

# Psychiatrist, Telehealth Pioneer, and Author Dr. Muhamad Aly Rifai Recently Featured on Close Up Radio

EASTON, PA, UNITED STATES, January 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dr. Muhamad Aly Rifai, MD, one of the nation's leading psychiatrists and a pioneer in telepsychiatry, has released a riveting new book detailing his two-year legal battle with the US Department of Justice. In "Doctor Not Guilty" (published July 2024, Amazon #1 Bestseller), Dr. Rifai shares the extraordinary events surrounding his indictment on federal healthcare fraud charges, his steadfast refusal to accept a guilty plea, and his ultimate acquittal by jury verdict.

Dr. Rifai's story is not only one of personal resilience but also a rare look inside the mechanics of federal healthcare investigations, the challenges physicians face under regulatory scrutiny, and the urgent need for reforms within the nation's legal and medical systems.



## Pioneering Telepsychiatry Long Before the Pandemic

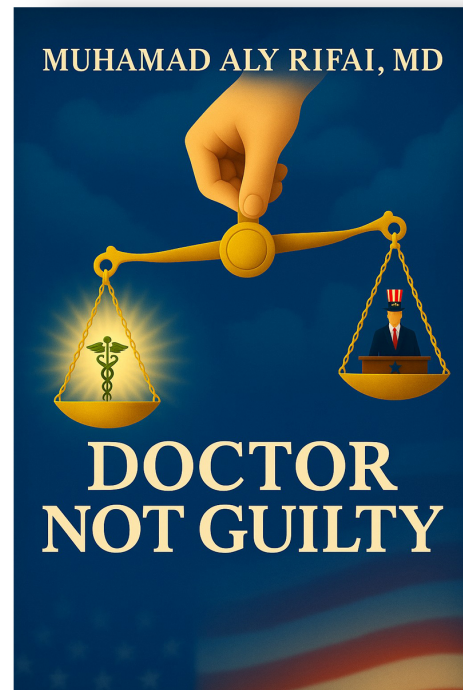
Dr. Rifai's dedication to medicine began early, with a natural inclination for psychiatry and a deep interest in understanding human behavior. As a quadruple board-certified physician in psychiatry, internal medicine, addiction medicine, and medical management, as well as a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, a Fellow of the American College of Physicians, and a Fellow of the Academy of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry, Dr. Rifai has long been recognized as a leader in his field. He was elected president of his local psychiatric society and has been acknowledged for his innovative work in delivering psychiatric treatment to rural and underserved populations.

His work in telepsychiatry began in 2006, well before telehealth became mainstream. Serving thousands of vulnerable patients in rural Pennsylvania, Dr. Rifai saved Medicare significant resources while increasing access to mental health care. His efforts were recognized by Medicare, which commended his cost-saving practices and commitment to patient care.

In November 2022, at the height of the nationwide shift to telehealth services, the Department of Justice brought four counts of healthcare fraud against Dr. Rifai, alleging that he did not provide psychotherapy in line with government time requirements. Specifically, investigators claimed that his telehealth sessions did not consistently meet the 16-minute minimum for reimbursement, despite documentation to the contrary.

Dr. Rifai, who has written manuals and taught courses on telepsychiatry, found himself embroiled in a confusing and contentious legal battle. Despite his compliance with American Medical Association codes and Medicare guidelines, and despite his pioneering status in telehealth, he faced intense pressure to accept a plea agreement. He refused, certain of his innocence and confident in his documentation.

"I did not do anything wrong," Dr. Rifai says. "I followed all the rules, taught others how to do so, and urged my staff to comply with every regulation. Yet I was targeted and prosecuted as an example at a time when telehealth was expanding across the country."



## Inside the Six-Day Jury Trial

The federal trial, which began April 30, 2024 and ran for six days, unveiled the weaknesses in the government's case. The prosecution relied on non-clinical interpretations of Dr. Rifai's medical notes and brought in an expert who, under cross-examination, reversed her position and admitted that she did not support the government's charges or its investigation. The government also compelled former staff to testify under threat of prosecution, yet their statements were discredited in open court using their own authenticated documentation.

The government's claims extended to accusing Dr. Rifai of billing for deceased patients, with evidence so inconsistent that it included patients who had died before Dr. Rifai's medical career began and even before his birth. Ultimately, the jury deliberated less than three hours before returning a definitive "not guilty" verdict on all charges.

## The Personal Cost and Fight for Accountability

Dr. Rifai's defense consumed over one million dollars in legal expenses, made possible only by the support of his physician siblings and parents. His acquittal has prompted him to seek reimbursement of attorney fees and sanctions against the prosecutors under the 1997 Hyde Amendment, which allows prevailing defendants to recover costs in cases deemed frivolous, vexatious, or prosecuted in bad faith. That legal fight continues on appeal.

"The government's case was built on a fundamental lack of understanding and a disregard for both evidence and the realities of modern medicine," Dr. Rifai explains. "Despite all I had done for Medicare, for my patients, and for the profession, I became the target of a baseless prosecution. My story is about the need for accountability, transparency, and reform."

"Doctor Not Guilty" shares Dr. Rifai's first-hand account of this ordeal, offering important lessons for physicians and professionals facing legal scrutiny. He discusses the critical importance of never speaking directly to investigators without legal counsel, the pitfalls of government quotas in prosecutions, and the disconnect between regulatory agencies and practitioners.

"There is a profound disconnect within the system," Dr. Rifai notes. "While the Department of Justice was trying to convict me, Medicare itself was urging me to continue seeing my patients, knowing that my work was essential. The people who suffer most from these misguided prosecutions are the patients: the elderly, the disabled, and the underserved who rely on dedicated doctors willing to serve rural communities."

## A Voice for Physicians and Patients

As Dr. Rifai resumes his clinical practice and leads the fight for redress, he continues to write and advocate for policy change. His next book, tentatively titled "People V Medicine," will further document the challenges faced by physicians targeted by regulatory bodies.

“Doctor Not Guilty” is available now on Amazon and select booksellers.

About Muhamad Aly Rifai, MD

Dr. Muhamad Aly Rifai is a quadruple board-certified psychiatrist, Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, Fellow of the American College of Physicians, Fellow of the Academy of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry, author, and telehealth pioneer serving Pennsylvania. He is a former NIH researcher and past president of his local psychiatric society. His work has been recognized for advancing patient care in psychiatry and expanding access to mental health services. Dr. Rifai is available for interviews, podcasts, and speaking engagements to discuss his case, his views on healthcare reform, and the future of medicine in America.

Close Up Radio recently featured Muhamad Aly Rifai, MD, author of “Doctor Not Guilty” in a two-part interview with Jim Masters on Tuesday January 6th at 9am EST and with Doug Llewelyn on Tuesday January 13th at 9am EST

[Listen to the Podcast](#)

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For more information about Muhamad Aly Rifai, MD and “Doctor Not Guilty,” please visit

<https://doctornotguilty.com/>

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