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## CAIR's 'flying imams' strategy: Sue everyone

Controversial case's settlement called 'a victory for future hijackers'

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By David Kupelian  
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Declaring the "flying imams" case – [settled out-of-court yesterday in favor of the imams](#) – to be as important to Muslims as the iconic Rosa Parks case was to blacks during the 1950s, the head of a controversial Islamic nonprofit organization in the nation's capital revealed the strategy his organization embraced in pursuing the imam's legal case: Sue everyone in sight, including passengers who, frightened by what they considered bizarre behavior, alerted authorities that a terror attack might be imminent.

When terrified passengers reported suspicious behavior on the part of seemingly unruly Muslims onboard the a US Airways Minneapolis-to-Phoenix flight, what they did "was uncalled for, it is pure discrimination, and pure prejudice on the part of those who reported the case, pure prejudice, and discriminatory attitude on the part of those who decided to inform the authorities to come and arrest them," insisted Nihad Awad, the national executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. The comments were made at the Adams Center in Herndon Virginia, at an April 2007 meeting at which Awad and CAIR's legal director were speaking about the six imams case. *(Listen to audio of some of Awad's comments below, courtesy of CSP-TV.)*

The notorious case resulted when six Muslim clerics were booted off the Nov. 20, 2006, flight after engaging in behavior that alarmed passengers and crew members alike prior to takeoff. The imams reportedly prayed loudly in Arabic in the departure lounge, then once on board refused to sit in their assigned seats, instead fanning out in the cabin in pairs to occupy the front, middle and rear exit rows, ordered seat-belt extenders that weren't needed, criticized President Bush and the Iraq war, talked about al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden and so on.

After being asked to deplane, missing their flight, being detained and questioned by law enforcement authorities for several hours and denied service on a later US Airways flight, the imams struck back.

*(Story continues below)*

In a high-profile lawsuit strategized and promoted by CAIR, as well as argued by a CAIR board-member attorney, Omar T. Mahammedi, the "flying imams" sued not only US Airways and the Minneapolis airport authority, but even the fearful passengers, or "John Does," who had simply reported the suspicious activity.

After a congressional bill – drawn up specifically in response to CAIR's and the imams' insistence on suing regular citizens reporting suspicious activity – was passed, the passengers were dropped from the case. But Awad wasn't too happy about that, condemning the bill's sponsor, Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y.:

"Now the allegation is that we are targeting innocent civilians," Awad said. "What we are trying to do is target those that knowingly made false allegations because of their anti-Muslim sentiments. ..."

"Today you have people like Peter King, a Republican



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congressman, in the Congress, who after we filed the lawsuit on behalf of the Imams, issued a bill, protecting John Does, regular passengers, from being sued, if they, falsely even, falsely claim that a Muslim is suspect and has to be removed from a plane because they are praying ... And he has some supporters in the Congress, to muddy the waters of this lawsuit ..."



Nihad Awad

Although details of yesterday's settlement are confidential, attorneys for both sides acknowledged that payment will be made to the imams.

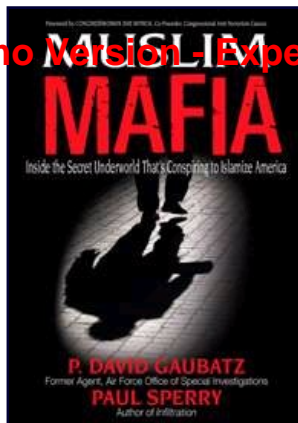
"The settlement of this case is a clear victory for justice and civil rights over fear and the phenomenon of 'flying while Muslim' in the post-9/11 era," Awad said in a post-settlement press statement.

Not so, says Paul Sperry, investigative journalist and co-author of the sensational new best-seller, "[Muslim Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld That's Conspiring to Islamize America](#)," which documents CAIR's Saudi funding, radical ideology and ties to convicted terrorists. Moreover, the book documents conclusively that CAIR is a U.S. front for the notorious Muslim Brotherhood, the parent organization of al-Qaida and Hamas.

"CAIR brags this is a 'victory for civil rights.' It's not a victory for civil rights," Sperry said in response to the settlement. "It's a victory for future hijackers. This settlement will have a chilling effect on law enforcement and security at our nation's airports. Even pilots will now think twice about bouncing from flights any Arabs or Muslims acting suspiciously and threateningly."

"The victims in the case are not the imams," Sperry emphasized. "The victims are passengers who are now more vulnerable to terrorist attack – thanks to CAIR which according to documents revealed in 'Muslim Mafia' manipulated this whole case from the start," he said.

*[Get "Muslim Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld That's Conspiring to Islamize America," autographed, from WND's Superstore](#)*



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Indeed, "Muslim Mafia" is based in part on research gathered during ACORN's undercover operation – except this one lasted for six months, was very dangerous ([CAIR has had close ties to a number of convicted terrorists](#)), and resulted in the acquisition of 12,000 pages of internal CAIR documents. The lead undercover agent, Chris Gaubatz, who grew a beard, pretended to convert to Islam and became an intern at CAIR's national headquarters, is the son of co-author P. David Gaubatz, a veteran Arabic-speaking former federal agent and terrorism investigator.

In the April 2007 meeting, Awad went beyond advocating suing fearful passengers. He advocated suing the press for covering the story:

"The Imams are going after those who caused this for them, that particular incident. The imams also have the right to sue the media, if the media misrepresented them, and that misrepresentation caused them harm. So this is like almost the first round.

"In the United States, people use free speech, First Amendment, to justify what they say. But there is a limit, and I think there are many lawyers who are looking into this, but the plain focus for the imams now, is to have legal recourse, against those who caused them immediate harm, they were rejected, uh...they were mistreated, they were arrested, and they were denied service.

"The Imams knew that this was a violation of their civil rights. It was uncalled for, it is pure discrimination, and pure prejudice on the part of those who reported the case, pure prejudice, and discriminatory attitude on the part of those who decided to inform the authorities to come and arrest them, it was a pure lack of professionalism and conduct on the part of the airport authority and the security agents arresting them, watching them, and causing this to be."



What about the post-9/11 principle, so often drummed into Americans, that if they "see something," to "say something" – in other words, to be willing to take a chance and report to authorities suspicious behavior?

"We support that when you see something, you say something," said Awad. "But also we have to fight people who, when they *don't* see something, they say something. And that's what this lawsuit is about. People who do not ... see something, but they see color, but they see Muslims, they see Arabs, they see people of different backgrounds, they don't like them, they can just launch a false report to security agencies, and they just get you in trouble. It happens. It happened after 9/11 and so many people have been arrested unjustly because of false tips. So to conclude, I would like our community to be aware of this case, because if we win in this case, this is another historic moment in the United States, and this will go down in history, like Rosa Parks did 50 years ago. And it would be a defeat for prejudice, and it would be a defeat for those who trying to ... subjugate the Muslim community, and silence any voice of opposition to discrimination and hatred."

Awad's aggressiveness and willingness to legally attack ordinary citizens was driven home a few months later when, on July 25, 2007, CAIR communications director Ibrahim Hooper gave a particularly embarrassing performance on MSNBC, as recounted in "Muslim Mafia":

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Host Tucker Carlson got the best of Hooper during an interview about the case, and Hooper imploded, and he's still stewing about it, insiders say.

Carlson, who's now high on CAIR's media enemies "hit" list, asked Hooper why CAIR was suing John Doe passengers for reporting suspicious behavior aboard a US Airways flight, when such legal action could scare other Americans into silence in the face of a terrorist threat.



Ibrahim Hooper

CARLSON: Why are you supporting a lawsuit that would punish people for doing just that?

HOOPER: Because we're not in support of malicious reporting.

CARLSON: How do you know it was malicious?

HOOPER: Well, that's to be determined.

CARLSON: But you are supporting these people being sued. Their lives are disrupted.

HOOPER: That's how you ...

CARLSON: You are punishing them, and yet you don't know it was malicious what they did?

Flustered and visibly agitated, Hooper could only raise his voice and talk over the host, which he did for the rest of the interview before closing with a snarky remark suggesting Carlson was an anti-Muslim bigot.

By suing John Doe passengers, say law enforcement officers, CAIR intimidated crew and passengers alike, possibly making them more reluctant to report suspicious behavior, "Muslim Mafia" reports. Though CAIR later dropped the claims against the

tipsters, there may be a residual "chilling effect," warned New York Police Department detective Edward Sloan, who added, ominously: "Acts of staged controversy could ... be used to desensitize security personnel by making activity that common sense would deem suspicious instead seem routine and not worth any special effort."

*If you're a member of the media and would like to interview Paul Sperry, Dave Gaubatz or Chris Gaubatz, [e-mail WND's marketing department](#) or call Tim Bueler at (530) 401-3285.*

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*David Kupelian is an award-winning journalist, managing editor of WorldNetDaily.com, editor of Whistleblower magazine and author of the best-selling book, "The Marketing of Evil: How Radicals, Elitists, and Pseudo-Experts Sell Us Corruption Disguised as Freedom." His newest book is "How Evil Works: Understanding and Overcoming the Destructive Forces That Are Transforming America."*

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