

**Susan Hirsch, Virginia**  
**Wife of Abdulrahman “Jamal”**  
**Abdalla, killed in Tanzania in 1998**

Susan Hirsch’s husband Jamal was killed in the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Tanzania. Susan herself was injured during the bomb blast. Four men faced trial in connection with the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and federal prosecutors sought the death penalty for two of the defendants. All four were ultimately sentenced to life in prison without parole.

Susan describes her experiences in her recent book *In the Moment of Greatest Calamity: Terrorism, Grief, and a Victim’s Quest for Justice*, and she has spoken about her opposition to the death penalty on National Public Radio, at the Library of Congress, and in many other venues. She now works at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University.

“The prosecutors urged me to testify during the penalty phase of the trial, but I felt it was disingenuous of them to try to convince me to tell my story on the theory that it would give me a sense of closure or honor Jamal’s memory. In that context, my story would be used to argue for a death sentence, and that was not what I wanted. One of the things I found most frustrating about the specter of the death penalty is that it would not allow for the possibility of the individuals coming to a full understanding of what they’d done. In that sense, the death penalty is the opposite of accountability.”

**Links to more information:**

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6582381>

<http://gazette.gmu.edu/articles/9342/>

<http://bostonreview.net/BR27.5/hirsch.html>



*Susan Hirsch*



*Jamal and Susan*