

ORANGE COUNTY

JOURNAL

Attorney

Volume 133, 2017
\$6.95

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THE PROBLEM SOLVER

Scientist, Engineer, CIA Partner, FBI Advisor, and High-Profile Trial Lawyer
Omar Siddiqui is Who Individuals, Businesses, and Even the Federal
Government Turn to for Solutions to Complex Problems

by Jennifer Hadley

BY any measure, Omar A. Siddiqui, Partner at Ulwelling | Siddiqui LLP, is frankly... fascinating. As a scientist, engineer, trial lawyer and advisor to both the FBI and the CIA, suffice it to say, Siddiqui has indeed fulfilled his childhood dream of becoming a “Renaissance Man.”

Siddiqui explains, “My childhood heroes were polymaths like Leonardo da Vinci and Benjamin Franklin. They were scientists, engineers, inventors, artists, and statesmen who mastered engineering and science, humanities and the arts. In their footsteps, I too wanted to be a millennial renaissance man—at the nexus of engineering/science and law.”

“Alternately, I wanted to be Darth Vader when I grew up, so this was the closest possible career choice,” he adds with a laugh.

It is precisely that quick humor, his mastery of both science and the law, coupled with a nearly palpable passion for championing the cause of the powerless, which have made Siddiqui such a successful trial attorney. “I absolutely love what I do. Every case is an adventure,” he says.

Not surprisingly, his enthusiasm, backed by intelligent expertise, and complemented by subtle wit, has led him to win millions of dollars for his clients, all the while earning him a spot as a frequent expert for multiple media outlets. Moreover, the invaluable assistance he’s provided to both the CIA and FBI, has earned him reverence from both agencies, for serving as both a community partner and Muslim-American liaison, on the front lines of national defense and counter-terrorism efforts. Yet, to hear Siddiqui tell it, his esteemed career can all be traced to a single mission: to solve problems for others through a steadfast pursuit of truth.

PURSUIT OF TRUTH

Siddiqui was born to an immigrant father who came to America in the 1950s from Pakistan via the Queen Mary.

Seeking a higher education, his father would go on to become a prominent engineer, all the while Siddiqui was growing up in Orange County, attending Sunny Hills High School, before completing his undergraduate and graduate degrees in Engineering at USC.

“It was a given that I would become an engineer, like my father. I wanted to be an engineer. In engineering, all efforts are geared towards finding one solid answer. Wherever you go in the world, math and science are constants, and engineering and science seek definitive answers in the search for truth,” he says. In fact, Siddiqui explains, even his name is representative of his pursuit for truth. “Siddiqui means ‘The Truthful’ in Arabic,” he says.

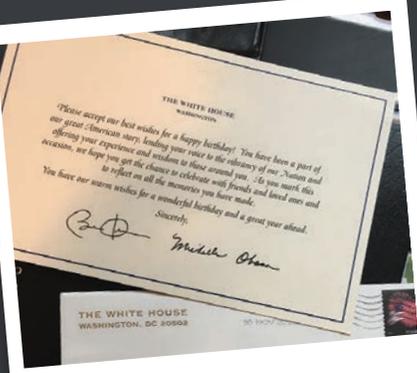
However, Siddiqui also fell in love with trial advocacy after spending time studying law at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles. Though he admits going directly from graduate school where he earned his Master of Science in Engineering, into law school was a bit of a challenge, he wouldn’t do anything differently.

“Law school was the complete opposite of engineering and science,” he says. “To become an attorney, I had to change my engineering mode of thinking, because unlike engineering the search for truth in law is subjective. There is often no one right answer to a legal problem. Ten different juries may come back with ten different verdicts,” Siddiqui explains. Yet, that’s precisely why Siddiqui decided to pursue law.

“A lot of lawyers shy away from math and science. I have always loved and embraced them—they are at play in nearly every practice area of law,” he says. Moreover, Siddiqui knew that he wanted to use his scientific background to support his mission: to champion the cause of the innocent, the powerless, and the helpless. He was afforded the opportunity to learn the courtroom skills necessary to do so through being accepted at



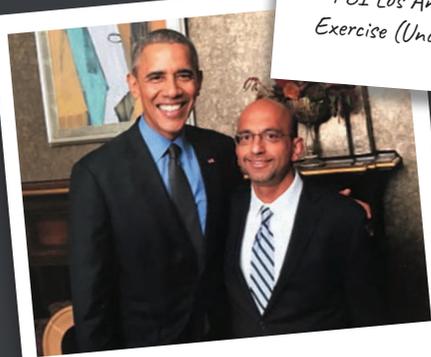
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Birthday wishes from President Barack Obama & First Lady Michelle Obama



FBI Los Angeles / U.S. Coast Guard Exercise (Unclassified) - San Diego, CA



Mr. Siddiqui with the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama.



Siddiqui, National Director Special Projects (FBI National Cit. Acad. Alumni Assoc.), at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA.



CIA Director John Brennan brainstorming international policy with CIA Community Partner/Advisor Siddiqui.

one of the nation's most renowned law schools.

"Being accepted at Loyola Law School, which is known for trial advocacy and litigation, and has produced Super Lawyers such as Johnny Cochran, Mark Geragos, Brian Kabateck, Tom Girardi, Gloria Allred, Robert Shapiro and countless judges, was a great honor," Siddiqui says. Upon graduation, he would begin cutting his teeth as an associate at the prominent Los Angeles litigation firm of Morris Polich & Purdy LLP.

Within just a few years, Siddiqui, a young associate at the time, found himself thrust into the media spotlight for his work on a highly-publicized case he brought to the firm, which incidentally, the firm wasn't exactly eager for him to tackle. All the same, in *DeSalvo v. Buca di Beppo*, Siddiqui saw an opportunity to help two models who had their images used in an outdoor ad campaign by the national restaurant chain and its advertising agency. Calling it a clear case of identity theft, Siddiqui's interest was immediately piqued.

"I promised one of the partners at the firm that I'd work on the case between the hours of midnight and six am, and that it wouldn't interfere with my other work," Siddiqui says. "This wasn't a typical type of case for the firm, but he supported me, even though we had to jump through some hoops," he says.

Trusting his gut paid off, as the jury returned a verdict in favor of the plaintiffs of more than \$277,000. In addition, the case thrust Siddiqui into the media spotlight with news outlets including the *Los Angeles Business Journal* and the *Daily Journal* covering the case extensively.

That case would not only put Siddiqui on the proverbial map as a powerful advocate, but it would also serve as the catalyst for his decision to launch his own firm. "Large law firms tend to follow a cookie cutter model in addressing legal problems, and can become entrenched in rigid rules and billable hours, leaving little room for creativity and emotion," Siddiqui says. As such in 2004, driven by a desire to fight for the powerless, wherever he was needed, Siddiqui gave up his secure position to forge his own way through partnering with a colleague to form Ulwelling | Siddiqui, LLP. "I had a vision of providing excellence and service to my clients, handling a wide range of matters from simple local business disputes to high-profile complex cases," he says.

PROBLEM SOLVING AS FIRM'S FOCUS

True to his vision, Siddiqui's firm focused on solving problems for those who needed his help, irrespective of the specific type of case. From entrepreneurs, large international corporations and Fortune 500 companies, to aspiring actors, models, stuntmen, rap artists, and Hollywood celebrities, saying that Siddiqui has a diverse book of clients is, at best, a gross understatement. He's served as counsel to mosques, churches, synagogues, along with club owners, liquor stores, and casinos. Ulwelling | Siddiqui, LLP has represented both plaintiffs and defendants including engineers, architects, accounting firms, doctors, dentists, international business executives, fellow attorneys, grocery store chains, and even judges.

“Our firm specializes in the art and science of trial advocacy and litigation. We have successfully tried cases involving business and corporate law, intellectual property, entertainment and sports, real estate, labor and employment, criminal defense, construction and professional liability and civil rights,” Siddiqui says. “With our unique background, we think differently. We understand our clients’ objectives and problems and find cost-effective solutions to those problems. We understand that each case is unique. While one matter may call for trial and complex litigation, another might best be resolved through a simple phone call. Our firm’s lawyers are trained to recognize and apply individualized solutions. We listen and we communicate clearly. We are prepared to serve as trial lawyers, advocates, counselors, defenders, or negotiators as the circumstances may warrant,” he explains.

By way of example, in another highly-publicized case, which was reported in USA Today, amongst others, Siddiqui represented a high-ranking LAPD captain, who was found to have hundreds of bootleg movie DVDs in her car and her home. She came to Siddiqui after she had been sued in federal court by Columbia Pictures, Disney, MGM, Paramount, Twentieth Century Fox and other powerhouse studios. As a longtime, respected member of the LAPD, she had asked a judge for help in fighting these giants. “Apparently, the judge told her that there was ‘some kid who beat-up Buca di Beppo and was too young to know what he should be charging,’ and referred her to me,” Siddiqui chuckles. Though still a young attorney at the time, Siddiqui was not only fearless, but eager for the opportunity. Siddiqui’s case strategies obtained a miracle result for his client.

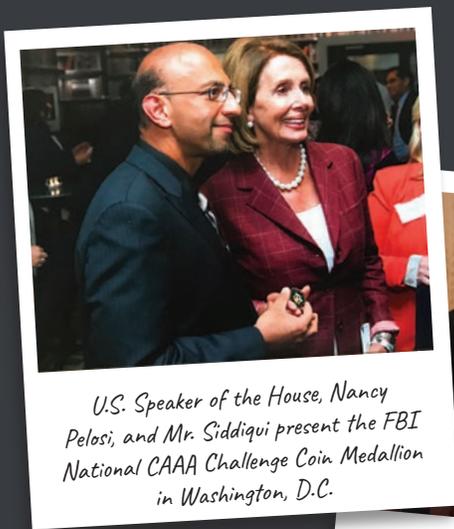
Another high-profile case was *Bellagio Jewelry, Inc. v. Croton Watch Co.*, in which Siddiqui represented a small family business

which owned the trademark “Bellagio” for jewelry and watches. After successfully preventing the Bellagio Las Vegas from selling Bellagio branded watches and jewelry in its luxury resort and casino, Siddiqui’s client then sued the Croton Watch Co. in federal court for trademark infringement, alleging that Croton had unlawfully refused to stop using the disputed trademark in selling its own line of watches on ShopNBC. Several prominent law firms from Manhattan and Los Angeles defended Croton in an epic David versus Goliath trial. Once again Siddiqui prevailed, the court ruling in favor of Siddiqui’s client entering judgment in the amount of \$831,274.

High-profile cases such as these brought still more increasingly complex and highly visible cases to Siddiqui’s plate. Though he admits to being fortunate in being able to be selective about the cases he takes, he asserts that his decision to accept a case is not based on the value of the case. Rather, he selects cases based on whether he believes in the case, regardless of how much of a fight it may be.

A perfect demonstration of his dedication to helping those who need help despite all odds stacked against him, is evident in *Compton v. Riverside County Sheriff’s Dept. et al.* In this highly-publicized case, Siddiqui represented a client in a civil rights action, after he was beaten by several Riverside County Sheriff’s Deputies, and then subsequently and falsely charged with resisting arrest. “There was no video, and it was his words against theirs, initially,” Siddiqui said.

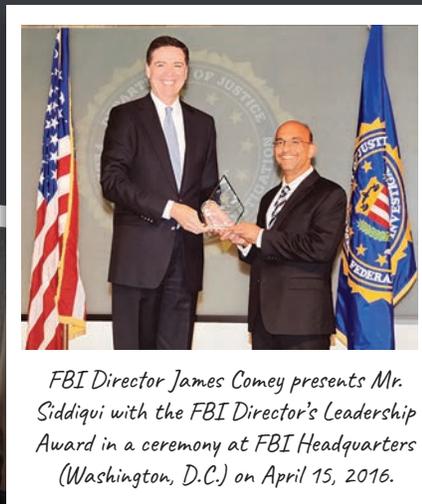
However, as the case progressed Siddiqui was able to convince the jury that the deputies were lying. The jury returned a swift verdict in favor of Siddiqui’s client, the judgment totaling over \$1.3 Million, which was one of the highest verdicts awarded for a non-wrongful death case.



U.S. Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, and Mr. Siddiqui present the FBI National CAAA Challenge Coin Medallion in Washington, D.C.



Strategizing airport security with TSA Administrator, Peter Neffenger



FBI Director James Comey presents Mr. Siddiqui with the FBI Director’s Leadership Award in a ceremony at FBI Headquarters (Washington, D.C.) on April 15, 2016.



Honoring President’s Day (2016) with President Barack Obama. President Obama amiably refers to Mr. Siddiqui as “The Lawyer.”



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PROTECTING OTHERS AS A PERSONAL MISSION

Although Siddiqui's high-profile cases had made him a familiar face on television, he wasn't contacted by the FBI to help in the fight against terrorism as the result of any of the headline-grabbing cases. Instead, it was through his work as attorney for the Islamic Center of Irvine, which first caught the attention of the FBI.

"A man had come to the mosque, and unlike most who are interested in the beliefs and theology of Islam, he began speaking to members about organizing terrorist activities and making references to jihad. We immediately turned him over to the FBI," Siddiqui says. "As a Muslim-American it is my duty to help protect and safeguard our nation."

It was several years later, before the man who Siddiqui helped turn over to the FBI was revealed to be an FBI informant sent to the Center under then President Bush's Operation Flex. Needless to say, the revelation had Siddiqui once again in the headlines. This time, he was also on the FBI's radar, as a potential ally in counter-terrorism efforts.

Siddiqui was more than willing to provide whatever assistance he could, and by 2010, he began serving as an advisor and consultant to the FBI. He subsequently went on to become Chairman of the Board of the FBI Los Angeles Citizens Academy Alumni Association. Today, he serves as the National Director of Special Projects of the FBI National Citizens Academy Alumni Association. The program has been such a success, that the CIA has also tapped Siddiqui as a Community Partner and Advisor, to help with creating a similar program.

Siddiqui is a regular fixture in Washington, meeting with

former President Obama numerous times between 2014-2016. While a guest of President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama at the 2015 White House Holiday Reception, Siddiqui was provided with intelligence that proved instrumental in the investigation into the December 2015 San Bernardino terrorist attack.

For his efforts as a first line of defense in the war on terrorism, Siddiqui has been bestowed with numerous awards. In 2016, FBI Director James B. Comey recognized Siddiqui as recipient of the FBI Director's Community Leadership Award, saying, "You have done extraordinary good across communities in this country and you have made a lasting difference. Thank you for that good, thank you for what you represent, and thank you for inspiring not just the FBI, but the entire country." Not long after, Siddiqui was the Keynote Speaker at the CIA's Martin Luther King Jr. Day event held in the CIA Headquarters Auditorium, aka "The Bubble."

**"LET THE FUTURE
TELL THE TRUTH..."
—NIKOLA TESLA**

As a tried and tested trial attorney, Siddiqui's name has become synonymous with troubleshooting even the most complex of legal problems and emerging victorious time and again. Named a Super Lawyer several times and each year since 2015, his litigation and trial skills have earned him accolades from multiple media sources including *Los Angeles Magazine*, and *Orange Coast Magazine*. He also makes time to give back to the legal community and his alma mater through serving as a member of the Board of Directors at Loyola Law School.

Dedicated to protecting the innocent, Siddiqui has proven his commitment to using his extraordinarily unique skill set, education, and problem-solving capabilities to benefit not only those he represents in legal matters, but to protect those he will never meet, as an Advisory Board Member of the Police Chief's Advisory Committee for the Fullerton Police Department, in addition to the advising and consulting roles he fills for the FBI and the CIA.

So, what does the future hold for Siddiqui? "Nobody will remember the Lamborghini you drive," he says. "They will remember how you helped them with their problems—where you were in their time of need. I intend to keep helping others find solutions to their problems."

To that end, Siddiqui has a full plate with forthcoming cases including a gruesome excessive force case involving Riverside County Code Enforcement Officers, along with representing the Friends of Coyote Hills in their fight to save 510 acres of land in Fullerton, from development by Chevron. He also plans to continue assisting both the FBI and the CIA on matters of national security, and counter-terrorism efforts.

Beyond that, Siddiqui won't confirm if he will follow the suggestions of both the former President of the United States, or Congressman (and Deputy DNC Chair) Keith Ellison and enter into the political arena. He's certainly proven time and again that he is not afraid to take risks. However, he can't help but reflect, when asked directly if he plans to run for office himself, "When the President tells you to run for Congress, it's hard not to explore the idea. In these times of uncertainty, there are a lot more questions than answers.... a lot of problems that need to be solved." ■

Contact

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» EDUCATION

- Loyola Law School, Loyola Marymount University, J.D., Law – 1998-2000
- University of Southern California, M.S., Engineering – 1995-1997
 - » Activities and Societies: Dean's Honor List; School of Engineering Honor Society; Tau Beta Pi, Chi Epsilon
- University of Southern California, B.S., Engineering – 1993-1995
 - » Activities and Societies: Dean's Honor List; School of Engineering Honor Society; Tau Beta Pi, Chi Epsilon
- Chicago-Kent College of Law, Illinois Institute of Technology, Law – 1997-1998
 - » Charles Evans Hughes Moot Court Competition (Chicago, Illinois); Trial Advocacy
- California State University, Long Beach, Engineering – 1995
- University of California, Irvine, Engineering – 1990-1993
- Fullerton College – 1991

» HONORS & AWARDS

- Certificate of Appreciation – Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), January 2017
- FBI Director's Leadership Award – FBI Director James Comey (Federal Bureau of Investigation/Dept. of Justice), April 2016
- FBI Certificate of Recognition – U.S. Dept. of Justice/Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), November 2015
- Certificate of Participation – Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), June 2015
- Certificate of Congressional Recognition – U.S. House of Representatives (Ed Royce, 39th Dist.), June 2014
- Certificate of Congressional Recognition – U.S. House of Representatives (Ed Royce, 39th Dist.), April 2014
- California State Assembly Certificate of Recognition – California State Assembly (Young Kim, 65th Dist.), August 2015
- California State Assembly Certificate of Recognition – California State Assembly (Sharon Quirk-Silva, 65th Dist.), June 2014
- Certificate of Appreciation – County of Orange, California, November 2016
- Certificate of Appreciation – City of Fullerton/Fullerton Police Dept., June 2016
- Certificate of Appreciation – Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), 2015-2017
- Certificate of Appreciation – Bethel Korean Church (Irvine, CA), January 2017
- Certificate of Excellence – Consulate General of Pakistan (Los Angeles), August 2004
- Super Lawyer – Los Angeles Magazine, 2009-2017
- Super Lawyer – Orange Coast Magazine, 2015-2017

» ORGANIZATIONS

- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Advisor/Consultant (National Security/Counter Terrorism) – 2010 to Present
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Community Partner/Advisor – 2015 to Present
- InfraGard Alliance (FBI + Joint Regional Intelligence Center + OC Private Sector Terrorism Response Group), Alliance Member – 2010 to Present
- Fullerton Police Department, Advisory Board Member (Police Chief's Advisory Committee) – 2015 to Present
- Loyola Law School, Loyola Marymount University, Member, Board of Directors – 2016 to Present