

Rais Bhuiyan's impact

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

July 19, 2011

Last month I posted about Rais Bhuiyan, the Muslim hate crime victim who is [advocating](#) that his attacker, who shot Bhuiyan as part of a post-9/11 shooting spree in which two other victims were killed, be spared the death penalty.

Bhuiyan's attacker, Mark Stroman, is scheduled to be executed tomorrow in Dallas. In an [interview](#) with Timothy Williams, Bhuiyan's comments reinforce the impression his earlier statements gave: here is a person who understands deeply his faith's call to reconciliation and peacemaking. "I decided that forgiveness was not enough," he says. "I decided I had to do something to save this person's life."

But I'm struck even more by what Stroman has to say about the situation. The convicted killer answered Williams's questions in a typewritten letter. Here's an excerpt (the ellipses are Stroman's):

Not only do I have all My friends and supporters trying to Save my Life, but now i have The Islamic Community Joining in...Spearheaded by one Very Remarkable man Named Rais Bhuiyan, Who is a Survivor of My Hate. His deep Islamic Beliefs Have gave him the strength to Forgive the Un-forgiveable...that is truly Inspiring to me, and should be an Example for us all. The Hate, has to stop, we are all in this world together. My Jesus Faith & Texas Roots have Deepened My Understanding as well. Its almost been 10 years since The world stopped Turning, and we as a nation will never be able to forget what we felt that day, I surely wont, but I can tell you what im feeling Today, and that's very grateful for Rais Bhuiyan's Efforts to save my life after I tried to end His.

It's worth noting that Bhuiyan didn't set out to teach Stroman that his beliefs about Muslims were ignorant and hateful. He set out to save Stroman from death at the hands of a justice system that argues that people like him are beyond redemption. It looks like he'll fail at that goal, but the fact that he tried helped to effect a remarkable change of heart in Stroman--who, of course, exists within the reach of grace just like everyone else does.