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Department. We eventually had contact with the Justice Department, but in 2004, we were advised to pursue this in Israeli courts by State Department staff. It was Colin Powell's chief of staff who wrote to us saying that he could say without equivocation that the investigation done by the Israelis was not thorough, credible and transparent.

Craig: And he reiterated in that letter the suggestion that we go to court and we were given a list of attorneys by the State Department. But we were not thinking in terms of a legal process. We were hoping that there would be some diplomatic resolution of it and some real accountability. But it was just one lie after one lie after one lie, changing stories from the day Rachel was killed. So after two years when the statute of limitations expired, we filed the civil lawsuit in Israel, which was the only path we could take.

One very good thing, I would say, about our case was that it was against the Ministry of Defense and Israel, so it wasn't a single soldier who was singled out for attention here. There were two people in the bulldozer, a driver and a commander. There was a lot of attention on the driver. We never got to see the driver because there was an unusual security certificate from the Ministry of Defense to have the identify of these people concealed because revealing them could be a danger to them. So it was unusual, but key military witnesses testified behind a screen. People from our family were not allowed to see them. The attorneys and judge could. But what I think about those individuals has changed during this process because I've already had some questions about the commander because he was sitting in an elevated position. It was his job to be a second set of eyes, and he commanded the driver. But the driver, one of the really disconcerting things he said in court was that he didn't remember what time Rachel was killed. And he had no memory of when that happened. It was translated from Hebrew, but from what I heard he expressed no remorse. And I really regret that the state didn't let family see these people because it dehumanized them being behind this screen. It would have given us a more complete picture if we could have seen them.

J.T.: *The U.S. government was critical of the investigation. But did they do anything beyond saying the investigation had problems?*

Cindy: Actually, it was then-Senator Joe Biden who — when he was with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee — put forward questions about Rachel's case and the investigation. And his response was to list the high-level officials in the U.S. government who had asked their counterparts for information, and it was an



Craig and Cindy Corrie arrive at Haifa District Court in Israel in August.

PHOTO BY REUTERS/AMIR COHEN

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— CRAIG CORRIE

impressive list of people leading up to Secretary of State Colin Powell. Then in 2008, the head of the State Department's Citizen Services wrote to us and said that high-level officials continue to ask questions about Rachel's case, and their questions go unanswered or ignored and did not expect the Israeli government to go further.

J.T.: *The Obama administration is criticized for being anti-Israel. Has the Obama administration been different?*

Cindy: They have been supportive. We're from Iowa originally, we still have family and visit. When Obama was running, we went to a little town in Iowa and we were in a barn where he talked to 500 people. Craig asked him a question about Israel-Palestine, which seemed to surprise him a bit with this question coming from this part of Iowa, but Craig noted our daughter and Obama knew the story and he answered Craig's question about Israel-Palestine. When the trial started in 2010, Biden was in Israel meeting with officials. We had a good meeting, but the bottom line is that the U.S. government has told us that they could not conduct an investigation.

J.T.: *What's it been like for you with your daughter getting all this attention?*

Cindy: The play has been a real gift to us. It's all Rachel's words. Soon after Rachel was killed we knew how much she wanted to get the word out about how what she was witnessing in Gaza, so we released our emails she had written to family and friends and the Guardian picked them up and printed them. A friend of the actor Alan Rickman took them to a theater and said, we need to do something with this writing. I'm thrilled to see it's being performed as we speak. It's a wonderful part for a young woman. Internationally, it's been translated into many languages.

J.T.: *Do you think that Rachel is becoming a martyr or a symbol in some ways?*

Cindy: It was hard for us when the word "martyr" was used to describe her. I think that the way people in the West think about that and the way people in other parts of the world think about it is different.

Craig: But when you say symbol, I think she is for a lot of people. I think that as long as that symbol is the right symbol, and if it's based on her respect for peoples' human rights no matter where they are and doing that non-violently, I think that's a good thing.

The one that comes to my mind is a guy who wrote to me from Cairo, and he said he

was one of those that cheered when he saw the planes flying into the Twin Towers and then he read about Rachel. Then he went back to school and got an advanced degree in conflict resolution and is now teaching conflict resolution in Arab countries. If that's what a symbol does, moves somebody like that, that's a good thing.

J.T.: *Do you ever worry that Rachel's memory might be co-opted and used for something she wouldn't have supported?*

Craig: I think it worried me in the first few hours. But it just didn't go that way. We had contact from one person out of Egypt somewhere that wrote some disturbing things, and I tried to get a hold of them and say that's not the way Rachel wanted to be remembered. But it never was really going to go that way.

J.T.: *A street in Tehran is named after Rachel. What do you think about that?*

Cindy: I think that these are Craig's words, but he said, what better place to have somebody remembered who stands for non-violence, for human rights, for freedoms for all people? If she can have that impact there to improve the situation, we don't have a concern about that.

J.T.: *Before this incident had the Palestine-Israel conflict been something you paid much attention to?*

Cindy: We were like most Americans who didn't have a direct connection to the Middle East and everything we knew was based on paying some small attention to what we saw in the media.

What we knew was the Jewish narrative coming out of the Holocaust, and we read to our children stories of Anne Frank, and that's what we knew and that's where our sympathies were if we had them.

J.T.: *I was hoping you could talk about the foundation, your work with it and what you're trying to accomplish.*

Cindy: We're based in Olympia, Wash. We're a non-profit. We have a small staff and a lot of volunteers. The direction we took was really prompted by the people in our community. Some people started sending money our way after she was killed and we really didn't know what to do with it. We had meeting with people to find out what the focus should be. Building connections and maintaining connections with places like Gaza became important to us. Both providing scholarships, but also to educate our community wherever we have the opportunity to support grass roots activism and particularly non-violent action and using art and the written word. We just had Olympia's Arab Festival. We have taken delegation after delegation to Gaza, and we expect to do some exchanges in Gaza.



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