

# Ali Wheatley's Party Story

by A. Human Being (January 2016)

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What if you had a day when *everything...went...wrong*? And it was simply *this* . . . all the problems, the insidious fear, and everything falling apart around you . . . that saved your soul?

I had a day like that.

You might as well know that I was born in Saudi Arabia where I had grown up the third son in a liberal and educated family in Riyadh. My father had a mid-level government job. My mother took care of the needs of the family.

The elders in my family would have described me as a bright kid, scatterbrained, head into everything. My father was an eclectic man and made sure that all of his sons had excellent foreign tutors, so that, in the welfare society of Saudi, we would emerge as the egalitarian elite. Saudization was hardly a consideration, so father took it as his responsibility to groom my brothers and I into our roles as businessmen and bureaucrats working above the fat diabetic herd below. He instilled in us an interest in the international world and tested us at dinner on the newspaper.

However, despite the active role he undertook for our betterment, for which I am still grateful . . . I felt a sense of indefinite betrayal. I felt betrayed by the Saudi government and Western civilization. I felt betrayed, resentful, and projected this all upon my father. The man had all the wrong ideas, as I saw it. 'American troops shouldn't be on Saudi soil,' I would proclaim. My uncle and I debated with my father constantly. As a mid-level bureaucrat, he was compromising and acquiescing on essential values. I wasn't overly religious for a Wahhabi, but I felt that the status quo was wrong.

As for academic interests, one day I planned to study medicine, next day physics. Though eventually I decided, or rather, my father decided that I should study business and international law.

And so, after I graduated from high school, I was sent to college overseas in

London to get my degree. And that was it, settled.

I was 19 years old in December 1992, when I went to the UK, ostensibly where I would study business and law. However, the *real* reason I urged my father to choose 'Londonistan' was because I wanted to connect with the 'Afghan Arabs', global jihadist soldiers who had fought against the Russians in Afghanistan. They were now thoroughly entrenched in London's ghettos. In the wake of this war that ended in 1989 with glory for the Afghanis, a subsequent civil war produced many mujahideen with military training overflowing from Afghanistan to Pakistan, Iran, and the rest of the world. But the UK was where the command issued from. My uncle was keenly aware of this and, unbeknownst to my father, suggested a community in central North London where I could easily find my way into the inner circles.

Backing up for a moment, it's important to understand that Afghanistan's war against the Russians had unified the Brotherhood globally in the cause of jihad. Westerners cannot imagine the emotional pull of growing up in a Middle Eastern country listening to the daily broadcasts eulogizing the mujahideen as religious heroes for ten years. Young men, regardless of nationality, came from all over the Middle East to join the fight against the Russians. It's essential to understand that *jihad* united the chronic tribalism of the entire Middle East! In Saudi, in school and at home, we prayed, as a collective, for the victory of the mujahideen. Across the Middle East, friends from Turkey to Pakistan experienced the same. Feel the weight of that? From 1979 to 1989, the Brotherhood united as a global community in prayers for jihad. It still unites them today.

So there I was, a Saudi student in London during the Christmas of 1992, an entitled idiot still struggling with the local language, and working through my uncle's connections into jihadist ghettos around Finnegan Park in central North London. I was completely infatuated with the mujahideen, and was increasingly groomed, trained, and isolated in a community teaching me how to be a 'proper' English brother. They encouraged English training and, to my surprise at the time, a college education. They also encouraged, at my uncle's suggestion, engineering, and were not predisposed about which specialty, mechanical, electrical, or chemical, as long as it had its application for jihad.

In my apartment complex, my flat mates were other Middle Eastern students – Pakistanis, an Iraqi, and a pair of Palestinians. In the daytime, I studied

English as a Second Language and undergraduate courses at City College. In the evenings, I returned to the ghettos to chant 'praise songs' for jihad: 'We are the lions of war who do not scare. We are the soldiers who sleep on the backs of horses and if someone calls for jihad, we will answer that call.'

I confess it's more catchy in Arabic.

I was training with other young student recruits in a warehouse down the street from the Finnegan Park Mosque. It was a wonderful time for me. I had never been so in shape as I was then. I was learning about myself: physically, *How much could I bench press?*