

# THE INNOCENCE OF MUSLIMS:

The People Behind the Movie, their Motives and the Drivers of their Hate

H.S.Lane

on behalf of



FAITH MATTERS

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***The Innocence of Muslims:***  
**The people behind the movie,**  
**their motives and the drivers of their hate**

By

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## Executive Summary

The film *'The Innocence of Muslims'* is one of the most explicitly Islamophobic and intentionally inflammatory pieces of cinematography to be released in decades. It was allegedly made to 'reveal the truth about Islam': the film's producer bragged, 'I could not have done a better job than what I have done to point out to the people of the world, and the vast majority of Muslims, just how dangerous these people (Muslims) are'. However, in reality, the film was clearly designed to inflame the Muslim world by portraying the Prophet Muhammad as a cruel, lascivious paedophile, and degrade Islam as a backward and barbaric religion.

Although it had been online since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012, *'The Innocence of Muslims'* did not gain international notoriety until several months later in September, when it was translated into Arabic and went viral. The protests against the film began in the same month and were widespread, reaching from Afghanistan, to Egypt, to the UK and the rest of Europe. According to Dr Isakjee and Dr Allen of the University of Birmingham, 'around 75 people died as a result of the protests with a further 650 or so being injured'.

There has been much confusion concerning the identity of the perpetrators of the film, as they originally operated in secret, used aliases, and released misinformation alluding to 'Jewish donors' and other shadowy characters. However, the four key players were eventually identified as Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, Steven Klein, Joseph Nasralla Abdelmasih and Morris Sadek; all linked through their virulent anti-Islam beliefs, but all very different characters. The following series of profiles exposes these men involved in the creation and proliferation of *'The Innocence of Muslims'*. It documents each individual's career history, belief system and level of activism, and any criminal convictions they might have in order to provide a more fully rounded portrayal of each of them.

We at Faith Matters believe it is important to identify these men. Although *'The Innocence of Muslims'* caused widespread unrest throughout the Middle East and the Western Muslim diaspora, the information concerning the named individuals has been somewhat widespread and patchy. We hope that in collating all the available information and presenting it as an easy-access booklet, we are helping to develop a pattern of understanding of Islamophobic beliefs and answer the questions of how and why each man became involved with the anti-Muslim film.

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## Nakoula Basseley Nakoula

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012 the film's 'trailer'<sup>1</sup> was posted on YouTube by a user called 'sambacile'; someone using the same name initially claimed to be the writer and producer. Although the film went largely unnoticed in the following few months, in the 48 hours following the Benghazi riots in Libya, rumours were rife regarding the identity of the mysterious 'Sam Bacile'. After a telephone interview with *The Wall Street Journal* in September 2012, in which he stated 'Islam is a cancer', Bacile appeared to vanish into anonymity, leaving the world to speculate who was really responsible for *'The Innocence of Muslims'*. Journalists discovered that he was not credited on any movie industry database and [SAG-AFTRA](#) stated they had no information about the film. The [DGA](#) also confirmed they had no 'Sam Bacile' on record. His very existence was brought into question. Conspiracy theories began to emerge, ranging from neo-conservatives in America working in cahoots with Mossad agents to incite a civil war to attack the Muslim world; to Iranian backing for a plot intending to discredit Americans, Jews and Christians and thereby reigniting anti-Semitic beliefs which formed part of a public relations drive by the Iranians. All of these conspiracy theories ultimately proved to be false.

Subsequent news reports pointed to a man called Nakoula Basseley Nakoula who was implicated in the film's development. A turning point in the investigation came when Nakoula was tracked down and questioned by the Associated Press (AP). He claimed he only managed the company that produced *'The Innocence of Muslims'* but later amended his story and admitted a role in the production. (He denied being Bacile but claimed he did know him.) However, the mobile phone number used by AP to contact 'Sam Bacile' was traced to the Nakoula's Los Angeles address. During a conversation outside his home, Nakoula offered his driver's license as proof of his identity but covered his middle name – Basseley – with his thumb. Records checks subsequently identified Nakoula and Bacile as the same person. Additionally, Tim Dax, an actor who appeared in the movie, said he was given a \$75 cheque each day from the bank account of one Abanob Basseley Nakoula – a name linked to Nakoula's Cerritos property. AP also noted that the house had a distinctive front door with triangle windows in a half-circle pattern that is visible in the film's trailer.

Nakoula has since been described by federal agents as the 'key figure' behind *'The Innocence of Muslims'*. Like others involved, he has since received death threats. One Pakistani cabinet minister, the Pakistani Railways Minister Ghulam Ahmed Bilour, offered a \$100,000 bounty to anyone who could kill Nakoula (who has subsequently been arrested for alleged parole violations from a previous fraud conviction and his family moved for their safety).

### Profile

**Name:** Nakoula Basseley Nakoula

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<sup>1</sup> The clip purported to be the trailer for the film, although the full-length version does not appear to exist online and there are some commentators who disbelieve its existence completely.

**Aliases:** Sam Bacile, Mark Basseley Youssef, Nicola Bacily, Robert Bacily, Erwin Salameh, Yousseff M. Basseley, Ahmad Hamdy, Daniel K. Caresman, Kritbag Difrat, PJ Tobacco, Thomas J. Tanas, Matthew Nekola, Amal Nada, , Sobhi Bushra, Malid Ahlawi and others. Court documents show that Nakoula officially changed his name to Mark Basseley Youssef in 2002 but did not tell federal authorities; they are now using that as part of their probation violation case against him. (The reason cited for the name change is: 'Nakoula is a girl's name and it causes [him] troubles.')

**Role in *'The Innocence of Muslims'*:** Writer and producer, although he originally claimed this was untrue and he was simply the manager for the company that produced the video and provided logistics for the film. According to government officials and those involved in the production, Nakoula provided his home as a set and paid the actors.

**Age:** Born in 1957, 55 years old.

**Family:** Married with three children.

**Location:** Cerritos, LA County, California (until September 2012 when he put his house up for sale and went into hiding).

**Occupation:** Former petrol station owner.

**Ethnicity:** Egyptian born.

**Faith:** Nakoula is a Coptic Christian but before his true identity was revealed rumours fuelled by Steve Klein (see page 8) circulated that 'Bacile' (Nakoula's alias connected to the film) was an Israeli Jew living in America. Klein told the Associated Press that 'Bacile' was motivated to make the film to help his 'native' Israel by exposing the evils of Islam, before claiming that the \$5m allegedly used to fund it was raised through the generosity of 'a hundred' Jewish donors. (Klein later retracted this statement and conceded that 'Bacile' was a pseudonym for an individual whose name he did not know and who was neither Israeli nor Jewish.) Israeli officials were quick to distance themselves from 'Bacile' and said they had no records of such a citizen, while Yigal Palmor, the Israeli Foreign Minister, stated: 'Nobody knows who he is. He is totally unknown in film making circles in Israel. And anything he did — he is not doing it for Israel, or with Israel, or through Israel in any way.' He called 'Bacile' 'a complete loose cannon and an unspeakable idiot'.

It was only when Nakoula was unveiled as the man behind 'Bacile' that rumours of 'Jewish heritage' were quashed. The US embassy in Cairo was defaced with graffiti praising Osama Bin Laden and threatening Jews. Jewish civil rights leaders said that despite Nakoula's 'Jewish lineage' being shown as a lie within 24 hours of the film going viral, the damage to the Jewish community had already been done and 'Jews will continue to suffer for it'. In September of this year a radical Islamic group killed an Israeli soldier in retaliation to the film, while President Ahmadinejad of Iran still blames 'Zionists' for it. Professor Juan Cole, Professor of History at the University of Michigan and a commentator on Middle Eastern affairs, summarised: 'The group behind the film...managed to evoke all the classic themes of anti-Semitism as a way of disguising the Coptic and evangelical network out of which the "film" came. When they weren't busy picketing Mormons and defaming Muslims they

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/28/nakoula-basseley-nakoula-aliases-innocence-of-muslims\\_n\\_1922945.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/28/nakoula-basseley-nakoula-aliases-innocence-of-muslims_n_1922945.html)

were trying to get Jews killed for their own smears of Islam!' (Parallels can be drawn here to the Breivik massacre when early reports pointed the finger at an Islamic extremist before it was known that the perpetrator was in fact a white, Christian extremist.)

**Key links:** Steve Klein, Alan Roberts, Robert Spencer, Pamela Geller,<sup>3</sup> Morris Sadek, Joseph Nasrallah, Terry Jones (right-wing Pastor who publically threatened to burn the Qur'an). Nakoula has the support of a network of right wing/conservative bloggers, led by Matt Drudge, who portray him as a martyr for free speech. His arrest has been used as an example of the need for political reform. Conservative blogger Glenn Reynolds demanded Obama's resignation for 'sending — literally — brown shirted enforcers to engage in — literally — a midnight knock at the door of a man for the non-crime of embarrassing the President of the United States and his administration.' Scott Johnson, a Powerline blogger, declared: 'I am Nakoula Basseley Nakoula', in reference to the anti-Red Scare film 'Spartacus', and Roger Simon wrote: 'Hillary Clinton, I insist that you have me arrested. I am thinking of making a movie about Mohammed'. Several Christian organisations and right-wing agencies have also pledged their support for Nakoula, including the Christian Broadcast Network and The Family Research Council (FRC).

### ***Criminal History***

According to the Associated Press, 'Nakoula has struggled with a series of financial problems', and he is frequently described as a 'fraudster' and 'criminal'. His criminal history has been closely investigated by the media and his misdemeanours are listed below:

- 1996 – A **lien**<sup>4</sup> for \$194,000 was filed against Nakoula's gas station for unpaid taxes, penalties, and interest dating from 1989 - 1992.
- 1997 – A \$106,000 **lien** was filed against him.
- 1997 – Nakoula was arrested by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department after he was found in possession of ephedrine, hydriodic acid, and \$45,000 in cash. (According to the 1989 Drug Enforcement Administration Statistical Reports, the most common method of

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<sup>3</sup> Pamela Geller is an American blogger, political activist, campaigner and commentator, notorious for her anti-Islam stance and vehement opposition to Muslim political activities and causes. Most recently she has commissioned posters for the New York subway that draw parallels between Muslims and savages. She and Robert Spencer co-founded the Freedom Defence Initiative and Stop Islamisation of America, an organization which is labelled as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Centre and Anti-Defamation League. She is considered by many to be the 'queen of the counter-jihad movement' – a term interchangeable with 'anti-Islam movement'.

<sup>4</sup> In law, a lien is a form of security interest granted over an item of property to secure the payment of a debt or performance of some other obligation. It is essentially the right to keep possession of property belonging to another person until a debt owed by that person is discharged.

manufacture of methamphetamine in the United States is the reduction of ephedrine with hydriodic acid and red phosphorus.) He was charged with **possession** of narcotics and **intent to manufacture** methamphetamine. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to one year in Los Angeles County Jail and three years probation.

- 1997 – He was allegedly fined for selling watered-down petrol.
- 2000 – He filed for **bankruptcy protection** owing several banks a total of \$166,500 but later failed to make payments under the bankruptcy plan.
- 2002 – According to the Los Angeles County District Attorney, Nakoula **violated his terms of probation** from his 1997 conviction and was re-sentenced to another year in county jail.
- 2006 – A \$191,000 **tax lien** was filed against him.
- June 6<sup>th</sup> 2010 – This was the date Nakoula first caught Pamela Geller’s eye when he attended her Stop the Islamisation of America (SIOA) ‘D-Day’ rally in Lower Manhattan. Since then he has spoken at the 2010 and 2011 rallies held by Geller on 11<sup>th</sup> September both years.
- 2010 – Nakoula pleaded no contest to federal charges of **bank fraud** in California. He had opened bank accounts using fake names and stolen Social Security numbers, including one belonging to a six-year-old child. The prosecutor described the scheme as **check kiting**: ‘You try to get the money out of the bank before the bank realizes they are drawn from a fraudulent account. There basically is no money’. Nakoula’s June 2010 sentencing transcript shows that after being arrested, he testified against an alleged ring leader of the fraud scheme in exchange for a lighter sentence. He was sentenced to 21 months in federal prison, five years probation, and ordered to pay \$794,701 in restitution. He was released from custody in June 2011 and a few weeks later began working on *'The Innocence of Muslims'*.
- 2012 – He was arrested for **violation of his bail conditions** from the 2010 conviction. Conditions of Nakoula's probation included not using aliases and he was barred from using computers or the internet for five years without prior approval from his probation officer. He had eight probation violations, including using aliases and the internet without permission and authorities have said he may face new charges that carry a maximum two-year prison term. Nakoula will remain incarcerated until a secondary hearing where a judge



will rule if he broke the terms of his probation; the Judge said she was detaining him because 'the court has a lack of trust in the defendant'. She explained that he has engaged in a lengthy pattern of deception in a variety of situations' and that he poses 'a danger to the community'. His case was pending at the time of writing.

## Steve Klein

A recurrent anecdote suggests 'Sam Bacile' is a pseudonym used by Steve Klein, an active member of the so-called '[counter-jihad](#)' movement with links to the extreme Christian Right and militia groups. Although 'Bacile' has since been unmasked as Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, Steve Klein played a central role in the film's proliferation and acted as its spokesperson. According to news sources, Nakoula contacted Klein as a result of his anti-Islam pedigree and his wealth of knowledge, defined by Klein in rather convoluted fashion as 'political science of the founding fathers centring on Anglo-American law and implementing first amendment educational outreaches – educating the general public about the biblical, Anglo-American basis of our charter documents'. Prior to the film's release, Nakoula asked Klein for help with vetting the film's script and advice concerning the limits of American free speech. (The advice allegedly given was: 'Lady Gaga can wear meat, you can make crazy movies'.) Klein also claims credit for inspiring Nakoula to produce '*Innocence*' and claims he promised him that he would achieve global notoriety and become the next Theo van Gogh – 'we went into this knowing this was probably going to happen'. He - -is listed as a consultant for the film, as well as being its spokesperson and promoter

Many believe Klein has abused his right of free speech enshrined under the First Amendment and has deliberately tried to incite violence nor accept any responsibility for the deaths that have occurred since. Klein meanwhile portrays himself as a victim and a hero and claims the amount of death threats he has received requires him to have a contingent of FBI body guards and a loaded gun in every room of his house – 'I am not afraid and if these people tried to kill me they would not be the first. I sleep with a 12 gauge shotgun by me and my wife sleeps with a 38-calibre pistol next to her'. The Southern Poverty Law Centre's Hate Watch organisation has been monitoring Klein for several years and has labelled two of the organizations he is affiliated with as hate groups.

### Profile

**Name:** Steven (Steve) Klein

**Role in '*The Innocence of Muslims*':** Consultant and spokesperson.

**Age:** Born in 1950, 61 years old.

**Family:** Married his wife Lorraine in 1970. He has one son and one daughter.

**Location:** Hemet, California.

**Occupation:** Insurance salesman and owner of Wise Home Insurance Services. He describes himself as 'a failed real estate investor who lost 20 properties in the recession'.

**Ethnicity:** White, American born.

**Faith:** Born-again Christian.

**Authored:** Is Islam Compatible with the Constitution? and The Invisible Empire of Saudi Arabia in America.

**Key links:** Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, Robert Spencer, Pamela Geller, Gary Cass (co-founder of the Christian Anti-Defamation Commission with General William S. Hollis), Joseph Nasralla Abdelmasih, Andrew Saqib James and David “Dutch” Johnson (aka Dutch Joens), who leads the Church of Kaweah’s militia.

### ***Anti-Islam activism***

Klein is very outspoken in his opposition of Islam and has a history of anti-Muslim activism dating back several decades. He is often referred to as a ‘hatermonger’. Below are some of the key events that have helped shape and strengthen his belief system and eventually led to his involvement in *'Innocence'*:

- From 1968-1977 he served on active duty in the US Marine Corps (USMC) and led a ‘hunter-killer’ team in Vietnam against the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army near Hamburger Hill. In an interview with Hagemann & Hagemann he claimed his experience of cell warfare in the USMC taught him how terrorist networks operate, which he likened to how ‘Muslim cells operate in America today’. In 2007, Klein’s son Matthew, a medic in the US Army, was seriously injured in Iraq by a suicide bomber, which only fuelled his father’s animosity towards all Muslims. Klein equates Islam with barbarity and terrorism and believes Muslims ‘have no choice but to hunt Jews and Christians down, torture [them] and kill [them]’.
- In 1977 he founded, and became an honorary board member of the Utah-based **Courageous Christians United (CCU)** – an organisation which promotes anti-Catholic, anti-Mormon, anti-gay and anti-Muslim literature on its website. The organisation conducts ‘respectful confrontations’ outside mosques, Mormon temples and abortion clinics.<sup>5</sup>
- After 9/11 in 2001, Klein ‘immersed [himself in] Islam in America – [he] went to every major mosque in Southern California...and uncovered useful information about many mosques

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<sup>5</sup> However, on September 14<sup>th</sup> 2012, Rob Sivulka the President of CCU posted this statement on the group’s website: ‘We at Courageous Christians United (CCU) had no knowledge of the film "*The Innocence of Muslims*" or Steve Klein's involvement in it until September 12, 2012. Steve was removed from the board of CCU as of September 14, 2012 because of his involvement in this film. As the founder of CCU, Steve was an honorary board member, but he has never been to any of our board meetings. In 2006, when I wanted to form my own non-profit corporation, Steve gave me CCU, which he was no longer using. Steve also does not, or ever has, run any of our web sites. Steve was in no way acting on behalf of our mission organization in the production of the video. While both Steve and the film maker have a right to express their views, that doesn't mean that we here at CCU endorse this movie as a good means to convey the truth about Islam. In fact, we find this film reprehensible and irresponsible and serving primarily to provoke a violent response.’

being the head-quarters of terrorism in America...and identified 500-700 of these people who are future suicide bombers and murderers'. This venture provided the groundwork for his campaign to stop the construction of mosques in his area on the twisted belief that their existence would bring in Sharia Law to California.

- In 2002 Klein ran for the Californian Insurance Commissioner under the **American Independent Party**, which is a right-wing political party linked to the militia movement. (He received a paltry 2% of the vote.)
- July 2011 saw Klein (in conjunction with Joseph Nasralla), organise a rally calling for the decommissioning of LA County Sheriff Lee Baca as he believed him to be part of a Hamas sleeper-cell. Klein believes America has been infiltrated by those 'who are awaiting the trigger date and will begin randomly killing as many of us as they can.' This rally was heavily promoted on Robert Spencer's anti-Islam website, Jihad Watch.
- Klein founded the **Concerned Citizens for the First Amendment (CCFA)** – an anti-Muslim group whose primary initiative is to warn high school students that they are being brainwashed by Islam via lessons on Islamic history. It has been designated a hate-group by the Southern Poverty Law Centre, and it is telling that they are not a department of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) – an organisation that 'defends and preserves the individual rights and liberties that the Constitution and laws of the United States guarantee everyone [in America]'.
- In 2011 he posted the following statement on his Facebook page Altar or Abolish: 'We are a country at war and the enemy is among us...it's a fight to the death and we should be as prepared as possible...I know I'm getting prepared to shoot back'. The accompanying picture depicted a white American family with a tank turret attached to the roof of their car, and Klein had added his own caption: 'Can you direct us to the nearest mosque?'
- He has links to the **Church at Kaweah**, a militant evangelical church located on the outskirts of Fresno that the Southern Poverty Law Centre describes as 'a combustible mix of guns, extreme anti-government policies and religious extremism'. The Church was founded in 1963 but since the 1990s has become increasingly radicalised after Warren Lee Campbell, its founding pastor and father of the current pastor, decreed that churches should reject all forms of secular regulation and answer solely to God. Kaweah has since hosted paramilitary training groups and forged links with white supremacists, border vigilantes, and neo-Confederates who aspire to turn America into a theocracy based on the Old Testament. Klein has spoken at conferences held in Kaweah's grounds on the subject of Islam and runs

drills there with the **Christian Guardians**. Based in San Francisco, the Guardians are run by Andrew Saqib James; an American-born Pakistani Christian who defines Islam as ‘a giant crime syndicate’ and hopes his organisations will become the ‘most feared militia in the world’. Klein states: ‘I look at life as ceaseless spiritual warfare ending only in a noble death for King Jesus – and I conduct myself as if it is spiritual warfare, using the skills of the USMC to resist evil with good.’

- In 2011 Klein worked with the Californian-based **Christian Anti-Defamation Commission (CADC)**, an anti-gay and anti-Muslim organisation whose mission statement ironically describes itself as the ‘first line of response to anti-Christian defamation, bigotry, and discrimination’. On the anniversary of 9/11, the group published an online article ‘Protect your children from the lies of Islam’, followed two weeks later by ‘Muhammad: The Criminal Womanizer’, which stated ‘today [Muhammad] would be arrested, convicted, imprisoned and possibly executed. He would definitely be registered as a sex offender’. The Commission also produces volumes of material designed to ‘arm students with the truth about Islam and Mohammad’, including leaflets depicting him as a paedophile, which Klein distributes around Californian high schools. These leaflets have led to fighting amongst students, a reaction Klein appeared to relish: ‘If the kids are willing to fight, that’s because they realize how dangerous Islam is’.
- Klein and Cass also work together, alongside Joseph Nasralla Abdelmasih, on the ‘**9/11 Defend Our Students**’ campaign, which is the sister organisation to the Christian Anti-Defamation Commission. The campaign promises to ‘defend the Students of America from the propaganda of Islam by telling the truth about Mohammed and his radical disciples’, and the website hosts articles with titles such as ‘“Unholy War” Christians under attack by Muslims in the UK’ and ‘Radical Islam Infiltrates Florida Public School’. In December 2011 the first coast-to-coast outreach project was launched, targeting Blanche Ely High School in Pompano Beach, Florida and Norco High School in California. Teams of ‘Christian patriots’ distributed hundreds of flyers depicting the ‘truth’ about Muhammad that reached approximately 6,000 students. I believe the flyer in question is one of the most shocking, disturbing and inflammatory that has been distributed in schools or even on the Internet. (<http://www.defendstudents.org/wp-content/uploads/PompanoBeachFlyer.pdf>)
- Steve Klein hosts a weekly satellite television show called ‘**Wake Up America**’ which is broadcast on The Way TV (a Christian channel in English and Arabic) and Christian radio. Klein uses this show as a vehicle for his anti-Islam message. On 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012 he told his listeners: ‘I hate Islam... I don’t ever want to see it again’. According to public records, The Way TV shares the same address in Duarte, California as Media for Christ. Both are run by Joseph Nasralla Abdelmasih who is listed as Chief Executive Officer for each company and

President of Media for Christ (although he is listed as Joseph N. Abdelmasih).<sup>6</sup> According to the L.A. County Sheriff's Department, 'Media for Christ took out a film permit for the production [*The Innocence of Muslims*]...It was filmed in Santa Clarita'.

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<sup>6</sup> Kamal Rizk of Raleigh, N.C. is listed as Vice President and CPA, and Rania W. Mossad is the Secretary.

## Joseph Nasralla Abdelmasih

Nakoula Basseley Nakoula and Steve Klein are widely believed to be the main culprits involved in the production and proliferation of the film *'The Innocence of Muslims'*. However, the name Joseph Nasralla is also frequently invoked and he is a well-known Egyptian expatriate and part of the American 'counter-jihad movement'.

Nasralla says he was contacted in 2011 by Nakoula Basseley Nakoula with a proposition to make a film about the persecution of Christians in Egypt. However, he has since tried to distance himself from the film and minimise his role in its creation by claiming that Nakoula lied to him and that he had been duped on several counts. Firstly he professes he was told by Nakoula that the film would be called 'Desert Warrior' and would 'examine the culture of the desert and how it is related to what is going on right now'. Therefore he offered Nakoula the use of his studio 'Media For Christ' for 10 days and claims that was the extent of his involvement in the film – 'employees were given a vacation during that time, because Nakoula was using the facility and so there was no work for them.' Nasralla then claimed that Media For Christ's name was used by Nakoula in promotion work without his knowledge or permission and that parts of the film were edited afterwards without MFC's involvement. Nasralla posted on Pamela Geller's blog that he was a victim of 'disinformation and smear' and Bishop Serapion of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Los Angeles said 'he denied completely any involvement'.

Nasralla is a well-known activist in the counter-jihad movement and according to Al-Ahram, the most prominent newspaper in Egypt, he makes up one third of the 'dark triangle behind the film'. The newspaper also defines Nasralla as the second most hated man in Egypt, (only behind Father Zakaria Boutros, who openly debates and critiques Islamic doctrine). Al-Ahram reported how, '200 people besieged his family's home in Giza to kill his mother and his two brothers' and Nasralla himself has referred to receiving 'numerous' death threats.

Despite this, neither Nasralla, nor Media For Christ are a focus of anti-hate groups or law enforcement officials who monitor extremists (in direct contrast to Steve Klein).

### Profile

**Name:** Joseph Nasralla Abdelmasih

**Variations:** Joseph of Arcadia, Joseph Nassralla, Joseph Nasrallah, Joseph N. Abdelmasih.

**Role in *'Innocence of Muslims'*:** Provided the studio where parts of *'Innocence'* were filmed. However, since the backlash began he has tried to distance himself and his company from the film. An official at Media for Christ said the charity was not connected to the film and was upset by its controversial content. The same day, an associate who served as a script consultant told the media that Nasralla 'had nothing to do with it'.

**Location:** Duarte, California (he has since gone into hiding).

**Occupation:** Founder and CEO of Coptic Christian charity Media For Christ (MFC), located at Blue Cloud studios in Santa Clarita. MFC is registered as a business entity with Nasralla listed as the ‘agent for service of processes’. MFC’s Guidestar entry describes it thus: ‘Media for Christ’ is a non-denominational evangelical Christian organization providing spiritual aid to people worldwide through its web site and its satellite TV station, the Way TV. Media for Christ also provides humanitarian assistance to needy people. Media for Christ’s slogan is “I am the way and the truth and the life.””

**Ethnicity:** Egyptian born.

**Faith:** Coptic Christian (often referred to as a Coptic Zionist).

**Links:** Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, Steve Klein, Pamela Geller, Morris Sadek, Karam El Masry, Robert Spencer, Eric Alan Bell.

### ***MFC’s links to ‘The Innocence of Muslims’***

- It has been suggested that Media For Christ arranged the logistics for *'The Innocence of Muslims'* as the permit required for the ‘Sam Bacile’ production was filed by a representative of the company. The film permit cost \$1,100 and an LA Public Affairs Office spokesman said it included descriptions of minor special effects sequences but no film synopsis. (The permit is unavailable for reproduction as it includes the names and addresses of several parties involved in the film’s technical production who would probably have had no direct involvement in the script or acting.)
- *The New York Times* revealed a production call sheet confirmed that some of the scenes from *'The Innocence of Muslims'* were filmed inside MFC’s Duarte headquarters. According to the sheet, in August 2011 11 actors shot a desert scene by using a green screen at broadcast studios MFC rents in an office park near the 210 Freeway.
- Before the trailer was dubbed into Arabic and uploaded to YouTube, it was allegedly premiered in a Hollywood cinema.<sup>7</sup> During May and June, the Anaheim-based Arab World newspaper advertised the screening of *'The Innocence of Bin Laden'* at a local theatre.<sup>8</sup> An employee of the paper said a man who introduced himself as Joseph paid \$300 for the ad to run three times. This earlier version of the film was screened at the Vine Theatre on June 23 2012 to an audience of around 10 people. An employee of the theatre confirmed it was a ‘small viewing’.

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<sup>7</sup> There are conflicting opinions as to whether this took place.

<sup>8</sup> Steve Klein explained the title was chosen to lure Muslims to the cinema so ‘when they came in they would see the movie and see the truth, the facts, the evidence and the proof’ and convert accordingly.



- The money trail provides an interesting insight that shows how Media For Christ was involved in a production much larger than its usual output during 2010/2011, (when *'Innocence of Muslims'* was originally created). Form 990, entitled 'Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax', is available on the National Centre for Charitable Statistics site and reveals that income increased from \$65,000 in 2007 to over \$1000,000 in 2011. The latest available 990 showed a 'program expense' of \$10,500 dollars for 'TV broadcast' in Egypt. These statistics, combined with other factors linking the production company to Nakoula and Steve Klein, provide circumstantial evidence that MFC produced *'The Innocence of Muslims'*.

### ***Anti-Islam activism***

- June 6 2010 – Nasralla attended SIOA's (Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer's group, Stop the Islamisation of America) 'D-Day Rally' in front of the proposed Islamic centre – Park 51 – in lower Manhattan. Park51 is a large multi-purpose Islamic community centre that includes a Muslim prayer space able to accommodate 1,000–2,000 people. Due to its location only several blocks from the World Trade Centre site, it has been referred to as the 'Ground Zero mosque' by opponents, although numerous commentators have argued that it is neither a mosque nor at Ground Zero. The 2010 rally was the first time Geller became aware of Nasralla. In a letter addressed to Geller and Spencer following the rally, Nasralla described himself as a refugee from 'the oppression of Islam' and said that he sought to "expose to the American public what kind of instigation we [Coptic Christians] suffered at the hands of hateful Muslim preachers...'
- September 11 2010 – As a result of making contact with Spencer and Geller, Nasralla spoke at SIOA's anti-mosque rally in New York, which was also attended by Morris Sadek and Karam El Masry. Nasralla criticised Islamic violence against Christians in Egypt and spoke in opposition of plans to build a mosque near the former World Trade Centre site in New York (referenced above). He began his speech by saying, 'Wake up, America!' and continued with, 'this mosque will be built over my dead body'. After the rally Geller said of him: 'He [is] a Coptic Christian who spoke against the brutal oppression, subjugation and persecution of Coptic Christians under the Sharia in Egypt...Joseph Nasralla spoke at our 911 Ground Zero mosque rallies. He is a champion of human rights'. (It is interesting to note that at one point during the rally, a proportion of the crowd surged towards Nasralla and El Masry, who had been speaking Arabic and angrily shouted 'go home' and 'get out'. They had been mistaken for Muslims, whom some members of the crowd wrongly believed had come to sabotage the demonstration.)
- September 11 2011 – Nasralla returned the following year to speak at the same rally. His speech began: 'All of Egypt was having a lot of peace. They were having a very good life until

Islam came with the sword, and they [Muslims] kill my people. That's what is happening right now in America'. Geller posted a video of this speech on her blog Atlas Shrugs.

- 2011 – Nasralla participated in Steve Klein and Gary Cass' anti-Muslim student outreach effort, '911 Defend Our Students'. In December 2011 they targeted high schools in Florida and California, distributing offensive flyers 'revealing the 'truth' about the Prophet Muhammad (see Klein section).
- June 2012 – Nasralla attended the 'Summer Night for Human Rights' evening, hosted by Robert Spencer and Pamela Geller's organisations, the American Freedom Defence Initiative (AFDI), Former Muslims United (FMU) and SIOA. Geller stated she had organized 'numerous apostates from Islam to speak about the death sentence they must live under every moment because they have dared to leave Islam'. [Eric Alan Bell](#) was also in attendance and on her blog, Pamela Geller includes a photograph of herself and Nasralla and one of Bell sitting in the audience.

## Morris Sadek

Morris Sadek is a well-known anti-Islam campaigner from Egypt. Early reports suggested Sadek had made the film (this has since been proved as untrue). In an interview with Bikyamasr.com last year he stated that his 'enemy is the God of Islam', which led the website to describe him as one of the most hated men in Egypt. He openly speaks of his support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his frequent anti-Muslim displays and calls for war led to him being banned from entering Egypt and the revocation of his Egyptian citizenship in May 2011.

Coptic Solidarity organization officials have condemned Sadek's anti-Muslim activities and the Coptic Church released a statement via an Egyptian website, distancing itself from Sadek and condemning what it said were moves by some Christian Copts living abroad 'to finance the production of a film insulting Prophet Mohammad'. Speaking from Switzerland, Medhat Klada, a representative of Coptic Christian organizations in Europe, said Sadek's views were not representative of expatriate Copts. 'He is an extremist ... We don't go down this road. He has incited the people (in Egypt) against Copts...We refuse any attacks on religions because of a moral position.' Much like Steve Klein, Sadek has not tried to excuse or apologise for his behaviour, and merely stated: 'The violence that it caused in Egypt is further evidence of how violent the religion and people are and it is evidence that everything in the film is factual'.

Before Sadek's Facebook account was deactivated, it showed the extent of his anti-Muslim alliances and beliefs. He was a member of the following online groups, among others: Islam is of the Devil; Warriors of Christ; and Obama is the Worst President Ever. It also revealed Sadek to be a fan of the Republican Party, George Bush, Allen West and of a large number of Islamophobic, conservative institutions. He is a supporter of ACT! For America, which believes that President Obama has embraced the Muslim Brotherhood; he has also supported Michelle Bachmann in her anti-Muslim witch hunt against [Huma Abedin](#) and others.

### Profile

**Name:** Morris Sadek.

**Variations:** Maurice Sadek, Morris Sadik.

**Role in '*Innocence of Muslims*':** Sadek translated the film into Arabic and promoted it heavily on his website 'Nacopticas', transforming it into a viral broadcast. He also sent a link to the film to Egyptian journalists and television stations.

**Age:** 70.

**Location:** Washington DC. He lives in America with religious refugee status.

**Occupation:** He regards himself as a human rights lawyer and activist and claims to have 'a license to practice law from Egypt and a consulting license from the US'. He is also the President of the Chantilly-based National American Coptic Assembly, a private company that has an estimated annual

revenue of \$97,000. This short biography can be found on his blog: 'Mr. Morris Sadek is one of Egypt's leading human rights advocates. He is President of the Egyptian Centre of Human Rights for National Unity in Cairo and President of National American Coptic Assembly in the USA. In October 1999, he became Advocates' Counsel for Middle East Affairs with a special focus on Egypt, as well as a Director of our International Institute for Law. He is a fearless scholar and a recognized expert in constitutional and human rights law.'

**Ethnicity:** Egyptian born.

**Faith:** Coptic Christian.

**Key Links:** Terry Jones, Brigitte Gabriel, Daniel Pipes, Michelle Bachmann, Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, Steve Klein.

### ***Involvement in 'The Innocence of Muslims'***

- Sadek gave the telephone number of 'Sam Bacile' to the Associated Press, which they used to locate him initially.
- September 4 2012 – Egyptian journalist Gamel Girgis, who writes for Egyptian daily newspaper al Youm al Sabaa, was the first individual contacted by Sadek in relation to the film. He described how Sadek had emailed him a link to a video: 'He told me he produced a movie last year and wanted to screen it on September 11<sup>th</sup> to reveal what was behind the terrorists' actions that day, Islam'. Girgis describes Sadek as a long-time source and claims that Sadek 'considers [him] the boldest journalist, the only one that would publish such stories'.
- Sadek was instrumental in the proliferation of the film as he translated it into Arabic and promoted it heavily on his website and across social media. He also posted Arabic articles online drawing attention to the film.
- September 5 2012 – He released the 14-minute trailer of the film on YouTube with Arabic subtitles.
- September 6 2012 – Sadek sent the same link to several other Egyptian journalists and television stations. He also told the Associated Press that he was promoting the video on certain television stations, although he did not identify them.

- September 15 2012 – McClatchy reported that Sadek’s phone call and emails to Girgis and Egyptian television stations had triggered the anti-American backlash against the *'The Innocence of Muslims'*.

### **Anti-Muslim Activism**

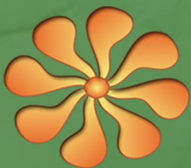
- 2010 – Sadek attended Brigitte Gabriel’s ACT! for America national conference. ACT! promotes the idea that Islam is a backward and subversive political ideology and that Muslim immigration to America must end. There are photographs of Sadek and Gabriel together at the event.
- Sadek has a working relationship with Qur’an-burning Pastor Terry Jones and has participated in demonstrations held by Jones and his church, the Dove World Outreach Centre. Sadek calls Jones a ‘Bible hero’ and voices his support for Jones’ mockery of the Prophet Muhammad on his website. One photograph on Sadek’s website shows himself and Terry Jones at a small anti-Islam protest outside the White House in June 2012.
- June 6 2010 – Sadek made a speech at a protest against the building of a mosque in lower Manhattan organised by Pamela Geller. Geller emailed Sadek a list of instructions about how he should present himself and what subject matter he should address and exclude. They included: ‘Don’t say or suggest that all Muslims are evil or terrorists...Don’t say or suggest that all mosques are planning grounds for jihad terrorism...If you do not adhere to these guidelines, your address will not help us achieve our goal. You will have helped the media portray the Rally as hateful, and will have just made the mosque Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf look good’.<sup>9</sup>
- September 11 2010 – At a Ground Zero rally organised by Geller and Spencer, Sadek was seen outside the National Press Building in Washington DC with a crucifix in one hand and a Bible an American flag in the other, shouting ‘Islam is evil!’ and ‘Islam is a cult religion!’
- September 11 2012 – Copts Today, an Arabic news outlet focusing on Coptic affairs, reported that Sadek had been surrounded by four angry Coptic women as he walked down Washington's M Street. They berated him for ‘fuelling the flames of sectarian violence’ and

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<sup>9</sup> The full email can be seen here: <http://theflowerthrowers.wordpress.com/2012/09/15/morris-sadeks-personal-invitation-to-stop-the-mosque-from-pam-geller/>

beat him with their high-heeled shoes, shouting, 'If anything happens to a Christian in Egypt, you'll be the reason!'

- Due to their virulent anti-Islamic displays and links to *'The Innocence of Muslims'*, the Egyptian government announced it had issued arrest warrants for 7 Coptic Christians and Florida-based pastor Terry Jones, (although it is already being viewed as a largely symbolic trial). As they are expatriates, the accused are unlikely to ever stand trial, but the aim of the prosecutor is to show Egyptians that they are moving forward in trying those they believe are responsible for the film. The warrants include Nakoula, Sadek and Terry Jones, who 'face charges of harming national unity, insulting and publicly attacking Islam and spreading false information'. A date for the trial has yet to be scheduled, but if convicted they could face the death penalty.



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