

Eric Schrody, Ex-Catholic, USA (part 2 of 2)

Description: An interview with the x rap star EverLast and his journey to Islam. Part 2.

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AB: My family tried to. I just can't understand that. But you know what? That's a trial. Although I've changed my name for like 8 years now, they still run up calling me by my birth name. Then it's, "Oh I forgot that you're Muslim." Then it's the pork jokes. It never stops.

E: It's one of those things where people laugh at what they don't understand. Or they fear what they can't grasp. The thing is that nobody can pretend that they don't understand it. Because I've never come across anything more simple in my life.

Like I remember that when I sat down and asked, "So, what does a Muslim believe," and I got the list run down to me. I was like, "You don't put up the wall between Christianity and Judaism." They were like, "Nah, it's all the same story."

If when you finally get down to reading the Quran, the Bible and the Torah, which is pretty much just the Old Testament, you find that the Quran is just an affirmation of what is correct and isn't correct within those books (the Bible and the Torah). And then you say to yourself, "How did that go down when these cats were all from different parts of the world?" But they are all confirming each other's story.

I'm reading a book right now called Muhammad: The Life of the Prophet, by Karen Armstrong. It was written by a non-Muslim. So far, I'm only about a quarter of the way through; but it starts out telling you how they originally tried to make Muhammad look like the most evil man on the earth; that he established Islam under the sword. But then you learn that Muhammad only fought when he had to. Muhammad only fought to defend Islam. It's a very good book about the man. It just lets you know that this cat was a man. We ain't trying to tell you that he was anything else but a man. We're telling you as Muslims that he was the most perfect example of a man to walk the earth so far. And from what I've read he is the last one to come of his kind.

When you get beyond being scared of Farrakhan and what he's sayin' -- and here as a white person I'm speaking -- when you get beyond the ignorance of believing that Islam has anything to do with just people that are blowing up things, that doesn't have anything to do with Islam. They might do it in the name of Islam. But it has nothing to do with Islam. You can't argue with it.

When I explain Jesus to a Christian, he can't argue with me. And I don't mean argue, saying, "Jesus isn't God!" I mean, how much more sense does it make that he's a man? If I was Christian, which to me means to be Christ-like, and God asks me, "Hey how come you weren't more like Jesus?" I'll say, I wasn't more like Jesus because you made him half

of a God [and] I'm only a man?" That doesn't make any sense.

God doesn't want things hard on us. God wants things easy as possible. God is going to make it as easy as possible. If you ask and you are sincere, God will bring it to you. He might throw some rocks on your path, to make you trip and stumble. But it's gonna come to you.

AB: Talk to me about the first and second time you took your Shahadah (profession of faith).

E: Well the first time, it was right after I had heard a tape from Warith Deen Muhammad (son of Nation of Islam founder, Elijah Muhammad, who took most of the Nation of Islam into mainstream Islam). That just kinda broke down the whole Jesus thing. He explained that we (Muslims) do Christians a great favor by bringing Jesus down to the level of a man. Why would God create a man who is half a God and compare us to him? And it just sent off a bomb in my head. So I took Shahadah. And then the initial high wore off.

It was almost like a Christian who says that they accept Jesus. Then they say, "No matter what I do now I'm saved." 'Cause I was raised with that kinda mentality. Like, "OK, I accept the truth so let me just go out here and sin my butt off and I'm saved."

I didn't really claim to be Muslim though at that time. I picked and chose what I wanted to believe. God gave me leeway for a time. But eventually it was time to fish or cut the line. I was coming to a point where I was unsatisfied emotionally, and spiritually. I had money in the bank and a \$100,000 car, women left and right -- everything that you think you want. And then just sitting there being like, "Why am I unhappy?" Finally that voice that talks to you -- not the whisper (of Satan) -- the voice said, "Well, basically you're unhappy because you're living foul and you're not trying to do anything about it."

My stubbornness at that time wouldn't allow me to talk about it at that time. You get in that state of mind where you're like, "I can figure this out all by myself."

I finally got humble enough to talk to Divine and Abdullah about it. They asked me, "How do you feel? What do you think it is?" So finally I'm sittin' there taking Shahadah again. From that point on I've made a commitment where I'm going to try my best. I'm gonna do my best to make my prayers, let's start there. Let's not beat ourselves up because we went out last night and had a drink. Let's make our prayers and pray for the strength to stop doing one thing at a time. That's what I'm still dealing with.

You know, once you get over the big things, it becomes very subtle. It can be as subtle as looking at a man, and not even speaking bad about him, but back-biting him in your mind. The easy ones to beat -- well I shouldn't say easy -- the big ones are easy to notice. It's the subtle psychological stuff that helps you get into who really you are. You gotta be able to face the truth of who you are. If you are not able to face that truth of who you are, you're gonna crumble, man.

People question me and go, "You're Muslim?" And I'm like, "Yeah I'm Muslim, but I'm also a professional sinner." I'm tryin' to get over it, tryin' to retire. I won't front and say

I'm better than you. I just believe that I've been shown the truth and hopefully that will save me."

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