

# THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

## Worksheet for Mubin Shaikh | Up Close with an Undercover Jihadi (Episode 261)

**Mubin Sheikh** is a Canadian intelligence (CSIS) agent who infiltrated and successfully foiled a crazy terror plot in which a group known as The Toronto 18 planned to hold Parliament hostage and behead the Prime Minister. Before that, he was a radical himself, even traveling to Syria to do a deep dive into hard-line Islam.

**On this episode** we follow Mubin on his journey from average Canadian teenager to radical Islamic militant, all the way to undercover counter-terror agent, and get a glimpse into the world of online terror recruiting and radical extremism. We discuss the factors that go into someone's radicalization, what to look out for when you suspect a loved one may be going through a process of radicalization, and why radicalization isn't *a/ways* a bad thing.

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## Who You Callin' Radical, Dude?

“Radicalization is the normal human psychological process whereby people become increasingly extreme in their views,” says Mubin. “It is a process, and the end of that process is that you become an extremist. You accept that violence or violent acts in the public space are acceptable. And if you act on that, then you’re a violent extremist. You could have a process of radicalization which does not end in violence, and then you could have what is called violent radicalization, or you could have gone through a process of violent radicalization, which does end in violence. The process whereby people become increasingly extreme in their views.

“We don’t want to make the implication that radicalization equals violent. Just like radicals that we know even in our popular culture. You know, Martin Luther King Jr., he was radicalized. He was a radical in that sense. He wasn’t violent. Then you’ll have others who have crazy ideas, and they’ll just promote those ideas, but they won’t actually act on them.”

**Do you know anyone who fits into one of these definitions of “radical?” With this understanding of the term, might you consider yourself radical on some level?**

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## Who Gets Radicalized?

Mubin tells us that violent radicalization can happen to anyone from any background, and that one or more of these factors usually play into the process: geopolitics or ideology, money, adventure, and frustration.

“Basically, there are always a multiplicity of factors,” says Mubin. “There’s a great quote by Peter Neumann. He’s the founder of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, that says ‘Ideology without grievances doesn’t resonate, and grievances without ideology are not acted upon.’ Another quote that’s mine is, ‘Sometimes religious ideology is indeed a driver for violent extremism. But at other times, just a passenger with other psychosocial factors at the wheel.’ And so that will include then your sense of meaning and belonging. The geopolitics falls under the grievances, the wars that are happening in different lands. Because people ask, ‘Why do they hate us?’ Well, you’ve been bombing them for decades and decades. You’re destroying their societies. So what do you think is going to emerge from those societies if not extremist thinking? So these are the things they relate to and why I put poverty, for example, people say sometimes poverty is a factor, other times it’s not a factor. What you’ve got to look at is every individual in their context and look at every factor relative to that individual in that context. Ideology could be prevalent for some people and it’d just be a secondary factor for somebody else or for some other people.”

**If someone were to attempt to radicalize you toward their cause, which of these factors would be most influential in swaying you closer? Geopolitics or ideology? Money? Adventure? Frustration? What can you do to safeguard yourself against exploitation of these vulnerabilities?**

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## That Doesn't Jive

“9/11 happened,” says Mubin. “It was Tuesday morning and I was driving to work. I heard a plane hit the building...and then just the events of that day, watching it on TV, everybody kind of sharing in that collective trauma. And then later that day going to see the bad friends that I was hanging out with, because I had left the group that I was initially with and then kind of came back and joined up with more extreme, more politically vocal, what they call Salafists or Wahhabis. They were just a lot more in tune with the geopolitical situation. I remember my friend asked, ‘I understand fighting the cause in combat; how do you justify flying planes into buildings? These are not combatants. These are not military targets,’ and there was a pause. And it’s never just one moment, but that was a moment that really struck me because the guy paused, trying to come up with an answer, and then ended up saying, ‘Well, they’re all infidels anyway, so it doesn’t matter.’ And then both my friend and I, we turned to each other with that, ‘Mmm, that doesn’t jive’ [look].”

**Think of a cause or position in which you’re strongly invested on an emotional level. It could be a political affiliation, religion, sports team, brand, or anything over which people disagree. What would have to happen for you to drop or switch your allegiance to this cause or position? What would be your “That doesn’t jive” moment?**

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## Who You Gonna Call?

When we suspect our family or friends might be in the sights of an extremist recruiter, what can we look out for?

“Sudden changes in behavior are the biggest warning sign — especially extreme changes,” says Mubin. “Now just because your daughter comes home with a hijab or your son decides he’s going to convert and wants to grow a beard, that in and of itself is not a sign of extremism. You have to look at clusters of behaviors. When you start looking at unequivocal black and white thinking, especially where you begin to demonize others, so it’s like believers and disbelievers and kuffar. It’s like you’re really demonizing people who don’t believe in your religion, right? It’s something to say, ‘Oh, they don’t believe in my religion; we have a difference,’ versus ‘Anyone who does not believe what I believe is going to Hell.’ Now even that, that’s like you could say that’s extreme conservative thinking. So let’s look at more clusters and really, ideology is going to be a big kicker in that. As soon as you start to justify or sympathize with certain activities or certain actions that are saying, ‘Well, this is okay what they’re doing because...’ Now you’re starting to get into sympathy, and then that starts to lead into membership. You might obviously look to see, ‘Hmm, is this person carrying around ISIS paraphernalia? Or is it Al-Qaeda paraphernalia?’ or ‘I don’t even know what that is; who do I call?’”

**“So if I can just give a quick shout-out and open plug in to a group called Parents for Peace. They are at [parents4rpeace.org](https://parents4rpeace.org). There is a line for parents, a 1-800 number that they can call, where there are people that will actually talk to you. There is some assistance in that regard for that. Like I said, ideology is the big one. Look to see what sect that they are either converting to or something along those lines and that will be a good start in terms of seeing what your kid is actually up to. Because the last thing you want is the FBI basically breaking down your door and hauling your kid out.”**

*Full show notes and resources for this episode [can be found here.](#)*

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## About



Join us as we get deep into the untapped wisdom of the world's top performers – from legendary creators to intelligence operatives, iconoclastic writers to visionary change-makers.

We deconstruct the playbooks of the most successful people on earth – and learn new strategies, perspectives, and insights you can't find anywhere else. Then, take these valuable insights into your own life and live what you listen.

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