

The 'Pro-Israel' Network Behind the "Innocence of Muslims" Video

By [Justin Raimondo](#)

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The 'moral obscenity' engulfing the Middle East in blazing Anti-Americanism

Introductory Note by Michael Carmichael, PlanetaryMovement.org

The indefatigable Justin Raimondo delves into the background of the makers of the inflammatory propaganda film, Innocence of Muslims, and discovers professional Islamophobes linked to the American pro-Israel network of radical neocons including:

1. *Media for Christ, sponsors of Christian programming in Arabic;*
2. *Pamela Geller, a wealthy hate-filled Islamophobe and full time anti-Muslim agitator behind the public protests of the mosque in Lower Manhattan in 2010;*
3. *Robert Spencer, a professional polemicist and devoutly conservative Roman Catholic who serves as the Director of Jihad Watch and*
4. *David Horowitz, the publisher of the neocon website, Frontpage.*

Raimondo reports that the Geller-Spencer crowd seem to have helped provide hundreds of thousands of dollars in the funding for the film project that led to the trailer for Innocence of Muslims that helped trigger the wave of violence in the Middle East on the anniversary of 9/11.

In his analysis, Raimondo argues that free speech has nothing to do with this film. Reminding his readers that Geller was an inspiration for the mass-murderer Andre Breivik who killed 77 people in Norway, Raimondo labels the result a "moral obscenity."

Delving even more deeply, Raimondo traces the ideological lineage of Geller and Spencer to David Horowitz and his neocon website, Frontpage, that is brimming with articles decrying, "the 'betrayal' of Israel by the US government and the perfidy of all things Islamic."

In Raimondo's piece, Geller, Spencer and Horowitz are homegrown propagandists with tons of "neocon money ... sloshing around" that gleefully precipitate phenomena like the Innocence of Muslims and the arc of violence now crushing US foreign policy in the Middle East.

The ultimate sources of the money under neocon control are unknown, but the Cheneyesque ideology of neoconservatism regularly receives a large share of exposure in the mainstream media through the appearances of Elizabeth Cheney, Daniel Pipes, Martin Indyk and John Bolton as well as the usual cast of characters on Fox News.

But, with one dead American ambassador along with three other dead consular officials and

a blazing US consulate in Benghazi as well as the ongoing wave of anti-American protest and violence from Morocco to Malaysia, when does the deliberate incitement to violence via propaganda and other treacherous chicanery rise to the level of treason?

* * *

If someone had planned to upend US foreign policy — to utterly destroy the [very basis](#)[.pdf] of all our diplomats (and military personnel) been working to achieve in the Middle East and throughout the Muslim world — they couldn't have done a better job of it than whoever put together [Innocence of Muslims](#).

As violent protests spread, the consequences continue to roll in: the [suspension](#) of joint US-Afghan military operations, the [suspension](#) of US aid talks with Egypt, the rapid [decline](#) of US prestige in the region, and the [growing influence](#) of the radical Islamist movement US support for the “Arab Spring” was designed to counter. The Obama administration’s effort to split the Islamist upsurge and lend its support to “moderates” has been stopped cold.

Was the release of the video a random event, one of those unpredictables that can arise at any moment to foil the best-laid plans? Perhaps. Yet one is hard-pressed to explain what the makers of *Innocence* sought to accomplish, if not precisely what has occurred. According to various explanations floated in the media — primarily by anti-Muslim agitator Steve Klein — the idea was to promote the video *to Muslims*. In [one account](#), Klein says he hoped the video would “smoke out” Muslim radicals in the US, who he is convinced have organized secret “cells” that will strike on command. On the other hand, we are [told](#) the film’s authors and promoters hoped to “convert” Muslims.

Neither explanation is very convincing. The video itself is so crude, so inept, and so deliberately insulting it is hard to believe anyone thought it could convert anyone to anything. And as for the prospect of “smoking out” secret Islamist cells — if there were such cells, one would hardly expect them to reveal themselves because of a YouTube video.

In order to understand the real motives and goals of the makers of *Innocence*, it is necessary to take a good look at the people who have, so far, been identified as the film’s authors and promoters.

The central figure in all this is reported to be one [Nakoula Basseley Nakoula](#), a 56-year-old Egyptian immigrant: although Nakoula presented himself in an [interview](#) with the Associated Press as “Sam Bacile,” a 56-year-old “Israeli-American” real estate developer, he is a [Coptic Christian](#), a member of a persecuted minority in Egypt — and a convicted felon. Media reports portray him as the central figure in the making of *Innocence*: he denies this, and describes his job as arranging “[logistics](#)” for the film. Nakoula’s role seems to have been that of a facilitator — gofer — rather than “creative director,” and in any case he hardly seems the type to have originated the idea for the movie. Having been released from jail — where he was serving a sentence for [bank fraud](#) — barely a month before filming started, Nakoula was hardly in a position to undertake such a project. Chances are he was recruited by someone else, the real originator and driving force behind *Innocence*— but who is that someone?

Public records show a filming permit was taken out by “Media for Christ,” an outfit run by one [Joseph Nasrallah Abdelmasih](#). His group sponsors Christian programming in Arabic, including “The Way,” a production that has [featured](#) such prominent Islamophobes as

Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer. The Geller-Spencer collaboration goes back to the protests against the New York City “Ground Zero” mosque in which the duo achieved national notoriety: Nasrallah was one of the [speakers](#) at their rally. The idea for just such a movie as *Innocence* [showed up](#) on Geller’s blog in February, in a post entitled “A Movie About Muhammad: An Idea Whose Time Has Come.” Ali Sina, an ex-Muslim and board member of Geller and Spencer’s “Stop the Islamization of Nations,” exhorted Geller’s readers to support his movie project:

“The movie shows Muhammad’s raids, plunders, massacres, rapes, assassinations and other crimes. A small subtitle in the lower right corner of each scene will give reference to the source of the story. This movie is entirely factual. Wherever possible, I copied the Quran, the Sira and the Hadith verbatim. It is a riveting story. Truth about Muhammad is more shocking than fiction.

“The world does not know Islam. What is known is a watered down and euphemized version of it that has no bases [sic] in reality. The truth is that Muhammad was a cult leader, much like Jim Jones, Shoko Asahara and Charles Manson. Unlike them he succeeded because there was no central power in the seventh century Arabia to stop him.

“The other good news is that I have been promised a substantial angel financing. I have been daydreaming about this movie for ten years. It was this promise that prompted me into action. I put everything aside for five months, read everything I could about my protagonist, selected the most salient episodes and wrote the script.

“The seed is now sown. Now it’s time to nurture it. What I need is an experienced executive producer, someone who shares my values, to make it happen with professionalism and missionary zeal.

“I am not thinking of a high budget movie, but given the subject matter, it can become one of the most seen motion pictures ever. (Recall Danish cartoons?)”

This may or may not be the same movie as *Innocence*, but what’s important here is that the idea of such a provocation — “recall Danish cartoons?” — was percolating in these circles when the movie was in production.

Nasrallah has now issued a non-denial [denial](#), in which he claims he was duped — along with the actors — by Nakoula who “did not make the movie we thought he was making.” However, he admits Nakoula called him and that Media for Christ lent him their facilities: and, one has to ask, what movie did Nasrallah *think* his buddy Nakoula was making?

Nasrallah’s recent involvement with the [Geller-Spencer crowd](#) coincided with a very profitable time for his organization: Media in Christ’s income has [recently skyrocketed](#), according to public records, with receipts totaling under \$200,000 in 2009 and prior, rising to \$633,516 in 2010 and \$1,016,366 in 2011. Where did all that money come from — was it Mr. Sina’s “substantial angel”? Nakoula [claims](#) he funded his movie project with money from “over 100 Jewish donors.”

When Nakoula spoke to the Associated Press, he described himself as an “Israeli-American” real estate developer operating out of California: this was soon debunked, however, when inquiring reporters outed him as an Egyptian of the Coptic faith. They also discovered he’s a

convicted felon — not only for a check-kiting scheme, but also for [drug-dealing](#) (methamphetamine). He's an unlikely hero for the right-wing Christians who have made a martyr out of him, although to ostensible "libertarians" like [Matt Welch](#), who thinks Nakoula & Co. are on the same level as Salman Rushdie, the meth conviction is doubtless a plus.

The idea that these vermin, who deliberately set out to make a "movie" that would inflame the Muslim world, are "free speech" heroes is worse than nonsense: it is valorizing villains. We don't yet know where the money, or the impetus to make the film, came from, but what we do know is this: the driving force behind *Innocence* was a desire to create an [international incident](#) that would bring discredit on the United States, and empower radical Islamists who hate America and everything it stands for. And the promoters of this garbage pose as "patriots"!

Free speech has nothing to do with this issue: the President requested of YouTube that they [reconsider](#) the video's place on YouTube *in light of their terms of service*. YouTube refused, and that's the end of it. Unfortunately, however, that's not the end of this imbroglio, the consequences of which we'll be living with for a long time to come.

There is an ugly sore festering under the skin of the West, and its first manifestation — or should I say symptom? — surfaced when [Andre Breivik](#) committed his ghastly crime, slaughtering the attendees at a Norwegian Labor Party youth camp. He, too, wanted to "stop the Islamization of nations," and his online manifesto [cited Geller, Spencer](#), and the writings of the movement their hateful rantings have energized. The [English Defense League](#) — a sorry collection of skinheads, neo-Nazis, and soccer hooligans — which Geller endorses, has mounted a campaign of violent intimidation aimed at British Muslims, inspiring imitators in several European countries. These groups feed off the more radical elements of the Zionist movement: Geller and her supporters claim to be "defending Israel," and the EDL [regularly](#) flies [the Israeli flag](#) at their hate rallies.

Defense of the Jewish state is a major theme of the Islamophobe network: they use it as a shield to deflect criticism. A key leader of this network is former New Leftist and Black Panther groupie [David Horowitz](#): his "David Horowitz Freedom Center" (formerly the Center for the Study of Popular Culture), sponsors Spencer's "Jihad Watch." Horowitz's "Frontpage" site — ablaze with stories decrying the "betrayal" of Israel by the American government and the perfidy of all things Islamic — recently [speculated](#) *Innocence* was created by the very Salafists now leading the protests. Since the video sprang from the same bigoted milieu of which Frontpage is the online Jerusalem, this "theory" isn't merely ironic — it's a moral obscenity.

It isn't hard to imagine where the money to create this deadly provocation came from. Of the many millions in [neocon money](#) sloshing around this country, it's hardly inconceivable a hundred thousand or so would find its way into the hands of a twice-convicted felon and all around dubious character like Nakoula, who is, I suspect, just a con man rather than an ultra-Zionist ideologue like the promoters of his "work."

Although, to be sure, the difference is altogether negligible.

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