

Arizona Daily Star interview with Jason Bush

On July 31, 2009, Arizona Daily Star reporter Kim Smith interviewed Jason Bush in the Pima County Adult Detention Center. Bush is charged with murder in the May 30 killings of Raul Flores and his nine-year-old daughter Brisenia, of Arivaca.

Investigators allege that Bush, along with co-defendants Shawna Forde and Albert Gaxiola, invaded Flores' house because they suspected he was a drug trafficker, and they wanted to rob him to fund Forde's border-watch group, Minutemen American Defense, and other activities.

All three have pleaded not guilty. Prosecutors plan to pursue the death penalty against them. Bush has also been charged with two different murders that occurred in Washington state in 1997.

Here is a transcript of the interview:

STAR: I appreciate your sending us the letter and agreeing to meet with us. A couple of ground rules. My bosses are insisting on recording this conversation.

BUSH: Absolutely I understand that. Kinda hard to take notes otherwise.

STAR: It is. I'm not nearly as fast a writer as I should be. And secondly, everything we discuss here has to be on the record. I'm not allowed to go off the record.

BUSH: I understand that. And that goes into some of the things that I went over with my attorney as far as taboo subjects and do's and don'ts and whatnot.

STAR: So you have discussed this with Chris (Kimminau, one of Bush's attorneys)?

BUSH: Uh huh.

STAR: Obviously you have an agenda, and we do as well.

BUSH: I understand.

STAR: So we can't promise that we're going to print anything, or all of it. There are certain questions we want to ask, and....

BUSH: I just hope we can keep it somewhat civil and not...

STAR: Oh, I'm sure.

BUSH: ... have any baiting or leading questions or have any something that gets skewed or twisted later on. I just want to be, like, as straightforward as possible.

STAR: That's part of the reason we're recording this.

BUSH: And some of the things, I'm going to tell you straight up I'm not going to be able to talk about. If it has to do directly with subject matter pertaining to the case, then I have to have Chris present. But things revolving around the case and even some background issues, no problem. But we'll have to take it on a question by question basis. Please in no way take an inability to answer a question as an admission of any kind.

STAR: And please don't get offended if I do ask you a question even though you and I may both know you're not going to answer it. It's just I'm not doing my job unless I ask the question.

BUSH: I understand you're given some questions that you have to ask. And in turn there's some questions I'm sure I'm not going to be able to justifiably answer.

STAR: OK, as long as this works. So did you want to lead off or can I go ahead and ask you some questions.

BUSH: Go ahead.

STAR: First question, how did you meet Shawna?

BUSH: That's one of those, should I answer that or not? Through a contact with the Southern Poverty Law Center.

STAR: Southern...

BUSH: SPLC.

STAR: How long ago?

BUSH: Middle of May. Somewhere around there. It was recently.

STAR: Can you put that into context for me? Was it a casual acquaintance sort of thing or was there a specific purpose for the meeting?

BUSH: It was fairly specific...gee how do I put that into context without giving information away? That's tough. I'm not sure I can put that into context, not at this time.

STAR: You are a member of the Minutemen American Defense, is that correct?

BUSH: No I am not.

STAR: Have you ever been?

BUSH: No, I've never been.

STAR: How is it, you know, obviously, that law enforcement is telling us that you are a member. That you've got this website.

BUSH: I don't have a website. Shawna has a website. And I have no control over what goes on to that Web site. But, I'd only physically known Shawna for two and a half, almost three days. Other than a few telephone conversations I had never physically met her but for about two and a half, three days.

STAR: From what I understand on this website is all of this information about your alleged military background, your mission statement, the fact that you're a patriot. All of this stuff.

BUSH: I didn't put that there.

STAR: Can you tell me why she might have done this?

BUSH: Um ... To try and ... She had a reputation as a bit of a crackpot, and that came from a number of difference sources, and I think she was trying to lend some legitimacy to her so-called movement. Other than that I really can't say.

STAR: Can you tell me what your stance is as far as the fight on illegal immigration and drug trafficking? I mean, do you have one?

BUSH You know, actually, I do have a stance on illegal immigration and drug trafficking. I think that the border makes very little sense and I think if they opened the borders and stiffened the sentences on drug trafficking, open the border checkpoints and let people through, check them for drugs, check them for guns and explosives, radiological materials, make sure they're not criminals, and let them in. The American dream's for everyone. And stiffen the sentences for drug trafficking. I think that would help a lot. I mean we've got a lot of border that can't be patrolled so what's the point?

STAR: This is totally blowing me away. We've heard so much about this organization, your involvement in it. You've probably been reading the media accounts..you're supposed to be the operations director...

BUSH: Actually I haven't. I haven't read one news clip. I don't get the newspaper. I don't have access to it and I don't have access to television.

Let me lay it out for you. Everyone's supposed to know you as Gunny, and you're supposed to be the operations director for MAD and you, and Shawna and Mr. Gaxiola, were supposedly going to commit this home invasion, steal a bunch of drugs, sell the drugs and use it to fund this organization..

BUSH: I can't comment on a bunch of the stuff you just talked about, but I can say that my personal stance is what I just stated. I don't have an anti-immigration stance, I don't have a secret agenda. My reasons for coming into contact with Shawna Forde I can't get into, but they were not nefarious in nature.

STAR: Are you a member of the Aryan Brotherhood or the Aryan Nations?

BUSH: I have never been a white supremacist or a member of any white supremacist group or organization ever in my life. I did get wind of that, that I was accused of being a white supremacist. I'd make a piss poor, excuse my language, I'm sorry. I'd make a really poor white supremacist. If that were true, half of my family tree would have to have been annihilated. Hitler didn't care too much for gypsies, Jews, and I have a lot of Native American influence.

STAR: Were you with Shawna in the days leading up to this incident and afterward? Tell me, why did you call us? What were you trying to straighten out here?

BUSH: What I contacted you for is kind of a little trade-off. Maybe answer a few issues for you and at the same time, hopefully get a little bit of my personal information out there, a bit of a plea. You see, since I was arrested, I haven't been able to get a hold of my family. I don't get out much. I'm locked down 24 hours a day. I get out every other day for about half an hour and sometimes not even then. And when I do get out it's usually at a time when my family is not at home. They're working.

So I was kind of hoping for a bit of a "Hey how you doing? And also a kind of a plea for help from the public.

STAR: Go for it.

BUSH: To my mom and dad, I love you. (deep sigh) Don't believe everything you hear. To my sweet beautiful blue-eyed angel, my breath, my heart and soul, I love you. And I'm sorry. I didn't see any of this coming. Hang on, we'll get through it. To the members of my community, please don't make life harder on my loved ones. Help them because this is hurting them too.

STAR: You know the sheriff's office is actually saying you confessed to killing this child, her father and to shooting her mother.

BUSH No.

STAR: You did not confess?

BUSH: No and I can't really get into that on the advice of my attorney. We knew that one was going to come up, but no I can't get into much detail on that.

STAR: Are you saying that you were coerced?

BUSH: I can't get into that.

STAR: Right now you're asking for the public's help. Too many people don't take kindly to a child killer.

BUSH: I will say this: I didn't do it. I'm not guilty of what they've charged me with. I'll say that. I'm not guilty of what they've charged me with. I'm no child killer.

STAR: I know you're in an awkward position and there are things you can't discuss. For example, you said you can't go into why you were affiliated with Shawna. Work with me here. Give me a little bit more than that.

BUSH: Let's see.

STAR: She's being portrayed as a killer too. As being the ringleader, the mastermind behind this whole plot. Is there any truth to that? Or do we have three innocent people sitting here in the Pima County jail? Are there other bad guys running around?

BUSH: I can't really get much into that.

STAR: You know how this is going to come across that you're just sitting here being self-serving. That you're just trying to play us all and mount some sort of defense through the media. So I want you to think.

BUSH: They've had a chance to vilify me though the media and that was fairly self-serving. Actually, it was very self-serving. Leaking stuff to the media and whatnot before the defense even had a chance to verify its accuracy, or have the court verify it's accuracy and it being portrayed as the truth.

STAR: Set the record straight, man.

BUSH. I can't get deep into it. There are some subjects I can't touch without my attorney here. Some of those subjects he would even say I can't talk about that.

STAR: Tell me about Shawna and Albert then..

BUSH: I don't know a whole lot. Other than what you read on the Internet and whatnot, I really don't know much. About Albert I know very little.

STAR: Is Shawna associated with the minutemen group?

BUSH: Shawna is the founder and the executive director, I guess she calls it, or the commander or whatever she calls herself, she is the head honcho of the MAD group.

STAR: Help me out here. I'm in an awkward position because I know there are certain things you can't talk about, but I need to be able to put things into context. You said you'd only met her a few times, had phone conversations with her. How did you both come to be in Arizona, in Arivaca, at the same time?

BUSH: I came to Arizona in about September 2008.

STAR: Was that Meadview?

BUSH: Yeah. And I came into contact with Shawna though SPLC as a person of interest.

STAR: So what, you were investigating her?

BUSH: God...I wish my attorney was here because that's one he'd answer for you.

STAR: Let me ask it a different way, what's your association with the SPLC?

BUSH Peripheral. They are a great source of information for me.

STAR: What do you do with that information..

BUSH: Hmmm. Generally use it to compile profiles and dossiers.

STAR: For them?

BUSH: Uh no.

STAR: For what purpose.

BUSH: For other people. I can't get into that right now.

STAR: So were you working undercover?

BUSH: I can't talk about that either.

STAR: You know people are going to think this sounds kind of loony? I mean, taken into context with your letter to us in which you talk about conspiracies and government agencies. And then we know that you don't have a military background.

BUSH:Ok.

STAR: On the Web site it says you've got a military background, and five or six tours.

BUSH: That's Shawna. That's Shawna.

STAR: Tell me about your background then...

BUSH: I grew up in a Christian family, devout Christian and I myself am a Christian..

STAR: Where did you grow up?

BUSH: Sandpoint, Idaho, and off and on in the tri-cities area in Washington after my parents got divorced.

STAR: Tell me about your professional background

BUSH: Welding and engineering, drafting and engineering, surveying.

STAR: Do you have any sort of degrees or educational background? Where did you go to school?

BUSH: North Central Kansas area, Vo-tech, ITT Tech, and a few correspondence, satellite courses.

STAR: What was the last job you had?

BUSH: Self-employed as an engineer

STAR: Do you have any certifications or degrees?

BUSH: Yeah, a lot of certifications.

STAR: Where were you self-employed?

BUSH: Meadview.

STAR: Can you give me any job references?

BUSH: I really don't want my ex-employers being contacted. They're going through a hard enough time battling the public right now, I'm sure, whatever's in the newspaper.

STAR: So whatever you were doing for the SPLC was kind of a sideline?

BUSH: I wasn't doing anything for them. They were just a pretty good source of information for me.

STAR: So you were compiling profiles and dossiers on people for other people. Was that an employment thing, was that a hobby?

BUSH: It was an employment thing.

STAR: What percentage of your salary would come from that?

BUSH: It varied. It wasn't a set amount

STAR: Was it something you depended upon heavily I'm just trying to figure out if the engineering was it 50 percent and the other was 50 percent.

BUSH: In the past, in the past. You see you have to understand, the last time I was in Idaho I was hit in the head at work and wound up partially paralyzed for just a little over a year, right around a year. And I was unable to work during that time. And in Arizona I wound up trying to rekindle relationships with old employers and that was pretty much that.

STAR: When were you hit in head?

BUSH: Oct. 4, 2007?

STAR: And when did you go to Meadview?

BUSH: Sept. 2008

STAR: So when you were unable to work, is that when you started getting information from that organization?

BUSH: No. when I was unable to work. I was pretty much out of it.

STAR: When you did you start compiling dossiers on people?

BUSH: Years ago, years ago, prior to ever getting injured.

STAR: Were you able to continue that after your injury?

BUSH: After my injury, yeah.

STAR: Can you tell me generally speaking, the people who asked you to gather these dossiers together, what their purpose was?

BUSH: Jeez...(long pause) I'll have to find out if I can answer that one.

STAR: So tell me how you ended up in Arivaca

BUSH: (long pause) That association with Shawna thing. I don't know if I can answer that. I was picked up in the middle of the night and driven down there.

STAR: The night of the slayings?

BUSH: No. No. Would have been two days, three days prior.

STAR: Who were you picked up by?

BUSH: Shawna

STAR: When did you meet Albert?

BUSH: The following day in the afternoon.

STAR: Through Shawna, or were you putting together a dossier on Albert too?

BUSH: I had never met Albert prior to that. I didn't even know his name. I didn't know his name was Albert at that time.

STAR: Can you tell me anything about the night of the slayings?

BUSH: I can't. I can't get into that at all. That's really a taboo subject right now.

STAR: So I'm just supposed to be satisfied with the fact that you did not kill these people?

BUSH: I did not kill them..

STAR: Did Shawna kill these people?

BUSH: I don't know who killed them.

STAR: Were you there that night?

BUSH: Um. I can't get into that either. I can't get around anything from that night.

STAR: What the sheriff's office is telling us is that you not only confessed to being the gunman, but that you named other people, aside from Shawna and Albert, that were that night and that participated in whatever this plan was.

BUSH: Like I said, anything coming from the sheriff's office, they have their own agenda. They have their own agenda and I can't really get into their agenda.

STAR: Why would they make any of this up?

BUSH: I don't know. Like I said, I can't comment on anything the sheriff's department said.

STAR: Why would they make it up, though? They don't know you.

BUSH: I can't comment on anything the sheriffs department has said.

STAR: So again, you are not a member of MAD.

BUSH:No.

STAR: You're not a member of the Aryan Nations?

BUSH: No.

STAR: Again, the sheriff's office has said you went to the house planning on killing both children that night. I mean, not only did you do it, but you went there planning in advance to kill them.

BUSH: That's news to me.

STAR: And based on that, I'm sure you're aware, I'm sure Chris has told you that the county attorney's office is more than likely going to seek the death penalty against you.

BUSH: I've been informed something along that line.

STAR: Tell me how you feel about that. You're telling me you're sitting here an innocent man and they are going to go for the ultimate punishment.

BUSH: I'm scared. I'll tell you that right now I'm scared. Of course I'm scared. Anybody who'd not be scared has got an issue. Of course I'm scared. I'm sitting in jail I can't go home to my family, the people I love. I'm facing something that is terrifying. I don't know how else to put it. It's terrifying.

STAR: You're saying you're not allowed to tell me a lot of stuff. I'm assuming you've made full disclosure to Chris Kimminau, and he's going to be pursuing whatever defense is possible.

BUSH: Chris and I have talked a lot, but I don't know...

STAR: How much faith do you have in Chris' ability to clear your name, to save your life??

BUSH: Here's the deal, and it's what I was going to get into eventually. The prosecuting attorney has limitless resources, thousands of police officers to investigate for them, and forensics, labs, and technicians, limitless resources. I have a state-funded, county funded attorney, and a private investigator. Those are my resources. Facing what I'm facing, it's kind of scary.

Do I have faith? No. It's hard to. I have faith in... I have faith in my family, my loved ones, I have faith in the Lord. But do I have faith in my attorney? No. I don't. I don't have faith..

I have faith that if somebody were be able to look at my case under attorney/client privilege, somebody who was really knowledgeable. I have faith that a good attorney would be able to... I mean, Chris is a good guy, but he's got a lot of cases in front of him and I'm just one of many. There's no way he can devote time and resources to my case that it needs.

STAR: Let's assume there's an attorney out there with limitless resources, do you have a defensible position?

BUSH: I do. I have a very defensible position. But even a very defensible position requires more resources than what we have available.

I understand that appointed attorneys get something like \$400 to work with, another case slapped in front of them every other day or so.

STAR: I don't know if Chris is death (penalty) qualified or not, but if they do actually seek the death penalty.

BUSH: They'll give another co-counsel

STAR: He'll have two attorneys and more resources.

BUSH: Great, two people, and another paralegal that are still overwhelmed.

STAR: Again, I know you're not supposed to talk to me about what your defense might be, but can you give me a hint? Is it an alibi? Is it self-defense? Is it you were coerced? Is it an insanity defense?

BUSH: God... (long pause) It's I didn't do. It's just flat out, I didn't do it.

STAR: Apparently a weapon was left behind. I'm going to assume there's DNA on it.

BUSH: Not mine. Not mine.

STAR: Were you in the house?

BUSH: I can't even talk about it. I can't talk about anything that night.

STAR: I'm assuming you wouldn't need resources if you had an alibi.

BUSH: I can't talk about anything that night. I can't comment on anything about that night. I'm going to have to leave that to a defense attorney. That's really touchy stuff.

STAR: I'm going to throw out some names to you. I want to know whether you've heard of them. If you know them. What you think about them. And what if any role they play in this case. Jim Gilchrist?

BUSH: I've heard that name before.

STAR: What can you tell me about Jim Gilchrist?

BUSH: He was on a list of fellows from the SPLC. He runs a Minuteman Project I believe it's called.

STAR: Were you assigned to get a dossier together on this guy?

BUSH: No.

STAR: Did you have any direction about him?

BUSH: Everything he was involved with seemed to be on the up and up with the exception of a few financial difficulties that were settled in civil court.

STAR: Glenn Spencer?

BUSH: Same thing. Seemed to be fairly non-violent, binoculars, lawn chairs watch the border kind of guy. Outspoken, very outspoken, but not associated with anything violent.

STAR: Todd Hezlitt?

BUSH: Never heard that name.

STAR: Oin Oakstar?

BUSH: Heard that name, but don't really know a whole lot about him.

STAR: How about the guy who treated your gunshot wound? (Chuck Stonex)

BUSH: I can't really talk about him

STAR: Can you talk about your gunshot wound?

BUSH: I can't talk about that either. That's part of my defense.

STAR: What can you tell me about Redding California?

BUSH: Uh, it's in California? I don't know. Where is it?

STAR: You're alleged to have gone there in the days after the slayings and committed home invasions and a burglary.

BUSH: Really? No. Where is this place anyway? I don't know. No.

STAR: You know you're also charged with murder in Washington?

BUSH: Uh, I talked to the detective about that, yeah.

STAR: Are you innocent of that one as well?

BUSH: That one never would have popped up had this one not come about. And, no. I didn't. That one, uh, (laughs) I have an airtight alibi on.

STAR: They are saying your DNA popped up on that one.

BUSH: They are full of whatever. It's a fishing expedition. Other than that, can't get into it. I don't know how long I'll be here fighting this case, and I don't want to give him any ammunition on me up there.

STAR: So what do you know about Albert?

BUSH: Not much.

STAR: How many times did you meet him?

BUSH: See, that I can't get into either. Being involved so I can't really talk about him.

STAR: What do you know about Raul Flores?

BUSH: Never met the guy. Can't really talk about that either.

STAR: How about his wife?

BUSH: Never met any of them. I can't talk about any of that, other than that. I never met any of those people.

STAR: Sounds like you really familiar with the various Minutemen groups. Can you tell me about that?

BUSH: I've done a lot of research.

STAR: Why?

BUSH: I can't tell you why right now.

STAR: Does it have anything to do with your political views on the border and the fact you think the border should be open?

BUSH: Um, no -- not so much that. I'm not sure I can talk about that.

STAR: Do you know Chris Simcox?

BUSH: Isn't he running for senator or something?

STAR: I think he might be. But I think he's probably the most well-known Minuteman.

BUSH: Yeah, but he's not part of Shawna's organization, I can tell you that. He has a ranch down there, the Anvil Ranch, I remember that.

STAR: Ever met him?

BUSH: No

STAR: Done research on him?

BUSH: Yep.

STAR: As well as the other names I mentioned? Researched them all?

BUSH: Yes.

STAR: But again, you can't get into why?

BUSH: Um, I'm contemplating that. Just work with me a little, OK?

STAR: Let me make sure I'm clear here. You can't get into them because of agreements made with the people you're gathering background information for? Or you can't get into them because it's part of your defense? Or both?

BUSH: A little of both. A little of both. I have signed non-disclosure agreements. Other than that, I can't really get deep into it without talking to my attorney. But yeah, it's also part of my defense on why I was down there in the first place and my motive. It's part of my affirmative defense.

STAR: There's going to be people listening to these tape recordings. They are going to wonder whether you've got some sort of mental health defect in which you kind of self-aggrandize and ...

BUSH: (Interrupts) I'm mentally healthy. I just don't know how far I can go or what I can talk about.

STAR: I don't mean to offend you, but I do want to make sure we're clear.

BUSH: They can think whatever they want (laugh). What people think at this point really doesn't matter to me. What matters to me is getting home.

STAR: You said that you don't read media accounts and don't watch the TV.

BUSH I haven't seen one newspaper article or watched one TV program related to this. I've been pretty much blacked out.

STAR: I imagine Chris has told you that a day planner allegedly belonging to you ended up in the newspaper's hands?

BUSH: No.

STAR: One of our reporters was down in Arivaca with a photographer, chatting people up, wanting to know more about the situation, and a gentleman, supposedly known by you, handed our photographer a day planner, with phone numbers and notes in it. It was kind of a diary/address book. And in it, it talks about your mental health, saying that you were diagnosed at 12 with various ailments.

BUSH: Really?

STAR: Yes.

BUSH: That's the first I've heard of that one.

STAR: And that starting at the age of 12, you have felt that you are outside your body watching yourself.

BUSH: Where was this?

STAR: In a day planner.

BUSH: In Arivaca?

STAR: Yes. And we called phone numbers in the book and tracked down people, and we're firmly convinced it's yours.

BUSH: Wow, that's the first I've heard of that.

STAR: It's not your book?

BUSH: I don't have any idea what one you're talking about so I can't....(laughs)

STAR: Have you ever been diagnosed with a mental illness?

BUSH: I can't get into that, because I don't, How do you answer a question like that?

STAR: Well, most people would say yes or no.

BUSH: (Laughs)Well, when you are fighting for your life how do you answer a question like that? That's a new one on me, the whole day planner. That's the first I've heard of it.

STAR: So you're not saying, No, you've not been diagnosed but you're not saying yes, either?

BUSH: I'm saying I've got to talk to my attorney before I answer any questions regarding anything in the day planner.

STAR: How often is Chris in to see you? Or in contact with you. I'm assuming you can have some phone contact.

BUSH: Actually no. My phone calls are denied. They won't accept my phone calls.

STAR: Your defense attorney won't accept your phone calls?

BUSH: No.

STAR: Have you talked to him about that in person?

BUSH: I can't remember — possibly. I see the private investigator about once a week. Chris, not so often.

STAR: The reason I bring that up is that if there are things that you want to discuss with him, and we can meet again, I'm totally willing to come back to talk to you.

BUSH: That's the other thing. In talking to you, he says, "Don't ever talk to the media without me." Well, when he reads this in the newspaper, I'm sure he'll come and see me.

STAR: I thought you told him you were going to meet me or meet with the media.

BUSH: I told the investigator.

STAR: You sent a message to your parents and to a blonde. I'm assuming that's your girlfriend, wife?

BUSH: Do what?

STAR: In the very beginning of our interview, you sent a message to your mom and dad, and to your blonde angel...

BUSH: Beautiful blue-eyed angel.

STAR: Girlfriend, wife, child?

BUSH: Soul mate.

STAR: Do you have kids?

BUSH: Yeah.

STAR: How many?

BUSH: Two.

STAR: Up until this point had you been in touch with them?

BUSH: Yeah.

STAR: So this must be really hurting, to be away from them. They can't be very old.

BUSH: It's the hardest thing I've ever been through in my life. Being separated from my family it's pretty bad.

STAR: It's not first time though.

BUSH: Yeah.

STAR: You've been in prison before.

BUSH: Yeah, I've been in prison before, but this is first time I've been separated from more than just my mom and dad. This is the first time I've had more to live for than just me.

STAR: Any messages you want to send to the Flores family?

BUSH: God I knew that question was going to come too. God, what do you say to people that have went through what they've went through? God bless you. What do you say? I don't know what to say.

STAR: Are there other people out there that the sheriff's office should be looking for? Additional people?

BUSH: I've read the reports, some of the reports. Yeah.

STAR: The real killer? Or killers?

BUSH: Killers. Plural. There's reports of upwards of six people, so I would say yes.

STAR: But you have no independent knowledge of that?

BUSH: I have no independent knowledge of who they are. No.

Other than that I really can't talk about it. It's stuff I read in the reports, so...

STAR: In your letter to us, you said you wanted to speak with us and it involved information about a lot of different government agencies and stuff. What did that mean?

BUSH: I was hoping to be able to speak with my attorney before you came and saw me. So I could talk to him about how far I could get into that without disturbing our affirmative defense in court. And I haven't seen him in time to be able to talk to him about that. I would like to. Yes I'd like to talk to you about that, but I need to talk to him about how deep I can go into that subject before I start crossing into the case itself.

STAR: You know, there are a lot of guys sitting where you're sitting right now.

BUSH: Oh yeah, there's a lot of people in here.

STAR: Saying they are innocent, but they don't go so far as to contact the media. Most of them listen to their attorneys.

BUSH: I probably should have, but I didn't feel that I had a lot of options. One, I'm scared. Two, I don't have a lot of faith in the process right now. I know I need help because what I have right now, bless his heart, he's trying as hard as he can. You know, he just doesn't have the time to devote to it. I just don't have the confidence.

STAR: So by my coming here and writing a story, what do you hope to accomplish?

BUSH: I'm hoping maybe somebody takes notice. There's a lot of attorneys out there that take on some pro bono work. There's a lot of people out there, even paralegals, maybe one of them is willing to take a serious look at this and be the one to represent me or help with my representation and make things easier on the attorney that I do have. I'm praying for a miracle. You've got to understand, I'm fighting for my life. (choking up). So, yeah I'm hoping for... I'm just keeping my fingers crossed.

STAR: You know this case is getting a lot of national attention.

BUSH: That's what I heard. I heard that.

STAR: Have you had any run-ins yet. I mean, I know you're locked down significant portions of the day. Have you had any run-ins with any other inmates.

BUSH: No, I'm locked down 24 hours a day and when I'm moved ...

STAR: Hence the orange and white stripes.

BUSH: I'm locked down, and when I do get out for a shower or to get a book, it's about every other day for half an hour.

STAR: How about transport to court?

BUSH: I'm in a portion of the vehicle by myself. It's just the classification people say it's because of the nature of the charges and the notoriety of the case.

STAR: Again, never had a website, have no idea what Shawna was putting on her Web site about you? And again you are saying it was Shawna who put this stuff up about you?

BUSH: Shawna has her own Web site she's got her own webmaster, and nothing goes on there without her. She puts everything up. It's her deal.

STAR: So you're acknowledging you don't have a military background?

BUSH: Conventional or otherwise? Conventional, no.

STAR: Tell me about unconventional

BUSH: I can't get into that right now, that gets into the government and whatnot service. It's part of what I need to talk to Chris about.

STAR: The people you've been gathering background for. Can you tell me if they're an organization, or if they're just individual people. Can you tell me if they are some government agencies, non-profit agencies?

BUSH: That's another portion of that whole... I can't... without... I really wish I'd seen Chris prior to this. Those are questions I needed to ask about how far I can go into this.

STAR: One of the things on the Web sites was about drug dealers and you referred, I'm sorry, you allegedly referred to them as terrorists. Is that what you believe?

BUSH: (Laughs) No. I believe that terrorists are people who invade people's homes in the middle of the night and shoot their families (chokes up). I believe terrorists are people that... have the ability and the knowledge to stand up and take responsibility for their own actions and choose not to and let someone else sit and rot as a result of their inaction. Don't know if that made much sense. Terrorists are people that plot to do harm to their neighbors or drive airplanes into buildings. Terrorists are people that inflict terror on other people's lives, hence the name terrorists. Drug dealers as terrorists? No, they're criminals and there is a difference. There's terrorists and there are criminals. The terrorist is the worst kind of criminal, I believe.

STAR: Is Shawna Forde a terrorist?

BUSH: I can't talk about that without talking to my attorney first.

STAR: How about Albert?

BUSH: Same thing. I don't have much of a comment about without talking to my attorney.

STAR: What else would you like to say?

BUSH: I don't know. You know, I've been portrayed as a bad guy and the root of all evil in the media from the sounds of it.

I guess I'd ask you and your newspaper... I've been told that you guys are pretty fair. There's a few guards who work here who used to work for you guys, and they said that if I am going to talk to the media you would be the best ones to talk to.

STAR: Have you met Lt. Stewart yet? He knows who I am, and I've interviewed him several times.

BUSH: I'd ask you and your supervisors and superiors to understand that there's been plenty of negative, and there's going to be plenty more negative. And I would like to have more interviews, I'd like to talk to you some more. I'd just ask you to please don't vilify me any more. There's been enough bad, and, you know, everybody else is going to be out there, you know, reporting whatever they hear. I wanted to talk to ya, so just please, take it easy.

My family could use a little bit of a ray of hope. And I do have faith in the court of law. Anytime I've ever done bad in my life, they have seen fit to seek the truth, and mete out justice. I have to have faith that the truth will be found.

STAR: One last question. Is the MAD organization, are they terrorists? OK, are any Minutemen organizations terrorists? And if so, which one.

BUSH: Any of the Minutemen organizations terrorists? Or terroristic in nature? I don't think any one organization is terroristic in nature. I think there may be individual members of those organizations that have very terroristic viewpoints. I'm sure that there are many people involved in these organizations that for one reason or another feel justified in doing what you do. Fine, it's your constitutional right to believe in what you want to believe in and sit out there on the border in your lawn chairs with a beer and a pair of binoculars. But my father taught me something a long time ago that holds true to that whole scenario: One man's rights end where the next man's begin. Plain and simple. You can't uphold your rights by taking them away from someone else, because then you become no better than the people you accuse them of being.

99 percent of the people who cross the border are just looking for a fair shake. They're not trying to hurt people or run drugs. 99 percent of the people that cross the border are trying to get a job to support their families. If these organizations had their way, and the borders were locked down, closed down, a head of lettuce would cost nine bucks. When was the last time you saw a white anglo saxon high school kid out there working in the orchards? You don't see that anymore. When I was growing up as a kid, I'd work the orchards. When I wanted money as a kid, I would mow lawns, I'd work the orchards. You don't see that anymore.

STAR: I know you said that you'd rather your past employers not be contacted and obviously you'd rather your family is off limits. Is there anybody I can contact that can corroborate anything you're saying here?

BUSH: I will be seeing Chris. Actually, I'll be seeing our investigator before I see Chris. I'll be seeing our investigator on Monday. He'll get into contact with Chris. There is a couple of people I'd like to put you in contact with, but I need to make sure that's not going to interfere with our affirmative defense in any way. And I need to get that cleared through Chris first. So yes there is. But my family, they've been through enough. And everything that comes out in the papers, every little rumor or tip or lead or leak that comes out, it just drives them... They're the other victims. No matter what anybody thinks I did, no matter what anybody thinks I did, my family didn't do a thing. People need to keep that in mind when they're putting stuff out there. My family has to wake up every morning and face the public.

STAR: If that's it, I think we're done. Also, I don't want to hand you a pen because they'd have a fit.

BUSH: I have a pencil.

STAR: Let me give you my phone number, and you can call me collect. It's 573-4241. That's my direct line.

BUSH: Area code?

STAR: 520.

BUSH: And it's Sue?

STAR: Kim Smith

BUSH: That's Arizona Daily Star.

STAR: And I usually work 8:30 to 5:30, something like that.

BUSH: I have to ask you: You're not going to tear me up in the papers, are you?

STAR: No. 1, I have to talk to my editors first and see what they have to say about printing any story at all. But I can assure you that if I do write a story, I'm just going to print what you told me and what law enforcement says -- the background information that we've probably already printed. I'm not going to slant it one way or another. I'm just going to lay it out, what you've told me, and let our readers make up their mind.

BUSH: I just hope you don't mind that there's some things I can't talk about and I wish that I'd been able to talk to my attorney first.

STAR: Well again, I'm completely willing to meet with you again and I've just given you my phone number. We can always just do another phone interview or multiple phone interviews.

Jason, I appreciate it...

BUSH: Even if they don't print the whole story or whatnot, would you guys at least be willing to put out there, my family?

STAR: A note to your family? What I can do is, if we don't print a story, I might at least be able to get permission to blog about your family, send a message about your family on the Internet.

BUSH: I do appreciate it. I know that in order to talk to you and get something printed out there, a plea for help or a message to my family, comes with a price. You got a little to get a little, so I help that I was able to satisfy some of your curiosity.

STAR: Of course not. But I do appreciate the opportunity.