

Marcus & Julie Lee

Arabian nightmare - Australians now free

Marcus and Julie Lee are an Australian couple who would have preferred to have lived their lives 'under the radar' but the events that occurred between 2009 and 2014 changed them forever.

Marcus Lee is an Australian man who was accused of a crime he did not commit in a foreign country then spent five years fighting to prove his innocence.

Julie Lee is Marcus's wife - an accountant from Sydney who was forced to fight to secure her husband's freedom when he was imprisoned in three Middle Eastern jails. Throughout this time, Marcus was regularly placed in threatening and violent situations and Julie often doubted his ability to survive.

Marcus and Julie Lee's nightmare began in 2009 when Marcus was working in Dubai UAE for the 'semi-government property developer Nakheel. Following the onset of the GFC, he was unexpectedly arrested in January 2009 after allegations of fraud were made against him by an Australian company also operating in the region.

At the time of Marcus' arrest, Julie was attending her mother's 80th birthday celebrations in Australia. Not knowing what had happened to Marcus, Julie immediately boarded the next available flight to Dubai to discover that Marcus had effectively disappeared from the face of the earth.

Julie eventually learned Marcus was being held in solitary confinement in the country's notorious State Security department. He endured two months of interrogation and solitary confinement before being transferred to two other Middle Eastern jails where he remained for a total of nine months. For the first six months of his imprisonment, Marcus was summarily detained without charge.

On being granted bail in late 2009, both Marcus and Julie Lee's passports were confiscated, forcing them to remain in the UAE until his trial was over and the court had decided his fate.

Over the next four years, he endured 50 court hearings and two trials before he was finally acquitted of all charges on 20 May 2013. When the Dubai prosecutor appealed against his acquittal, he was subjected to another six months of uncertainty until his acquittal was finally upheld by the Dubai Court of Appeal in December 2013.



All charges against Marcus were dismissed and the courts unanimously found that the allegations made against him were baseless. Marcus and Julie Lee's five-year legal nightmare finally came to an end when they were able to return to Australia in January 2014.

Marcus and Julie have experienced what many could only imagine in their worst nightmares. Although knowing of Marcus' innocence all along, they were at the mercy of Dubai's questionable investigative and legal system.

Marcus and Julie were forced to navigate through not only an extremely long court process, but also a myriad of complex legal, cross cultural, translation and other issues. Despite the odds stacked against them, they were successful at achieving their ultimate goal - Marcus' acquittal and their eventual return to Australia.

Marcus' lawyer, John Sneddon, a partner at Shand Taylor Lawyers in Brisbane, was awarded the prestigious 2014 President's Medal, one of the Queensland Law Society's highest honours, for his commitment and determination in obtaining Marcus' freedom.

Marcus and Julie's story is about triumphing over extreme adversity, the power of persistence, self-belief and hope and the strength of their relationship in the face of impossible odds.

Speaker options:

- Marcus Lee
- Julie Lee
- Marcus and Julie Lee together

Together or separately, Marcus and Julie have a fascinating, frightening and ultimately triumphant story to tell, one that is sure to hold a wide range of audiences spellbound.

Marcus Lee talks about:

- Dealing with and confronting adversatives
- Strength of relationships and reliance on those close to you
- What to do when things go wrong
- How to navigate through, deal with and address the key issues
- Life as an Australian in a Middle East prison - how do you survive?

Julie Lee talks about:

- Julie's relationship with Marcus
- What to do when faced with unknown circumstances and impossible odds
- How to isolate and understand the core issues, the issues that matter
- Triumphant over seemingly impossible adversities
- Belief that the 'truth will prevail'

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