



Written by [Becky Akers](#) on November 10, 2010

## Khadr's Coerced Confession

Imagine you pull into your drive after work to find the beagle from next door dying on your lawn, victim of a hit-and-run. You climb out of your car only to have the neighbor jump you and jam a gun in your ear. "Admit you killed Snoopy," he screams, "or I'll shoot!" Who can resist persuasion like that? You prudently "confess," but any rational person dismisses what you say under such duress.

Unless your neighbor works for the American government. Then a surprising number of folks believe in magic as coerced lies become true.

Omar Khadr, Canada's "teen terrorist," recently agreed to [five charges the United States' government levied against him](#). In return, the Feds will release him to Canadian custody next year from their notorious gulag in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. That rescues him from Gitmo's "interrogators" and their torture. Yet few folks acknowledge this as [they gloat over Omar's conceding](#) that he's as bad as the U.S. alleges. They damn him as a confirmed terrorist — [a "psychopath" and "murderer"](#) — merely because the U.S. government really, really wishes he were.

Actually, what the Feds allege isn't bad to anyone but neocons and politicians. [Omar is a Canadian citizen](#) whose family raised him in Canada, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. His father was a friend and financier to Osama bin Laden; that has many Westerners shrugging at Omar's travails — as if there's nothing abhorrent about punishing a child for his parent's deeds. Omar was 15 in 2002 when [his father allowed him to travel with an associate, Abu Laith al-Libi, as a translator](#).

Like Osama himself, al-Libi once upon a time was an American ally: [he battled the Soviet Union when it invaded Afghanistan](#) in the 1980s. But later, when the mujahideen insisted they had been fighting for Moslem autonomy, [not American interests in oil and pipelines](#), the Feds redefined them as terrorists. ("It looks like after we have removed the Russian Empire, we'll have to end up removing also the American Empire," Omar's father once observed.) Yep, keep a scorecard, because imperial America's "allies" swap places with "terrorists" at dizzying speed. Former accomplices who seriously tick off our rulers may even find themselves sporting a noose, à la the late Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Khadr died in 2002, but that doesn't stop commentators from excoriating him for permitting Omar





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to accompany al-Libi. Would they also condemn Mr. Andrew Jackson, whose 13-year-old [namesake joined a rebellion against an earlier empire](#)?

Al-Libi and Omar eventually wound up at a farm in Afghanistan where a handful of men the U.S. government derides as “militants” (and Afghans no doubt call “patriots”) had gathered, just as U.S. troops attacked. [They bombed the farm](#), rained grenades on it, and, when it was over, [shot the only two survivors](#). One was a man already wounded in the firefight who obligingly and immediately died. The other was Omar.

During the bombardment, shrapnel hit Omar’s eyes and permanently blinded the left one. According to experts in these sorts of things, [he was likely concussed from the bombing](#) if not immobilized under debris. Yet the Feds contend he lobbed a grenade at this point, killing an American soldier named Christopher Speer.

Let’s pretend that Omar emerged unscathed from the massacre, could see to locate a grenade, and threw it at invading soldiers. That’s war. Throughout history, governments by mutual consent have given a pass to combatants defending themselves on a battlefield. Until now. The Feds insist Omar murdered Sgt. Speer.

There’s another problem with this unprecedented accusation. Americans outside the farm [covered their cohorts reconnoitering inside with grenades](#). It’s almost impossible to determine who hurled the one that killed Sgt. Speer, and it’s completely impossible to do so beyond that famous “reasonable doubt.”

Meanwhile, someone also shot the blinded Omar. An American matter-of-factly claimed he did, twice, in the back. But the [Pentagon suppressed his account](#) until 2008. Then an official inadvertently leaked it, directly contradicting the previous story of troops firing at Omar’s chest when he brandished a gun.

The boy’s treatment after capture didn’t improve. Our rulers imprisoned him at Gitmo as an “enemy combatant.” This totally unconstitutional, politically convenient category allows the Feds to play games with words and men’s lives by denying that prisoners of war are in fact prisoners of war. The prize? Since “combatants” aren’t POWs, the Feds may ignore international treaties and inflict such atrocities as torture.

Like the other inmates at Gitmo, Omar suffered “short-shackling” with chains that immobilized him in agonizing positions for hours, beatings, [threats of gang-rape](#), deprivation of sleep, and deliberate humiliation (guards refused him use of the latrine, then forced him to wear the clothing he soiled for days). Nor could prisoners snared in “enemy-combatant” limbo hope for release: not only did the US resist charging and trying them for years, it may well prolong its amorphous but oh-so-profitable War on Terror for decades. The despair [drove some of Gitmo’s victims to suicide](#) despite the Quran’s stern prohibition.

The U.S. finally decreed that “enemy combatants” would face “military tribunals” rather than genuine trials. Tribunals tidily keep everything in house: [the military prosecutes the accused](#) (who’s almost always a demonized “enemy”) before military officers on charges the military concocts. No wonder most folks denounce such biased proceedings as kangaroo courts.

Rather than submit to this travesty after eight years of Gitmo’s hell – and risk spending the rest of his life there — Omar accepted a plea deal. Such bargaining has become a staple of American injustice; it hustles cases through clogged courts in a nation where thousands of laws manufacture millions of “criminals” — all while enhancing politicians’ reputations (“Re-elect A. Fierce Esquire as County Prosecutor. He’s tough on crime, with 5000 convictions last year alone!”). But plea deals replace justice



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with corruption, lies, and cynicism. And so Omar “confessed” to “crimes” he couldn’t have committed — including a charge of espionage though Americans have imprisoned him since he was 15 - in exchange for transfer to Canadian prison.

The Feds coerced Omar to admit that he’s a terrorist, spy, and murderer. But extortion cannot make it so. And though our taxes support Omar’s railroading as well as thousands of others’, our beliefs never should.

The more government insists on a man’s guilt, the more you can bet he’s innocent.

**Becky Akers**, an expert on the American Revolution, writes frequently about issues related to security and privacy. Her articles and columns have been published by *Lewrockwell.com*, *The Freeman*, *Military History Magazine*, *American History Magazine*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *New York Post*, and other publications.



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