

Challenge Profile:

London Marathon for Amnesty International

Dr David Nicholl

Born 1965 – Consultant Neurologist

The Challenge: 'Running for Justice' 2005 London Marathon dressed as a Guantanamo detainee



The London Marathon is a very high profile event that was taking place three weeks before the General Election, which was an ideal time to raise awareness of the British residents still being held in

Guantanamo as well as raise money for Amnesty International. I ran in an orange jump suit and a set of chains. The image

I was trying to create was very much like the little girl in red in "Schindler's List" - in London I was one runner in Guantanamo kit out of 30,000 others. I spent ages searching the Internet for an appropriate outfit that I would be able to run in, then I managed to find a US medical supplies company that sold orange surgical scrubs- they are based in George Bush's home state of Texas!

My time was 4 hours and 43 minutes.

The Charity - Amnesty International

Amnesty International (AI) is a worldwide movement of people who campaign for internationally recognized human rights.

I have been an Amnesty member for years. Growing up in Belfast, I saw the effect of internment. I wanted to show that the first casualty of the 'War on Terror' was human rights.

Humour is a fantastic way to get people to think of even a very complex issue such as Guantanamo Bay. I did this in 2 ways: by singing Englebert Humperdink's "Please Release Me" en route (see photo) and by shouting out

at the end of each mile "Only another 25 miles of torture to go". I also had a very loud whistle to draw attention to myself for those who were colour blind.

There is just so much competition for media space on the actual day of the marathon so the trick is to develop your media build-up BEFORE the marathon. For example, do a training run in your fancy dress into the middle of your local town etc and hope the press turn up. I have been covered in 20 different national and local media, including the Times newspaper and BBC News 24.

Diary

Best Moment

On the day of the Marathon was lucky enough to meet Terry Waite.

Hardest Moment

The day before the marathon when I, and the relatives of 3 Guantanamo families, were refused access to Number 10 Downing Street, and having to negotiate with the Police without getting myself arrested!

Training Tip

Start running! Follow a marathon training programme (Runners' Worlds are great), and build up with a 10km and half-marathon as part of your training. Get decent kit (especially shoes and socks- I have yet to ever get a blister!).

Biggest Problem

I suffered a knee injury 3 weeks before the marathon (iliotibial band syndrome) when I felt like Paula Radcliffe in the Athens Olympics, and it all looked like it was going pear-shaped. Luckily, my physio Emma, (physio with British Netball team) saved the day — it's the one time in my life I've pulled all the NHS connections I had to get the end result!

Fundraising Tip

Set up a Justgiving web-page. Change the page regularly and use it as a point of contact for everyone from friends to journalists. Give regular e-mail up-dates of progress.

"Running the marathon taught me how to turn my anger into activism. Apathy is the greatest global evil, don't get apathetic, get active!"



Dr David Nicholl sings "Please Release Me" during the London Marathon to the surprise of fellow participants