today, objectivity may not be as popular or practiced as it was in the past, but it truly is the standard to which we should aspire. It also leaves one with a clearer conscience, able to say that while I may not be on the same political page as many that I worked to discredit, the cancelation campaign I was part of was wrong.

I apologize to those impacted, and I hope that my efforts to reveal the truth will help to repair some of the damage caused.

-Former IPT Staffer