

The Link

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9 a.m., Oct. 11, 1985: a bomb explodes
at the Santa Ana office of the American-
Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.

Shortly after the attack,
the suspected terrorists
flee to Israel to avoid U.S.
jurisdiction.

30 years later,
no one has been named,
questioned or
indicted for

The Murder of Alex Odeh

by Richard Habib

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About This Issue:

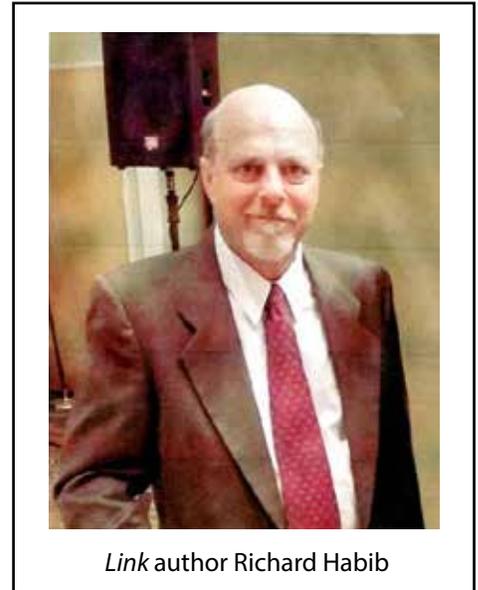
Our July-August 1989 issue of *The Link* featured an interview with Ellen Nassab, the sister of Alex Odeh. That interview took place on Feb. 18, 1989 at Ellen's home in California, less than four months before she died of cancer.

In that interview Ellen cited a L.A. Times article that named a member of the Jewish Defence League as a suspect in her brother's murder. But that suspect had fled to Israel, and Israeli authorities had refused to extradite him back to the States. Ellen's last words on the subject were: "So, here in the States, we bow to Israel."

It's been over 30 years since Alex Odeh's murder and, as this issue of *The Link* tells us, much has happened — and not happened. Richard Habib, our author, was a Los Angeles chapter board member of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee at the time of Alex's murder. Now a retired businessman, he has followed the case closely over the last 30 years. In 2015, he received the Alex Odeh Advocacy Award.

By the end of his article, Richard Habib, it seems, reaches a conclusion not that dissimilar from that of Helen Nassab.

Readers who may be interested in commenting on our current issue are invited to go to our website, www.ameu.org, and scroll down to the end of our online edition. There you will find



Link author Richard Habib

our Comment application. Don't be surprised if you are the first to use it, as it is the latest update to our site.

Also, for readers wishing to read Ellen Nassab's article, it too is available on our website. AMEU was founded in 1967, but our first issue appeared in 1968. Every issue since then has been digitized and is now easily downloadable.

On pages 14 and 15 you will find a select list of videos and books, all available at low discount prices. Again, our website offers over 90 books, many out-of-print and hard to find.

Finally, on page 16, we have placed a "Gift Subscription" form. For \$20 we will send a year's subscription to *The Link*, along with recent AMEU publications, to the person or persons you enroll.

John F. Mahoney
Executive Director

The Murder of Alex Odeh

By Richard Habib

October 11, 2015 marked the 30th anniversary of the cold-case murder of Alex Odeh. The FBI designated the murder as an act of domestic terrorism --- a terrorist attack that took place here in the United States, in Santa Ana, California.

A number of disturbing issues are associated with this case. Limited information about it is due partially to a policy of silence and an absence of public accountability by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the FBI regarding steps those agencies have taken to apprehend the person(s) responsible for killing Mr. Odeh.

This has left anguished family and friends dangling on a string for decades, looking for answers. It is a circuitous 30-year-old story begging for logical explanations to lingering questions held by those who believe this matter has not been thoroughly and properly addressed. A congressional hearing to review the facts and evaluate how the case has been processed would go a long way to ease concerns by all of those who held Alex in high regard, especially his family and friends.

It is noteworthy to remind readers that President Obama made the second of two statements within a two-month period reiterating what has presumably been long-term U.S. policy on the matter of pursuit of those who engage in acts of terror. On Aug. 20, 2014, he stated: "The United States of America will continue to do what we must do to protect our people. We will be vigilant and we will be relentless. When people harm Americans, anywhere, we do what's necessary to see that justice is done."

To family, friends and colleagues, that resolve and commitment declared by President Obama does not seem to extend to the apprehension and prosecution of the terrorist(s) responsible for the attack on U.S. soil that killed Alex Odeh over thirty years ago.

As will be pointed out in this article, those believed to have some responsibility for setting the bomb that killed Alex were identified decades ago. The outstanding perplexing issues have to do with an incoherent explanation for the failure to question, arrest or indict any of those individuals.

Who Was Alex Odeh?

Iskander "Alex" Michael Odeh was born on April 4, 1944 in Jifna, a small town about 14 miles north of Jerusalem, in Palestine, now commonly referred to as the West Bank. The State of Israel did not emerge as an internationally recognized state until four years after Alex was born. Alex's family follows the tradition of devout Roman Catholics; of his eight siblings, one brother is a priest and one sister became a nun.



Alex Odeh, left, at Chanukah service.
ABC News June 11, 1990

In 1965 Alex left Jifna for Egypt to study at Cairo University and was a student in Cairo at the time of hostilities in 1967 that resulted in Israel's occupation of Palestine's East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip (as well as the Syrian Golan Heights and the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula).

Because of Israel's occupation, Alex was prohibited from returning to his home in Jifna, so after his college term in Cairo, he went to live in Amman.

Meanwhile, Alex's sister Ellen immigrated with her husband to the United States. She corresponded with

Alex encouraged him to move to Southern California, which he did in 1972. Alex lived in Southern California with another sister, and worked different jobs to support his return to college at California State University Fullerton (CSUF) to pursue his Master's degree in political science.

Before graduating from CSUF Alex was able to get a travel permit from Israeli authorities that allowed him to return to Jifna for a visit. On that visit he married Norma Ghattas, a neighbor in Jifna, and they returned to the United States together.

While a student at CSUF, Alex's extracurricular activities included efforts to combat anti-Arab (and particularly anti-Palestinian) stereotypes that had become commonplace in the American print and broadcast media. He also became involved with interfaith dialogue and other groups interested in promoting a process of reconciliation between the American Jewish community and the American Arab community.

In addition to his activity as a civil rights advocate, Alex was a published poet, writing mainly in Arabic, with his works translated into English.

Alex's activism continued after obtaining his Master's degree and eventually led to his employment with the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), a national organization formed in 1980 by former Senator James Abourezk of South Dakota. The founding purpose of the ADC was to combat the growing trend of anti-Arab discrimination and prejudice, particularly in the print and broadcast media, and the protection of civil rights of Americans of Arab descent.

In the early 1980's Alex became ADC's Southern California Regional Coordinator, and he was a perfect fit for the job. Alex was both a gentle man and a gentleman. He was intelligent. He was soft-spoken and an empathetic listener - effective attributes at times of discussion with those who may have had a sense of apprehension to share Alex's point of view. But that is who Alex was - a facilitator who brought people together for constructive purposes. There was nothing threatening about him. On the contrary, he was an instantly likeable person.

The Assassination

On the morning of Oct. 11, 1985, Alex Odeh approached

the Santa Ana, California west coast office of the ADC. Another day of outreach meant more letters to write and more phone calls to make. He had plans that evening to give a presentation to the Congregation B'nai Tzadek, a Jewish synagogue about eight miles away from his office.

It wasn't unusual for either Alex or his assistant Hind Baki to open the office in the morning - it just depended on who arrived first. Hind would try to arrive by 9:00 a.m., but on this morning it was Alex who arrived first. As he entered his office, a trip wire from the entry door detonated an explosive device that was planted from inside, which caused massive damage to the building and injury to several bystanders. Alex took the full force of the explosion and was pronounced dead at a local hospital a short time thereafter.

Bob Navarro of KNBC television in Los Angeles, in a live report on the day of the incident stated: "Investigators aren't talking for the record, but there is a consensus this was a carefully planned assassination."

Within hours of the bombing the FBI, Treasury agents and members of the Los Angeles Anti-Terrorism Task Force and the Santa Ana Police Department were on the scene. According to a May 13, 1990 Los Angeles Times article by Robert Friedman, even at this early stage, while the investigators were in front of the bombed-out building, the names of Jewish Defense League (JDL) members Keith Fuchs, Andy Green and Robert Manning were mentioned as the bombers.

This writer personally knows of two individuals who were told by law enforcement officials almost immediately after the bombing that they (law enforcement) knew who did it.

Alex was 41 years old at the time he was killed. He left behind his wife Norma and three daughters: Helena, Samya and Susan, ages seven, five, and two respectively. Similar to their despair was the anguish of Alex's siblings. His sister Ellen articulated their sadness in a summer 1989 Link interview.

Alex's younger brother Sami with his wife and their two children lived close to Alex and Norma. Sami was at the hospital when Alex was pronounced dead, and for decades on he became the family spokesperson to interface with various law enforcement agencies, the news media and everyone wishing to know what was taking place in the investigation. Sami died in 2013 at 62 years of age after suffering from multiple health maladies. There is no way to know the extent to which Sami's health was

compromised by trauma brought on as a result of his brother's murder. The same can be said for Sami's wife Lisa who passed away in Dec. 2015 at a relatively young age. The stress that radiated as a result of Alex's murder was tremendous. Sami's son Michael recalled to this author the efforts that his parents and relatives made to shield the children from the trauma of Alex's murder. The adults tried to put on a "normal" façade around the children, taking them to amusement parks and other outings to distract the children and themselves from the living nightmare of the tragedy. Michael described the atmosphere after his Uncle Alex's death as being haunted by "evil up close, not at a distance." Different family members were afraid to accept packages or flowers for fear that they might contain a bomb.

Another group of persons traumatized by Alex's murder were friends and colleagues with whom Alex worked, this writer being among that group. Alex worked diligently, and was quite successful at developing personal relationships. The list of individuals this writer knows who were friends or associates of Alex is only a fraction of the people with whom Alex had developed friendly and constructive relations.

Hind Baki had taken the position with the ADC's Los Angeles office as Alex's assistant primarily because of her faith in Alex's gentle outreach approach to matters of civil rights. After the bombing and Alex's death it was an unpleasant task for Hind to sift through shreds and pick up pieces of the Santa Ana office for a move to a replacement facility. Eventually a new, but smaller ADC office was established, but unnerving and threatening calls continued to come in to the new office, extending the atmosphere of fear and tension. Hind kept logs of those threatening calls and reported them to law enforcement, but eventually the stress of feeling like a target and her desire to develop a career in journalism prompted her to leave the ADC position to pursue her long-term professional interests.

Beyond the circles that included Alex's immediate family, his siblings, his friends and associates, the impact of his death (and especially how he was killed) was recognized as a tragedy by officials of foreign governments and, of course, in Jifna, the village of his birth, where a memorial in his honor was erected.

The Motive

From the beginning, one particular side-story has so deeply penetrated the narrative of Alex's murder that this writer believes it is necessary to debunk its illusion as a legitimate motive.

What happened is this: in the immediate days before Alex was killed, a terrible and dramatic development was taking place thousands of miles away in the Mediterranean Sea. That development was the hijacking of the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro by terrorists of the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF). Leon Klinghoffer, an elderly and disabled Jewish American was killed during that event. News networks were seeking stories for their outlets, and the Achille Lauro hijacking event was a hot topic. According to Robert Friedman (GQ Magazine, October 1991), shortly after PLF terrorists hijacked the Achille Lauro, nationally renowned Arab-American disk jockey and radio personality Casey Kasem was asked by KABC (the Los Angeles ABC affiliate) to comment about the chaos taking place in the Middle East, including the Achille Lauro hijacking drama that was currently playing out. Mr. Kasem had become active in the Arab-American community and was working with the ADC to combat anti-Arab stereotypes, but at this point in time when KABC reached out to him, Casey was preoccupied with concern about the condition of his mother who was hospitalized and critically ill. So, when contacted by KABC news, Casey referred the inquiry to Alex Odeh, ADC's Regional Coordinator.

Alex agreed to be interviewed by both KABC and Cable News Network (CNN). In those interviews Alex discussed the role of the ADC as a civil rights organization, concerns of prejudice felt by Americans of Arab descent, the need to fight against discrimination, the need for non-violent strategies to combat racism and a general discussion about the Middle East and the Achille Lauro hijacking. The entire, original interview between Alex and KABC lasted 30 – 45 minutes. That evening (the day before Alex was killed), KABC selectively omitted most of what Alex stated in the interview and edited snips of Alex's statements that focused solely on his opinion that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) under the leadership of Yasser Arafat was playing a constructive role in diffusing the situation, and that Yasser Arafat himself was a "man of peace."

Almost every broadcast and print report makes reference

to Alex's death taking place after his appearance on television "defending" the PLO and commending Yasser Arafat. The implicit suggestion of that narrative is that Alex was targeted after and because of his statements of support for the PLO and Arafat.

In reality, the decision by Alex to engage in the interviews was a decision made shortly before the interviews took place when Alex agreed to be a substitute for Casey Kasem. So it's unlikely that surveillance for, and success at planting the bomb in the Santa Ana office of the ADC could have taken place between the time after conclusion of the evening interview broadcast on Oct. 10th and the next morning of Oct. 11th when Alex was killed.

Furthermore, whoever was responsible for setting the bomb at the ADC's Santa Ana office had no way of knowing whether Alex or his assistant Hind Baki would be the first one to open up the door in the morning and take the impact of the bomb. Hind would try to be in the office by 9:00 a.m., but there were times she ran business errands before arriving or would be delayed by traffic. Alex made his own schedule, sometimes arriving to the office before Hind's 9:00 a.m. arrival target.

The Los Angeles Times reported on Oct. 12, 1985, the day after Alex was killed, that FBI spokesman John Hoos stated the [FBI] "has no evidence linking Odeh's remarks to the bombing." But for reasons unknown, that logic as stated by agent Hoos never fully penetrated the psyche of those who continue to assert a causal effect between Alex's television interview and the planted bomb that killed him the next morning.

Hind Baki offered a more rational explanation to this writer who, along with everyone else who has studied this case at length, believes that the ADC office was a target of terrorism in order to silence, intimidate and stop the successful outreach made by Alex, the ADC, and those espousing their point of view to solicit understanding and support from other communities.

Readers interested in an analysis comparing the murders of Leon Klinghoffer and Alex Odeh, might read a book written in 2004 by Michael K. Bohn titled "The Achille Lauro Hijacking: Lessons in The Politics and Prejudice of Terrorism," which describes the relentless pursuit of the killers of Leon Klinghoffer compared to the less publicized hunt for Alex Odeh's killers. Mr. Bohn was the director of the White House Situation Room during President Reagan's second term when both murders took place.

The Investigation

U.S. federal agencies, the Department of Justice and the FBI took over the case from local law enforcement when the FBI characterized the bombing that caused Alex's death to be the result of a domestic "terrorist" attack. Eventually a broader group called the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) evolved that merged the resources of federal agencies, usually the FBI, with local law enforcement to combat and investigate acts of terrorism.

On Dec. 10, 1985, about a month after the bombing that killed Alex, William Webster, Director of the FBI, made the following statement at the National Press Club: "I think I can say that Arab individuals or those supporting of Arab points of view have come within the zone of danger - targeting by a group as yet to be fully identified and brought to justice."

By June of 1986, former U.S. senator and ADC founder James Abourezk was sufficiently troubled about the FBI's commitment to pursue the Odeh case that he wrote FBI Director Webster to register his concern. Within one month of Senator Abourezk's letter, a full force letter writing campaign emerged asking the FBI to publicly reiterate its commitment to pursue those responsible for the murder of Alex Odeh. The response to almost all of the incoming letters, mostly authored by William M. Baker, the FBI's Assistant Director, Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, stated: "I can assure you that the FBI is making every effort to resolve this matter and bring this case to a prosecutable stage."

On July 16, 1986, about nine months after the bombing, Oliver B. Revell, the FBI's executive assistant director, made the following statements to a House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice of the House Judiciary Committee:

- I can tell you that substantial progress has been made and that a definite investigative focus has been established. In other words, we have suspects in this case and are pursuing those suspects.
- The FBI believed those responsible for Alex Odeh's death were "Jewish extremist elements."
- Israeli police have been contacted by the FBI, which is trying to determine if Israeli citizens have helped Jewish extremists carry out terrorist incidents in the United States...[because the]... FBI has blamed Jewish extremists for four of the seven terrorist attacks in the United States in 1985.

- The Alex Odeh murder is the highest priority investigation we have within our domestic terrorist program, and it will continue to be so until it is solved.

- I have stated to the chairman that we have identified suspects, we are conducting an intensive investigation. I believe, and truly believe, that we will solve it...

- [After] a careful examination of the modus operandi and other factors, we began to focus on certain individuals, and the collection of information about those individuals tended to confirm our identification of them as the prime suspects.

On April 3, 1987, about 17 months after the bombing, the same Oliver Revell of the FBI stated at the annual convention of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in Washington, D.C., "I remain confident we will resolve the Alex Odeh case and bring those responsible to justice." He also stated, "Our patience and your patience is paying off [and] I promise we will not rest until we have concluded our duties and the murder of Alex Odeh is solved and those individuals responsible pay the full penalty of the law."

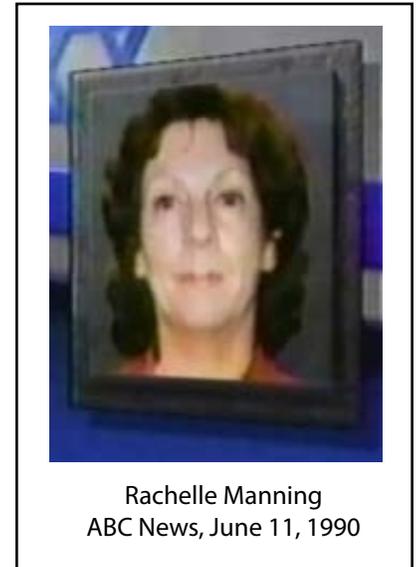
On Nov. 19, 1987 the Los Angeles Times published an article by journalist Ronald Ostrow that referred to memos, written by Floyd Clarke, the head of the FBI's investigations division, that said "Israel's responses to FBI requests for information about terrorist suspects living in Israel have been untimely, incomplete, and in certain cases no response was rendered."

The Washington Post on the same day (Nov. 19, 1987) published an article stating that the FBI's Floyd Clarke memo also mentioned that "several key suspects in the investigation have fled to Israel, where they have sought asylum in Kiryat Arba, a large Jewish settlement on the Israeli-occupied West Bank." The memo described Kiryat Arba as a "haven for right-wing Jewish extremist elements."

The memo continued, saying: "The [FBI] Terrorism Section has had numerous meetings with [Israeli] representatives in Washington, D.C., during which our concerns relative to their handling of our requests were raised. Although these discussions have sometimes resulted in a temporary flurry of activity on their part, no sustained improvement in the flow of information has been realized."

On June 22, 1988, Rochelle Manning was arrested upon her arrival to the United States from Israel. Three days

later, the Los Angeles Times reported that her husband, Robert Manning, a U.S. Army-trained demolitions expert and one of at least four suspects all living in Israel, was a "prime suspect" in the bombing death of Alex Odeh. According to the report, Robert Manning's wife Rochelle may have had a "peripheral" role in the Odeh bombing.



The connection of Robert and Rochelle Manning to the Odeh murder came as a result of a separate investigation into a bombing incident that killed Patricia Wilkerson. On July 17, 1980, a package, along with a letter, arrived at the office of a Manhattan Beach, California computer company run by Brenda Crouthamel. At the time, Brenda was engaged in a business feud with a local realtor by the name of William Ross. Purportedly, Ross was so enraged that he arranged with the Mannings to kill Crouthamel. But it was Patricia Wilkerson, Crouthamel's secretary, who got the mail that day. She opened the letter which directed her to open the package, remove the device inside, then plug in the cord in order to hear a recorded message about computer marketing. Wilkerson died instantly. A fragment of the blood-streaked envelope that survived the blast contained Rochelle Manning's fingerprints.

After her arrest, Rochelle was held for trial in the United States while her husband Robert remained free in Israel and/or Israeli-occupied territories. In 1989, Rochelle Manning was tried in a U.S. court for the bombing death of Patricia Wilkerson, but charges against her and co-defendant, William Ross, were dropped after the jury deadlocked. At the time, prosecutors said they would re-charge Rochelle Manning and Ross if Robert Manning could be extradited from Israel." Rochelle then traveled back to Israel to be with her husband Robert.

On May 13, 1990, the Los Angeles Times published an article by Robert Friedman that stated that, according to FBI documents and Justice Department officials, the FBI had amassed an impressive body of physical evidence and identified three American Jewish members of the JDL

who lived in Israel. The article continued, "Tel Aviv has obstructed the U.S. government's investigation, according to FBI documents and Justice Department officials. Any attempt to extradite the suspects, the officials fear, would be met in Israel by a firestorm of protest from right-wing legislators."

Information available to the public with respect to legal proceedings for the extradition of Rochelle and Robert Manning from Israel to the United States are not easily obtained. According to a New York Times article published on March 19, 1994, an extradition request by the United States began sometime in 1989: "The extradition request by the United States in 1989 was not enforced until March 1991

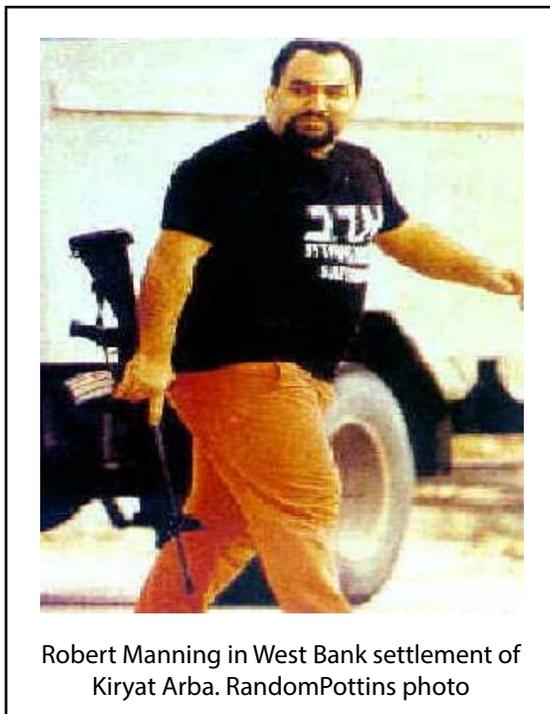
because of sensitivity over arresting the Mannings at their home [in the Israeli-occupied Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba]. United States diplomats apparently feared that the request might imply American recognition of Israeli sovereignty in the West Bank." Robert Manning and his supporters threatened that he (Manning) would commit suicide rather than be extradited.

Robert Manning fought extradition from Israel to the United States for two years. Towards the end of his fight, according to a Los Angeles Times report of July 19, 1993, he "tried to avert extradition by taking 20 sleeping pills and claiming heart trouble."

On March 26, 1991, the American Embassy in Tel Aviv said that the problem of sovereignty was finally "deemed not important" by the Justice Department for the purpose of the extradition order.

On June 8, 1991, the Los Angeles Times reported that an Israeli court ordered the extradition of Robert and Rochelle Manning to the United States to face charges in the bombing death of Patricia Wilkerson. Robert Manning, 39, and his wife Rochelle, 51, then living in the West Bank Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba, were jailed in March, seven months after the U.S. Justice Department requested their extradition.

On July 18, 1993 Robert Manning was put on a plane bound for Los Angeles in compliance with an extradition



Robert Manning in West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba. RandomPottins photo

agreement between the U.S. and Israel. He was extradited to the United States on charges related to the bombing death of Patricia Wilkerson.

It is unclear to this writer why Rochelle Manning was not extradited from Israel at the same time as her husband Robert.

Those hoping that Robert Manning's extradition would move the wheels of justice forward in the case of Alex Odeh were tempered by a statement from U.S. Attorney Dean Dunlavey, who advised that the two cases (Wilkerson and Odeh) were unrelated. "I don't want to get into this thing where we're being accused of using this case as a stalking horse for the

Odeh case," said Mr. Dunlavey, according to a Los Angeles Time report of July 20, 1993.

The issue of extraditing Robert Manning as a suspect in the bombing murder of Alex Odeh became hostage in a quagmire of negotiations between the United States and Israel that caused considerable delay coming to an agreement between the two countries. Gyration in developing Israeli law at the time combined with what this writer believes was U.S. failure to proceed with firm resolve left negotiations to apprehend suspects believed to be responsible for the death of Alex Odeh highly tilted in favor of the Israeli posture.

In 1999, the Israeli Supreme Court banned the extradition of Israeli citizens. The impact of this act on the Odeh case was addressed in a Jan. 2002 issue of the Vanderbilt University Journal of Transnational Law, which concluded that the Robert Manning case "provides perhaps the most graphic illustration of the way the 1999 act could be abused." According to the Journal:

Due to administrative delay... the United States did not request Manning's extradition from Israel until 1991. Under the 1978 statute, Manning could not be extradited for the Odeh killing because it had been committed after he acquired Israeli citizenship, but he was unconditionally extraditable for the 1980 murder [of Patricia Wilkerson]. Accordingly, he was returned to the United States in 1993, convicted in federal court

[in the Wilkerson case], and sentenced to life without parole in a U.S. prison.

... the Manning investigation caused considerable friction between Israeli and U.S. law enforcement officials. U.S. authorities accused Israel of dragging its feet in processing the extradition request, and the United States was finally forced to agree to prosecute Manning for only one of the two murders of which he was suspected. Had the 1999 law been in effect, the United States may well have had to agree to yet another condition - that Manning be returned to Israel to serve his sentence in the event of conviction. In other words, Manning - who was a U.S. citizen and had lived in Israel only after becoming a fugitive from justice - would have been entitled to the protection of Israeli law.

ABC News anchor Peter Jennings broadcast a detailed report on May, 28, 1991 about Israeli extremists, Robert and Rochelle Manning in particular, being shielded from extradition by the Israeli government. The report explained that Israel's control over Robert Manning as an Israeli reservist could easily have accommodated the wishes of the United States without raising the issue of Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank. All Israel had to do was assign Manning to a post inside Israel's recognized (pre-1967) borders and arrest him there.

Rochelle Manning remained in an Israeli prison awaiting extradition while her husband was extradited to the United States and convicted in the murder of Patricia Wilkerson on Oct. 15, 1993. At the time of Manning's conviction, according to the Jewish Journal of Sept. 25, 2005, the Los Angeles Times of Oct. 15, 1993 reported that U.S. Atty. Dean Dunleavy "declined comment ... about any plans to try Robert Manning in the Odeh case. Under the terms of U.S.-Israeli extradition treaties, suspects can be tried only in the cases for which they were extradited. Manning was extradited for the Wilkerson case."

On March 19, 1994 a spokesman for the Israeli prison where Rochelle Manning was being held announced that Rochelle, at age 54, "apparently suffered a heart attack," died, and a "routine inquiry was under way."

The time lapse between Alex Odeh's murder and the time of Rochelle Manning's death now exceeded eight years!

As to other suspects believed to be responsible for Alex Odeh's death, namely Keith Fuchs and Andy Green, who had changed his name to Baruch Ben-Yosef, the Jewish Journal of Sept. 29, 2005 reported that both were believed

to be residing in Israel proper or in Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories.

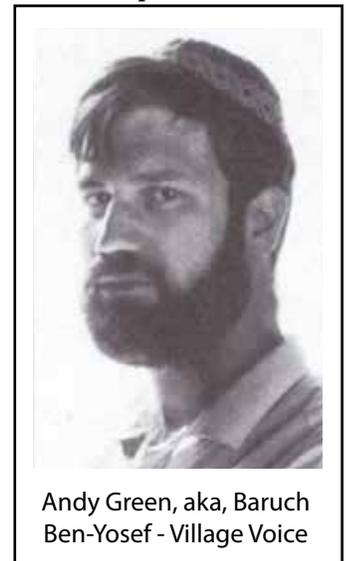
Sometime after 1980, Robert and Rochelle Manning had moved from the United States to the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba located in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Manning set up a Jerusalem-based private investigating firm with Green who was a JDL activist from New York. The two of them engaged in a variety of aggressive and controversial activities in Israel, Israeli-occupied territories, and in the United States.

In 1983, according to the Jewish Journal of Sept. 25, 2005, Keith Fuchs was convicted of shooting at a passing Arab-owned car in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Israeli authorities eventually pulled him out of jail and put him on a plane back to New York.

The New York Times on Dec. 20, 1993 reported that Israeli authorities arrested five Americans, including Andy Green (aka Baruch Ben-Yosef) and an individual named Israel Fuchs on "arms and terror" charges. It is unknown if Israel Fuchs and Keith Fuchs are the same person.

In the summer of 1985, according to the FBI, Manning and Green began a wild five-month coast-to-coast bombing spree that left two people dead and more than a

dozen injured. As reported by Robert Friedman in GQ Magazine of Oct. 19, 1991, in addition to Alex Odeh, the other person killed was Tscherim Soobzokov, an alleged collaborator with the Nazis during the invasion of the Soviet Union. The CIA had recruited Soobzokov and apparently misled the U.S. Immigration Nationalization Service to get him U.S. resident status. He died three weeks after being severely injured by a bomb set outside his Patterson, N.J. home. The bombing was linked by the FBI to a similar bomb attack on another accused Nazi war criminal, Elmars Sprogis, that took place in Long Island on the day Soobzokov died. Sprogis was not injured, but an innocent good Samaritan who tried to put out the fire on Sprogis' porch was severely burned. And a Boston police officer Randolph LaMattina was seriously injured



Andy Green, aka, Baruch Ben-Yosef - Village Voice

on Aug. 16, 1985 when he tried to defuse a bomb that was placed outside the Boston office of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the same national organization that Alex Odeh worked for.

Nearly 30 years later, according to the Jerusalem Post of July 6, 2004, Andy Green, using the name Baruch Ben-Yosef, attended secret meetings of settlers from the West Bank and Gaza, the purpose of which was to instigate “civil revolt” against Israel’s planned removal of its settlements from the Gaza Strip.

As a confirmation that U.S. authorities had no plans to extradite the two “suspects” Green (Ben Yosef) or Fuchs from Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu in his first term as Israeli Prime Minister stated the following at the National Press Club in Washington DC on Jan. 21, 1998: “I am not familiar with extradition requests concerning the murder of Alex Odeh. But I am sure that if those would be brought before me, I would look into them. Again, we have a problem for lack of an instrument, of the legal instrument.”

With prime suspect Robert Manning in a U.S. prison on charges unrelated to the death of Alex Odeh, and Manning’s wife Rochelle dead from a “heart attack” while in Israeli custody, and while Green/Ben-Yosef and Keith Fuchs were free to roam around Israel and Israeli-occupied territories without concern of being apprehended by American or Israeli authorities, the next significant event related to the Odeh case took place 16 years after Alex’s murder, in Dec. of 2001.

The Rubin and Krugel Connection

On Dec. 12, 2001, Irv Rubin, national chairman of the JDL, and Earl Krugel, who was the JDL’s West Coast coordinator, were arrested for plotting to blow up a Southern California mosque and an office belonging to Darrell Issa, a Republican member of Congress from California. The arrests, according to law enforcement authorities quoted in the L.A. Times of Dec. 13, 2001, “followed one of the most significant investigations by the Los Angeles Joint Terrorism Task Force in its 16-year history.”

Then on Oct. 10, 2002, the L.A. Times reported that Irv Rubin and other JDL members were subpoenaed to testify before a federal grand jury investigating the unsolved murder of Alex Odeh. But less than a month later, on Nov. 4, 2002, USA Today reported that Irv Rubin allegedly

committed suicide while incarcerated by slashing “his neck with a prison-issued razor blade” and jumping or falling almost twenty feet over a railing to a concrete floor below at the Southern California detention facility where he was held. He died from the injuries on Nov. 13, 2002.

Sometime after his arrest with Irv Rubin, attorneys for Earl Krugel negotiated a plea reduction in Krugel’s sentence, from a mandatory 40 years to 20 years in exchange for his agreement to plead guilty to complicity with Rubin in the planned bombings of the Los Angeles mosque and congressman Issa’s office. As part of the agreement, according to a Nov. 6, 2005 Los Angeles Time article, Krugel was supposed to help law enforcement solve the murder of Alex Odeh.

The Jerusalem Post of June 15, 2004 reported that on the previous day, June 14, US District Judge Ronald S.W. Lew ordered a closed hearing to rule that Krugel had violated his plea agreement and thus was subject to the maximum prison sentence on the original bombing conspiracy charges.

While carrying out his sentence, Earl Kruger was killed at the Federal Correctional Institution in Phoenix, Arizona, three days after being transferred there. According to published reports, Krugel’s death took place on Nov. 4, 2005 after being attacked by a white supremacist who smashed a cinderblock five times into the back of his head.

Mr. Krugel’s death in prison occurred less than a month after the 20th anniversary of the unsolved murder of Alex Odeh!

Recent Updates

By 2013, 28 years after the murder of Alex Odeh and without tangible evidence that U.S. law enforcement was actively pursuing those responsible for Alex’s murder, activists began a campaign to publicize the absence of transparency as to the status of the case, including the failure to name, apprehend or indict anyone responsible for Alex’s death. At issue was and still is the posture of secrecy by the DOJ and FBI with respect to accountability as to how the case has been handled.

On June 11, 2013, Loretta Sanchez, the House Representative for the California district where the bombing that killed Alex took place, wrote a letter to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder requesting an update.

On July 7, 2013, Rep. Sanchez received a reply to her

letter from Peter Kadzik, Principal Deputy Assistant U.S. Attorney General stating that the Alex Odeh case "...is currently an open investigation and the FBI continues to work to identify any individual(s) associated with the bombing." Mr. Kadzik also advised that the DOJ and FBI have "longstanding policies not to release information of an ongoing investigation...to protect the rights of all parties involved."

On Oct. 17, 2013, in an interview with Amy Goodman of Democracy Now, Michigan Representative John Conyers, the ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, characterized the DOJ and FBI posture of secrecy in the Odeh case as follows: "The fact of the matter is that this is an embarrassment...it's like they just put this [Alex Odeh case] into a closet and locked the door."

On Nov. 6, 2013, U.S. Representatives Loretta Sanchez, John Conyers, Jim Moran and Eleanor Holmes-Norton co-authored a letter to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder asking the following questions:

- 1) Can you provide us the names of suspects associated with responsibility for the death of Alex Odeh?
- 2) Do you know the whereabouts of any suspects associated with responsibility for the death of Alex Odeh? If so, where are they?
- 3) Has the FBI interviewed all of the suspects associated with responsibility for the death of Alex Odeh? If not, why not?
- 4) Is there or has there been any extradition process to bring all suspects who might be outside of the United States to the United States for prosecution or questioning with respect to responsibility for the death of Alex Odeh?
- 5) Is there any suspect associated with the death of Alex Odeh that the Justice Department has not successfully interviewed? If so, why have those suspects not been interviewed?"

This writer is not aware of any response by U.S. Attorney General Holder to the letter by these members of Congress.

On June 30, 2014, Alex's daughter Samya, who was a small child when her father was killed, sent a letter to President Obama, and California Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer asking if they would assist with clarifying the status for apprehension of those (FBI-designated)

terrorists responsible for her father's death. The letter was prompted by the first of two statements in two months by the president relating to American policy and the pursuit of terrorists. On June 17, 2014, President Obama had stated: "It's important for us to send a message to the world: that when Americans are attacked, no matter how long it takes, we will find those responsible and we will bring them to justice."

President Obama did not reply directly to the letter from Samya. Instead a White House reply dated September 24, 2014 was generated via the DOJ from Michael Steinbach (Assistant Director Counterterrorism Division, National Security Branch) who stated:"The FBI is currently pursuing all leads that could possibly be related to the death of your father. This includes interviewing anyone with information or who may be able to provide information on previously unidentified suspects." The letter concludes by stating, "Due to the sensitivity of the ongoing investigation, we regret that we are unable to provide you with any additional details at this time."

California Senator Barbara Boxer never gave the courtesy of a reply to Samya's letter. Senator Feinstein did send a reply, stating she could only look into the matter once she received a completed "privacy release form" that was provided in her reply. Samya completed the form and returned it to the Senator. After months of waiting, Senator Feinstein never responded.

In addition to the Nov. 6, 2013, letter referenced above, U.S. Representatives Loretta Sanchez and John Conyers wrote a second letter to Representative Bob Goodlatte, Chairman of the House Committee of the Judiciary, to request a hearing on the status of the Odeh case.

On April 20, 2015, in an interview with KPFK's radio program Middle East In Focus, Representative Sanchez stated: "We did not receive a response back from Chairman Goodlatte ... he has somewhat indicated that there is nothing to be had with a hearing" to review the Odeh case.

This statement by Representative Sanchez marked the 30th year since the murder of Alex Odeh took place!

The single most obvious and significant question about the Alex Odeh case has to do with the enormous change in narrative by United States law enforcement with respect to confidence and ability to bring Alex's killers to justice. In 1986 and 1987, FBI Assistant Director Oliver Revell's statements included, "we have suspects ... we are pursuing

those suspects ... [the case] is the highest priority ... we have identified suspects [and] I believe, and truly believe, that we will solve it.”

Then, in only a matter of months after FBI statements of optimism, and after it became clear that the prime suspects had fled to Israel, information leaked from FBI sources in 1987 characterized Israel’s demeanor and lack of cooperation with U.S. law enforcement as being without “sustained improvement,” as well as “incomplete,” and “untimely.” It was also at this time that inquiries by interested parties were met with an essential blackout as to what was happening with the case. Since that time, FBI and DOJ response to inquiries have characterized the case to be too “sensitive” to discuss because it is still an ongoing and “open” investigation.

Fortunately, around the same time as U.S. law enforcement’s change from declared optimism to a posture of silence, journalist Robert Friedman wrote several articles published in the Los Angeles Times, the Village Voice and other publications and books that included a flood of information about what was taking place behind the scenes. In his writings, Mr. Friedman disclosed detailed information about activities and negotiations between U.S. and Israeli authorities for apprehension of suspected terrorists, including those thought to be responsible for the death of Alex Odeh. Mr. Friedman quotes leaked FBI memos and efforts by FBI agent Larry Wack, to penetrate Israeli politics in pursuit of those suspected terrorists. He also documents the strongly-held belief by politically elite conservatives in Israel and influential members of the American Jewish community at the time that those who killed perceived enemies of Israel were considered “heroes, not criminals.” [See Friedman’s “The False Prophet (1990), Chapter 15, “Who Killed Alex Odeh,” pp. 237-254.]

All of those believed to be responsible for the terrorist attack that killed Alex Odeh on U.S. soil were United States citizens who fled the United States to seek protection by a nation that is supposed to be friendly to the United States and is the recipient of billions of dollars of financial aid, provided annually by the American taxpayer.

The greatest disappointment and concern by those wishing to see justice prevail in this case is the sense of resignation and dismay that the government of the United States has failed to muster up the resolve and courage needed to pursue, capture and punish those responsible for killing Alex Odeh. There is no evidence to suggest that the

United States government made clear or took the position with the government of Israel that U.S. - Israeli relations would suffer if Israel failed to assist with access to or arrest of those U.S. citizens who had fled to Israel to avoid prosecution for the death of Alex Odeh. With an implicit message of impunity, the United States huffed, then puffed, and then melted away when Israel failed to cooperate, claiming the illusion of victory when Robert Manning was belatedly extradited to the United States on the condition he not be charged in Alex’s death.

Today, Robert Manning is incarcerated at the Phoenix Federal Corrections Institution, a medium security facility managed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, an entity within the Department of Justice and ultimately under the authority of the U.S. Attorney General. Recently he petitioned to be transferred to Israel to carry out his sentence. The ADC along with members of the Arab-American community wrote letters to the Bureau of Prisons in opposition to the request. In Sept. 2013, this author participated in an extended conference call that included members of the national office of the ADC and three FBI agents familiar with the Odeh case. In that call one of the FBI agents stated that Robert Manning was an absolute and totally “committed Zionist” who would never cooperate in an investigation that might lead to criminal charges in the Odeh case. Indeed, the impression from the conference call was that, in trips to Israel to pursue this case, no U.S. law enforcement official ever questioned any of the suspects believed to be responsible for the death of Alex Odeh.

The Only Way Left

Because developments for justice in the case of Alex’s Odeh’s murder have been a circuitous connection of dots, a recap is in order:

Over 30 years ago, on Oct. 11, 1985, Alex Odeh, a United States citizen, was murdered, on U.S. soil, in a FBI-designated terrorist attack believed to be carried out by U.S. citizens.

Friends and associates of Alex were told by law enforcement shortly after the attack that they (law enforcement) knew “who did it.” Publicly, the FBI stated: “we have suspects in this case and are pursuing those suspects,” and, “the collection of information about those individuals tended to confirm our identification of them as the prime suspects.”

Those believed to be the terrorists “who did it” fled to Israel shortly after the attack to avoid jurisdiction of United States law enforcement.

The state of Israel, for years, obstructed efforts of U.S. law enforcement to apprehend the terrorist suspects.

Credible reports indicate DOJ and FBI expressed “fear” that “any attempt to extradite the suspects ... would be met in Israel by a firestorm of protest from right-wing legislators.”

Eventually, Robert Manning, one of the prime suspects, was extradited to the United States on July 18, 1993 on charges unrelated to the death of Alex Odeh. This decision shows the United States yielding to political expediency rather than pursuing justice. Upon the extradition of Robert Manning, U.S. Attorney Dean Dunlavey, is quoted as saying: “I don’t want to get into this thing where we’re being accused of using this case as a stalking horse for the Odeh case.”

After Robert Manning was extradited to the United States on charges unrelated to the death of Alex Odeh, Manning’s wife Rochelle, who was also a suspect in the Odeh case, “apparently” suffered a heart attack and died in an Israeli prison while awaiting extradition to the United States.

Irv Rubin and Earl Krugel, who were individuals believed to possess information that could lead to the arrest of suspects responsible for the death of Alex Odeh, both died or were killed in prison before their contributions to move the Odeh case forward could be fulfilled.

No information or evidence exists to indicate any suspects believed to be responsible for the death of Alex Odeh who fled to Israel were ever questioned by U.S. Law enforcement.

Credible reports and analyses indicate that Israeli authorities withheld cooperation with U.S. law enforcement efforts to apprehend suspects in Israel due to prejudice against Alex Odeh’s ethnic identity and national origin.

It doesn’t require an intellectual powerhouse to conclude that efforts to bring the killer(s) of Alex Odeh to justice were bungled, suffered miscalculation or fell victim to political machinations of the notorious (and amorphous) “special relationship” between Israel and the United States.

Thirty years is enough time to know that something significantly diminished the DOJ and FBI’s confidence for bringing Alex’s case to a just resolution. And what is known about the way the case developed over the years is significant because what did take place only brings more questions as to how the case was processed.

Given the posture of silence by the DOJ, it seems the only way to evaluate how this case was processed by U.S. law enforcement and to understand why it devolved to its current status would be to have a full and transparent congressional inquiry into the matter. Indeed, all of those hoping for justice believe there is “something to be had” by getting answers to the seemingly endless list of reasonable questions haunting this case.

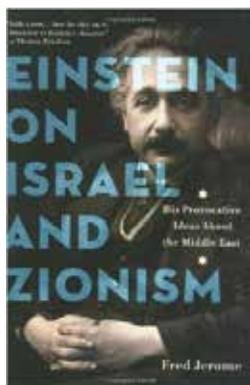
“Lies,” wrote Alex in one of his poems, “are like still ashes; When the wind of truth blows, they are dispersed like dust, and disappear.”



Above, Alex and his wife Norma; below, Alex with his three daughters Helena, Samya and Susan

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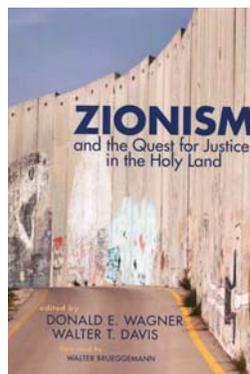
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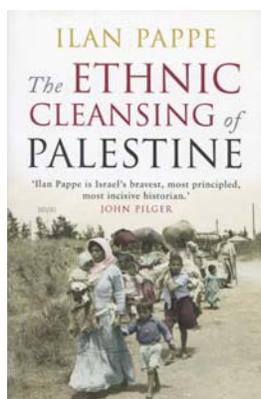


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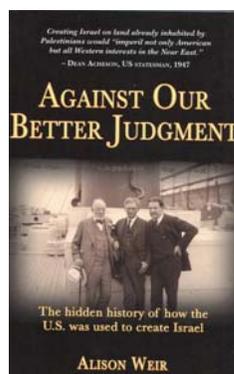
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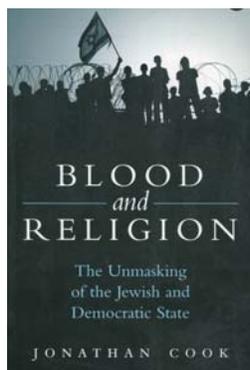
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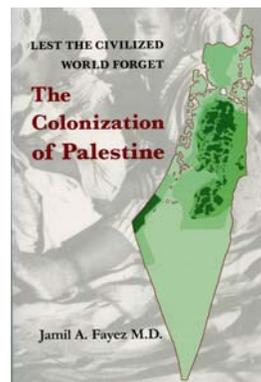
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