

I have watched the campaign of Bader Qarmout for New Jersey Senate with interest. My interest stems from my personal acquaintance with him and his family and the extraordinary positions he has taken in this campaign. So perhaps from a “legal” perspective I shall offer my personal opinion of this candidacy. Our community and nation frequently suffers from a lack of capable political candidates who might stand and offer to our people a truly different path and opportunity to confront problems in our nation. Fortunately in our history more often than not, when true emergencies arise we have elected those who did in fact protect the nation and for that reason as much as the force of history itself, the United States has remained a nation that the whole world knows humanity is fortunate to have. The United States perhaps shines best when times are worst.

And in spite of the current justifiable anger and fears of many, our Country is not now faced with imminent epic creating danger. But such could arise as we all know in our volatile world at any time. And so we as a sensible people would like our nation to prepare for possible dangers before they fall on our head and wake us up. We would like to elect capable political leaders before the sky falls. But as a general rule we do not. It is the emergency that tends to give rise to the best within us and until that emergency occurs we all too often labor under mediocrity and somehow the Country peters on while nonsense peters out and new nonsense arises. For many people such is the norm. The daily politics, social commentary, Facebook posts, TV watching and the latest clothes, hairstyles and movies seem to be of concern. One of the reasons for this is that most of the time Americans are fortunate enough to be able to worry about personal things such as going to work in the morning, taking care of children, cleaning their home, making money and living the life they have chosen for themselves to seek happiness in their own way.

But you know we cannot get away from being responsible for who we elect to our government and that is why I feel the obligation to voice my Opinion on Qarmout. Bader Qarmout had his young son go before an audience to announce he loves and endorses his father for Senate. Not all of us would use our children in that way. It made me uncomfortable and other things do also. What Bader Qarmout does not tell you:

Hatred of Israel, Support for Hamas:

1. In all the many years I knew him one constant remained. He would argue with me and others demanding we accept his view that Israel and the *Jews stole the land of his family*, that Hamas was a valuable organization protecting the right of “Palestinians”, that Israel is not a legitimate country and that the demands of the Palestinians to come back to Israel (return) and take back all their land cannot be denied. He went on and on and the thing that strikes me most in memory is his utter hatred of Israel and a personal feeling of injury done to him and his family by the Jews.

The arguments took place for years in the Deli he owned and he ran every day located at 267 Spring Street, Newton, New Jersey. My friendship with his other family members caused me to make excuses in my own mind for his behavior. I thought that perhaps something happened to his family that caused the emotional outbursts and excused them. But now in light of his “political parade” of pro Israel comments what I know to be true is relevant and important.

Selling Counterfeit Tobacco:

2. I have no doubt that Bader worked very hard to continue the G and S Deli started by his father and then run by his brother Anwar. Bader took over from Anwar and I personally saw the substantial cash sums earned by this very successful small Deli business. As was normal a large amount of tobacco products were sold by Bader and his family.

But from time to time I could see a side of the business which disturbed me.

On or about April of 2005 the Lorillard Tobacco Company had the United States Marshals execute a Search Warrant from the United States District Court, Newark, at the G and S Convenience Store (Deli). Lorillard commenced proceedings against Bader Qarmout for selling illegal and counterfeit cigarettes with phony tax stamps. This is found in the *United States District Court for the District of New Jersey under Docket#03-CV-2266*. This is found in Pacer. I also have copies of all the documents. After the Search Warrant was executed I was called by family members to help with the case and to find out what could be done.

Bader and his family had this successful Deli business and did not to my knowledge need this illegal cash income from selling counterfeit cigarettes with phony tax stamps. Lorillard had no doubt that Bader and other family members were engaged in selling such illegal and dangerous products. I learned Qarmout customers had returned such cigarettes to family stores after getting sick from the phony Lorillard products and complained about it to Bader and others.

I took Bader and others at their word when they denied being involved and agreed to work to defend him and others. My defense was successful. In retrospect I have no doubt in my mind that Bader and others knew they were selling such tobacco with phony tax stamps. In this case I was able to protect the Deli stores and I thought Bader Qarmout and others learned a lesson. YET, the strange event remained in my mind. What disturbed me then and now was why, why would a man who has a successful business do this? Sell such illegal tobacco products? Make customers sick? I leave the answer to those who can see.

Taking Money From Tenants and Pretending They Did Not Pay:

3. Next to the G and S Convenience Store (Deli) in Newton, NJ Bader owned a large house with apartments and a bar. One of the Tenants accused him of taking the rent and not crediting it. In other words Bader went to evict the Tenant but the Tenant said they had paid the rent. This is a very serious allegation by the Tenant. Bader denied this and stated the tenant never paid him.

The case went to trial in the Superior Court, Landlord Tenant Part, Sussex County, Newton, New Jersey. It was affirmed by the Appellate Division. My recollection is that the Court determined that in fact the rent was paid to Bader even though he denied it and he unlawfully went to evict the Tenant. Why would Bader Qarmout do this to a Tenant?

Q and S Convenience Store owner Anwar Qarmout convicted of Drug Offense

4. Anwar Qarmout, the brother of Bader Qarmout was also in the Deli business like Bader. Anwar was convicted and served a jail sentence in the Sussex County Jail for selling “Drugs” out of the Deli, in a school zone. The Deli was apparently located in a school zone. This was reported in the *New Jersey Herald on August 3, 1989 in an article “Newton Man Arrested On Drug Charges”*. I worked with Anwar and had not been aware of his criminal record until his transfer application for a liquor license was questioned due to this criminal conviction. Anwar was in a panic and a substantial amount of money was at stake. I investigated and determined that in fact his conviction was not expunged or sealed and therefore it had to be done all over again or his liquor license would be denied. Again I could not understand the motivation to sell drugs out of a successful business and jeopardize the family. But it was in the past and people make foolish mistakes, so I again ignored this sign and helped to resolve this problem.

There are other issues of concern that can be addressed in another article.

There are NO perfect citizens or human beings. We all make mistakes and hopefully learn from them. If we only elected perfect men or women to Office we could not have a government. BUT in this case where a man is running for the United States Senate it is important to understand what we can. In Qarmout there may be a pattern of expediency where decency goes out the window where money and ambition is concerned. The legal and public record and personal experiences may give you reason for concern. It certainly does for me.

Bader Qarmout for Senate, Kenneth Ellman My Opinion

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March 25, 2012