

I invited Abdullah Almalki to breakfast in Ottawa but he only took coffee. And while I wolfed down my all-English breakfast in the Chateau Laurier Hotel (beloved of Churchill and Karsh of Ottawa fame), he sipped gingerly at his cup with much on his mind. Snooped on by the Canadian secret service and then tortured in Syria while the Canadian authorities did nothing for him – save supplying his perverted torturers with questions – he had much to think about. A carbon copy of Binyam Mohamed, the British resident who had his penis cut up while the Brits sent questions to his perverted Moroccan torturers.

In Abdullah Almalki's case, he wasn't renditioned. He simply flew into Damascus to see his Syrian family, got banged up in the city's secret police headquarters and was then beaten into submission, not much different from an even more famous case – that of Maher Arar, who was a Canadian citizen and got renditioned to Damascus by the Americans while the US authorities sent questions to his perverted Syrian torturers. Arar has received apologies from US senators – though not from the war hero George Bush (battle honours: the skies over Texas during the Vietnam conflict) -- and compensation from the Canadian government.

The details of each case are shockingly similar. Tim Hancock of Amnesty International has supplied similar information on Khaled al-Maqtari, a Yemeni man, who was apparently threatened with rape and beaten in chains by his perverted American torturers. Western nations simply assisted the perverts by providing them with pages of questions while their citizens/residents lay in agony, wishing they had never been born.

In the case of Abdullah Almalki, four interrogations by the Canadian "secret service" (its acronym – CSIS – inspires more laughter than fear) preceded his departure from Canada and the collapse of his business and subsequent residence in Malaysia. He and his wife had run an electronic components export business in Ottawa which prompted CSIS's suspicions. Was he sending funds or components to "terrorists" (the quotation marks are, of course, obligatory since CSIS was not worried about the "terrorists" who run the Syrian secret service and who were later to torture Abdullah Almalki on Canada's behalf).

For months, he was held in a secret service hellhole in Damascus and whipped with steel while the Syrians acted upon a Canadian letter to them (dated 4 October 2001) which stated that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were suggesting that Mr Almalki was linked through association with al-Qa'ida and engaged in activities that posed an "imminent threat" to the public safety and security of Canada. Readers who doubt this outrageous letter to the Syrian dictatorship can check page 400 of the Iacobucci report which was drawn up with government assistance after Almalki's release. The RCMP – the famous Mounties – also sent letters to Canadian government liaison officers in Islamabad, Rome, Delhi, Washington, London, Berlin and Paris, identifying Almalki as an "important member" of al-Qa'ida. For more information, you must read Kerry Pither's brilliant account, *Dark Days: The Story of Four Canadians Tortured in the Name of Fighting Terror*, which is scandalously unavailable in Britain.

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