

Interview 12

This interview was conducted by the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC) of The Graduate Center, City University of New York (June 2002 – March 2003).

Gender of respondent: Female

Age: 27

Q. Okay. I'd like to first start by asking you a few questions about yourself. Where were you born?

A. I was born in Englewood, New Jersey.

Q. And where did you grow up?

A. I grew up in Cliffside Park, New Jersey. And I grew up part of the time in Rumala in the West Bank.

Q. Is that where your family is from?

A. Yeah. My family is from ... from that area.

Q. Both your parents were born there?

A. Both my parents are from the same town called [name of town]. It's a small town outside of Rumala.

Q. What would you say your ethnic background is?

A. Palestinian.

Q. What is your religious affiliation?

A. Muslim.

Q. How old are you?

A. Twenty-seven.

Q. And you're a U.S. citizen. Right?

A. Yes.

Q. And what is your highest level of education?

A. I have a Bachelor's degree and am beginning my Masters.

Q. What was your field or major?

A. My major was, I got a double major. I got a BFA in theater and a BA in Political Science.

Q. Where did you obtain your education?

A. At Arizona State University.

Q. What is your main occupation?

A. I'm a professional stand-up comic.

Q. What is your marital status?

A. Very single.

Q. Now I'd like to start by asking you a few questions about how you experienced September 11th.

A. Okay.

Q. Where were you on that day around 9 a.m.?

A. Around 9 a.m.? Actually, that day a bit prior to 9 a.m., I was driving across the George Washington Bridge, getting ready to go to [town], where I do extra work on and my cell phone rang and it was my mother asking me where I was. I told her I was on the George Washington Bridge and she told me to turn around for home. I said, "Well, I can't turn around. I'm on the way to work." She said, "do you know what's happening?" and I said, "No, I have no idea." She was, like, "There's a huge fire downtown." She was on route 80 West in New Jersey and she could actually see the fire and the first impact and all that stuff. She said, "Turn on your radio and turn around." I was listening to a CD so I had no idea. So I took an exit off the bridge and on 179th I made a left and got back on the bridge. By the time I got back to Cliffside, which is the town I live in, the first town over the George Washington Bridge, the second building was on fire. I went to my Dad's house and I was, like, "What is going on?" And they showed the replay of the second plane hitting the building and I was, like, Oh my God! And, like, immediately, immediately we knew that, you know, this was no accident. So my Dad and I went out to

... We live on the cliff and from the cliff you can see all of Manhattan. We went out on the cliff to see what was going on and there was, I mean, literally hundreds of people standing on the cliff. As we were standing there we saw the first building collapse. When the first building collapsed all these people started screaming and crying. And my Dad was like, "You know what? Let's go inside." He was, like, "We have no business being out here right now." So we went inside and we sat and watched TV for, like, the next three days.

Q. What did he mean by that, that you have no business being out there?

A. It's too dangerous. Like, there's no reason that we should be outside with all this happening. 'Cause I know that my instinct was like, after the first plane hit, the second plane hit, at that point I was completely expecting something to hit the Empire State Building, something to hit the G.W. Bridge. And it was, like, you don't stand outside while things like this are going on. So we went inside and started watching the news. And then all the phone calls had to go out, because my three best friends from high school, I grew up, I went from kindergarten through twelfth grade with the same twelve girls. Three of the girls work in the downtown area. One of them works for Mercer, which was on, like, the ninety-sixth floor of one of the buildings. My brother-in-law works on the eighty-sixth floor of the North Tower, so we were making all the phone calls trying to figure out who was there and who wasn't. We called my sister and found out that my brother-in-law had been on the ferry, the Imperial ferry down in Edgewater on his way when they turned the ferry back. So all that stuff was said and done.

Q. What was your first reaction?

A. What was my first reaction?

Q. Did you think there could have been a possibility of the terrorists?

A. No real immediate, like, I'll tell you the God's honest truth, immediately, when my mother called and she said a plane hit the first Tower I was, like, okay. You know, some idiot, first of all, I pictured, like, a prop plane, like, a little tiny plane, 'cause I wasn't

seeing any. It was all on the radio and when I heard on the radio that a second plane had hit I knew immediately that it was terrorism. Like, there was no doubt in my mind.

Q. How did you feel? Did you think they could have been Middle Eastern or?

A. Yeah. I mean, I shouldn't buy into the stereotype but my initial reaction was, I said to my father immediately, was, "Please, God, don't let it be Palestinians. Don't let it be Palestinians. I don't care who did this, please don't let it be Palestinians, and then, like, I guess, you know, forty-five minutes, an hour into it I was talking to my Dad and I was, like, "You know what? Palestinians don't even have the capability to do something like this." I was pretty, like, sure that, it wasn't them. And then, like, within a couple of hours they showed the footage, you know, the alleged footage of the Palestinians reveling in the street. You know? Whether or not they were or weren't, you know? You know? I don't know if they were or weren't, but they showed that and I was just like, "Oh, for the love of God, we are consistently doing the stupidest things." But, I mean, at first I had so much fear that Palestinians would be involved. And then, like, literally within half an hour, forty-five minutes, I was, like, we could have never pulled this off.

Q. What were your feelings about what happened immediately afterwards?

A. About, like, about the towers and everything? Oh, I was in shock on two levels because, one, like, I've lived in Cliffside Park, New Jersey, my whole life basically except for the three months every year that I've lived in the West Bank, and I couldn't believe they were gone. Like, forget about the numbers and all that stuff. Physically we can see the Towers every single day and they're just gone. And I remember, like, any time anyone would visit us we would go up to the top of the Twin Towers and they were just gone. So my initial reaction was just, like, shock as to the fact like, "Oh my God, they're gone." The second thing that happened to me was my best friend in the entire world works at the Pentagon. So I got through with everything that happened at the Towers and started, like, getting in contact with people. I couldn't get in contact with him in Washington D.C. until 2 p.m. the next day. So that was just, like, really shocking. And

then, you know, I mean, my reaction. I was, like, I couldn't believe that all these people had been killed. I mean, it was really just, it was really shocking. I went into the city the second night with a police escort because I had to go in and do ... I mean, it sounds like really frivolous work but we had to shoot some scenes that just you know, needed to be done, and there was no one on the street. You could lie down on 9th Avenue and it was, like, the city was just completely dead. And we all knew in that moment that, like, the city had forever changed. It was almost like that was completely and utterly the end of the innocence for this City and for this time. Like, it's done. No one would ever feel safe again. I have a different reaction to, like, the "do I feel safe, do I not feel safe" question, because I've lived in militarized areas. You know? When you've lived in a place where it's not uncommon to have tanks come in and bulldoze and be shot at and, you know, have bombs going off left and right, it's less shocking to be living in that area. But, I mean, just my friends were livid, livid human beings. You know? And it was sad. I mean, it was just incredibly, incredibly sad that all these people had died, and it was incredibly sad that all these peoples' families were looking for them when, like, anyone in their right mind knew these people were gone. And it was also, like, you know, I felt like, I felt like, wow! This is a real wake up call, because the United States has never felt, you know, numbers like this since 1948, which is a long time ago anyway, with Pearl Harbor, you know, not even, whenever Pearl Harbor was. But I felt like they were finally going to understand what it was like to lose that many people. Losing one person is sad. Losing many people is a statistic. I don't feel like, you know, the United States hadn't had that experience in a long time of just losing that many people in one shot.

Q. Have your feelings changed since the events?

A. In what way?

Q. In the sense that it was a sort of end of innocence and there was a sadness basically plaguing the City?

A. It's still there. I mean, there, it's, you know, it's triple fold. Number one is, like, people

never talked about anything... there is not a single day that goes by where people don't use September 11th as a pre or post. It was before September 11th. It was after September 11th. Everything is a point of reference to that date. Second of all, for us who work in the entertainment industry, like, we've never recovered. Before September 11th the City was booming. This summer I'm practically broke, because so few people are coming into the city and then also for us, like, the fire station that's located right next door to where *As the world Turns Studio* is, was wiped out completely, so every time we walk past the fire station we still see it. You know? I mean, within the first weeks after, everyone was, so kind and they're not that way any more and I feel like, you know, they're in, like, the anger stage at this point. Like, people are just really nasty at this point in the city.

Q. What would you say is your most vivid memory of September 11th?

A. My most vivid memory was watching the second Tower drop.

Q. Did you feel any guilt as an Arab-American?

A. Absolutely not.

Q. When Americans asked you about your ethnic background before September 11th what did you tell them?

A. Palestinian.

Q. And what about immediately after?

A. Palestinian.

Q. What do you say now?

A. The same thing, Palestinian. I have very... I mean, I have very distinct and strong opinions about, you know, this whole thing. I feel like, you know, I was interviewed by Channel 11 immediately after everything happened. And to me, the people who did this, you know, whoever they are, they're no more Arab-Muslim than Timothy McVeigh represents an American Christian. I don't think that zealots should be given the right to represent a culture or a religion just because they choose to wear that culture or religion. You know? No one in the world would say that Timothy McVeigh represents Americans.

He would ... He served for America, for God's sakes. No one would say he represents a Christian. He would, you know, and that's how I feel about these people. I feel like they don't represent Islam in any way, shape or form. Islam itself has been completely, completely denigrated and distorted by everything that happened, and they don't represent the Arab culture. I have no shame in who I am. And I mean, I've had... I've had really, you know, ludicrous things happened because I am Arab to me and...

Q. Before September 11th?

A. No, after.

Q. After?

A. Yeah. And, I mean, I feel like just such utter disgust for these people who are doing it because there's, there's so much of a lack of education and a lack of knowledge and a lack of understanding that's going on right now. You know? I feel like right after September 11th people are, like, the Muslims are our friends and this is... You know? We're not going to punish the whole culture. And that's completely been undermined by the way, you know, the State Department is dealing with basically courting people to report people who have suspicious behavior, and so on and so forth. I mean, my big story was I rent a shore house down the shore every, down the Jersey shore every single year and I rent it, you know from Memorial Day to September 7th. Every year for five years I've been doing this. This year my car got keyed because I have Arabic CDs not, like, hanging from the mirror but they're all over the seat and someone claimed, you know, that the license plate on my car said Al-Qaeda.

Q. My goodness.

A. And it says [name removed].

Q. [Spelling]. Yeah.

A. And they keyed my car. And I came back and I asked my roommates, my roommates whom I've known for five years, did anyone see what happened and my roommate looked me dead in the eye and said, "What do you expect when your license plate says Al-

Qaeda."

Q. Oh, goodness.

A. And I said, "[name], it says [name removed] okay?" So, like, if anyone came up to me and was, like, why does your roommate's car say so and so, I'd be like, "Oh, that's their last name. I wouldn't be, like, I don't know. She was like... I said, "What'd you say to them?" She said, "I don't know. I just told them that you were an Arab and I have no idea." and I was like, "that's great."

Q. How long had she been your roommate?

A. Five years. Yeah. I mean, it's weird. Like, my friends from Cliffside where I grew up, I've had no variation in their behavior towards me. My friends in South Jersey have been insane... have been like, literally nuts. My friends called the police on us because I had gone down there with seven Arab guys, like, a couple of my cousins and their friends, and there just happened to be no other girls other than me. We were sitting on the lawn playing cards and the guys were drinking and we were all speaking Arabic because that's what we do. They called the police because they claimed that they were really uncomfortable that they were acting, we were acting suspicious that they couldn't...

Q. Suspicious by playing cards?

A. Yeah, and drinking alcohol down the shore, which is basically what people do, and no one came up to me and asked me, hey, like, what are you guys talking about? No one tried to, like, sit and join in on the conversation. They called the cops on us.

Q. How long after September 11th was this?

A. This was, like, this was 4th of July weekend, so, you know, it's like ten months later.

Q. Okay. You mentioned that somebody had keyed your car. Have you experienced any other backlash after 9-11?

A. People keyed my car. My roommates calling, you know, calling the cops. I was, I was held when, when they first started doing the check points in New York which they, you know are so obsolete and they have no point in even being there, when it first happened

and they were pulling over people. I was pulled over for twenty-three minutes. You know? And, you know I just, I see peoples' faces when they see the last name. Like, I got pulled over for making a right on red where you weren't supposed to, and the cop came up to my car and he was, like, pleasant as punch, he was the nicest guy you've ever seen in your life. And I was, like, you're not going to give me a ticket? He's, like, "No." He was, like, "But let me just make sure that you have your license and registration and everything." And I was thinking so much that my insurance is really going to go up. He looked at my license, his face turned red, his hands started shaking and he gave me a ticket.

Q. Really?

A. And I was, like, "Okay." You know? But the other thing is, I mean, I'm very, very blatantly Arab and I've seen people that have been, like, covering their cars with American flags and toning it down. I'm the polar opposite because, if anything, I'm more proud to be an Arab than I ever am, because I know that this is not what the Arab culture represents. And I'm, like, ... I've been really disgusted by the attitude that, you know, has been going on in America where I've, I've heard people say, you know, let's just kill them all or let's... You know? All of my friends, like, when I talk about the problems in the Middle East, like they immediately assume that the whole Arab world is terrorists, because they've been taught it by the media and by the government. The word terrorist has become, like, a word that has absolutely no meaning whatsoever because they're comparing... Every single activity that happens now is terrorist activity. You know? For me... for me the big thing that... like, September 11th has changed for me is that, like, I've always been a very staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause and my friends have always supported whatever I do. And now they've been manipulated into believing that the Palestinians are terrorists, you know, which they're not. But because now they have a picture in their head of what a terrorist is and what a terrorist does, now all of a sudden they have, like, no sympathy and no support and this blind... blind support for Israel

because the Mus--Muslim terrorists have been used to describe the Palestinian people. You know? They're not, but, you know...?

Q. Has a member of your family experienced backlash?

A. Yeah. My Dad had a really rough time because, like, I come from a family ... we're four girls and we blend. Even when we're not blending we blend. My Dad is, like, a stereotypical Arab man. So, I mean, he's had people yell at him, "Go back to your country." He was in the A&P and somebody threw a bottle of A1 steak sauce at him. You know? I mean, yeah. He was definitely, like... he was more shaken than any of us were, because he came in '67 and was from the generation that did everything in their power to blend. And, you know he was worried about, like, going to work and you know, having people come near his house. He hung a huge American flag and you know...?

Q. Do you think Arab-American organizations have been effective in handling the backlash against these groups after 9/11?

A. Absolutely not. I don't. I don't. I know that the ADC has done incredible, incredible work in protecting those who have been affected already. But as far as prevention goes, no. I don't think that we've done enough to separate ourselves, to reiterate over and over that these are zealot groups that do not represent Arab-Americans. I don't... I don't think that we've educated enough. I don't think that we've done anything, to really draw that line, the proverbial line in the sand: that's, like, we are not these people.

Q. What do you think organizations can do better to mobilize the community?

A. Much more with...

Q. To do what? I'm sorry.

A. I think that we need to liaison.

Q. Okay.

A. Much more. Actually I'm working on doing that myself. I think we need to liaison much more with our politically elected officials to further reinforce the fact that the United States government does not support hate crimes towards the Arab-Americans. I

think that we need to work more with the media to show the difference between the extremists and the... and the... and the moderates. And I think that we need to work more within our communities to, you know be preventive and be part of the community. I think that, like, there was an instinct for everyone to, like, kind of pull away and get even more cliquy. I know that with my Arab friends we all started hanging out much more with each other, because we just didn't want to be part of the, you know the hate that seemed to be developing towards our collective people so Arab people just started hanging out with each other. And I think that's so important that we're, like, out there, constantly out there saying this does not represent us. These are not our views. These are not our actions.

Q. Um-hum. Have you joined...?

A. And this is not the first time in the world that terrorism has happened and it will continue to happen. And this is not, you know, the first time in the world. And when you say stuff like that people are, like, Oh my God! You're so unsympathetic. No. It's not that I'm unsympathetic. I live in the Manhattan area. I knew people that were in those buildings. My best friend was in the Pentagon. That is one of... that is by far the most horrifying experience I have ever lived through.

Q. I can only imagine.

A. Like, I mean, horrifying; unbelievable; trying to look for people; going into work, you know as a stand up comic, I have audiences and I have people that come in every week that never showed up again. You know? It was horrifying. However, you know I feel, like, lost in all of the ... in all of this, was the fact that you know, why do these things happen? Why do these things happen? And I'm not saying that people have to change the way they live, that cater to the zealots. But on the part of you know America it felt like it was so blind to not know why these things happened. And I feel like, you know, people have completely forgotten that. We lost three thousand people in the World Trade Center. That is horrifying and yet still, when there's a landslide in India and twenty thousand are

killed it's not up on the screen.

Q. Have you joined any organization since 9-11?

A. I became much, much more active in the ADC and I joined the NAAADC, which is the government-affiliated branch of the ADC.

Q. In what capacity? What do you do with these organizations?

A. With the NAAADC I'm one of the liaisons for Senator Clinton's office.

Q. Have your feelings towards the U.S. changed since 9-11?

A. Have my feelings towards the U.S. changed? No. My feelings towards the U.S. have changed since George Bush became President, not since 9/11. I think that I would have a completely different attitude if Clinton was still President. I think our administration handled this just about as terribly as we possibly could.

Q. Has your level of political awareness changed since?

A. Yeah, absolutely.

Q. In what way?

A. I'm more aware of...I'm more aware of foreign policy. I'm more aware of domestic policy. I'm more aware of... I'm much, much more aware of the thing that I've become the most aware of is that the U.S. government has the power to really just obliterate privacy in personal life under the guise of security. And that's what I've become really aware of, that's why I watch every day the government slowly, but surely trying to get more and more access to our private lives and really just starting to resemble, you know Germany and other... and Russia and other countries; I mean, Cold War Germany and Russia where they feel like they totally no longer have to persecute people. Like, I'm very aware that after September 11th we've had thousands of detainees that have not had charges pressed against them. This is not what the American government is supposed to be doing. This does not fall in line with the ethics and the standards that were set by the U.S. Constitution. I feel like, you know, when I sit and watch the government talk about racial profiling in U.S. customs and finger printing and photographing that they've completely

really made a sharp right turn towards promoting racism on every level... I think that... I find it disgusting the way that, you know and that's the thing that I'm following the most politically is the ideas of racial profiling; the ideas of photographing and finger... finger printing Middle Easterners when they come into this country because I feel like it's a complete ... complete violation of you know, privacy and that really the government, in even introducing these bills and in introducing these, you know objectives are promoting racism to the twenty millionth degree. You know? When Colin Powell said: yeah, we are going to have racial profiling, I'm wondering how the community would have reacted if he had said, you know we are going to start watching black people more closely again. When I hear that they want to finger print and photograph Middle Easterners that are coming into the United States, I have to wonder in my mind how would people react if they were only finger printing and photographing African-Americans that were coming in or if they were only finger printing and photographing Jewish citizens that were coming in. It's ludicrous that some ... some of the moves that the American government is making are racist and a complete violation of all the freedoms that we supposedly have in this country.

Q. Do you feel a sense of belonging to the United States?

A. Do I feel a sense of belonging? Absolutely. Absolutely.

Q. Have you always felt like this?

A. I felt so much, much, much more before September 11th than after. I was much more tied to this country. I've always been ...I've always been very politically active. I've, you know done fund-raisers with the Democrats and stuff like that. I'm starting to feel less attached, because I feel like I'm less cared for in this... in this... I feel like my views have completely stopped being represented.

Q. Um-hum. By society in general or the government?

A. By the government.

Q. Do you think that there's been a change in the way people from the Middle East

have been treated in the United States since 9-11?

A. Absolutely.

Q. How?

A. I mean, people have stopped going to their stores. I know this, you know, first hand. We're getting plucked off of airplanes, which is insane. People are afraid of us. People are suspicious of us. People are completely unkind. I've had so many different people, like, pick a fight with me about the Middle East because they feel like we all sat there, you know, a couple of million of us sat there and said let's take down the twin towers. I mean, they're absolutely, absolutely has been, like, a lack of sensitivity towards our community and just, like, we're treated like third class citizens, not even second class citizens. There's absolutely no value ... no value whatsoever for Arab or Muslim life at this point.

Q. In your opinion, what would you say the nature of the relationship between Arab-Americans is in the United States at this time?

A. I think it's... I mean, I've found, at least with my friends, that it's still the... the strange desire to prove that it wasn't us. And it's... I mean, I still think that there's this hugely apologetic atmosphere going on. I feel like, you know we're trying to restore that trust that we feel is lacking now.

Q. What do you think our community can do to improve the relations between the ethnic groups now?

A. All the same things that I said, which is, like, when the government is taking the present initiatives, like racial profiling in the INS initiative, that we need to explain that we're just the first group; that if we start being, you know persecuted and if we start being segregated and if we start having all these things happen to us, you're next. The Chicanos will be next and after the Chicanos it'll be you know the Blacks and after the Blacks, the Chinese and after... If you let one group in this country be persecuted then you're all open to have it happen to you.

Q. Well, given your understanding of the status of Middle Eastern immigrant

groups in the U.S. after 9/11 would you encourage people from these countries to emigrate to the United States?

A. Absolutely I would. I don't think immigration should end because, you know, it's gotten more difficult, because I don't believe in playing into the stereotype. If you know that you've done nothing wrong and you want to seek a better education or better employment by coming to the United States then you have that right and you should be able to come here just like a person from any other country should.

Q. And what is it about the United States that would be, that would somewhat be, like, a reason for them to come?

A. I... I would say, you know, number one, being from a Palestinian background, they have you know, they have no life whatsoever over there. They have no ... You know? Men are either detained, killed or disabled by the time that they're twenty-five. So if you want to, for some reason, survive past your thirties it's a good idea for people like that to come here where it's not militarized and I feel like that education, I feel it's extremely important for people in Middle Eastern cultures to have education. In European cultures, you know countries have great universities but so does the United States. I mean, you know, it still is a land of opportunity. It still is, you know the best place in the world to get an education, to get a job, to get, you know, a well-rounded life.

Q. We have talked about some of the negative consequences. Do you think that there were any positive consequences of 9/11?

A. No, not a single one. I thought that after it happened that there would be more of a cohesiveness, more of, like, people gaining understand about you know the value of life and the value of all the things that in that day were taken away in one brief moment. But they're not. They're not. If anything I've seen, like, less of a value for life then I ever have.

Q. Do you think that there's been more visibility and improved understanding of the Middle East or Muslims in the U.S. because of this entire incident?

A. No, absolutely not. There has been less visibility and more misunderstanding, more

confusion as to what we represent than ever. If I hear one more person on television talk about the seventy virgins that these terrorists were going to get I'm going to push my fist through the TV screen because no one... no one has made an effort to actually study Islam and see that this is an urban legend and that none of this is true. I've heard more misquotes, more misrepresentations of Islam in the past ten months, maybe because I'm listening to TV more than I have in my entire life. And when I watch Fox, you know Fox News Network and I hear the ludicrous perverted things that they're saying about Muslims, I mean, it's unbelievable that they're even getting away with it. I watch Curtis Sliwa on MSNBC and I'm livid that someone's allowed ... allowed to be an utter racist under the guise of look at what these people did to us.

Q. Why do you think the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon happened?

A. See, that's the proverbial answer. I think that the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon happened, because of zealot extremists that have no comprehension of how government works and how the peace process works and how any of these things works felt that violence would be a means to an end. They felt that they could scare the United States into changing its foreign policy, which is completely wrong. And you know if anything it causes people to go in the opposite direction. I think what motivated these insane extremists to do so is U.S. foreign policy. I think the fact that, you know the United States has a strangle hold on the people of Iraq and has been starving them to death for the past ten years has pissed these people off. I think that their actions in Saudi Arabia really, really upset these already crazy, unstable zealot groups. And, you know I think the fact that every bullet that's killed an Arab in the past you know, thirty-five years, has been made in the U.S.A. has really angered people. And when you're consistently, consistently doing things to hurt this area of the world, extremists and people who don't understand that violence accomplishes nothing; that innocent people are not responsible for the actions of their governments, would take a measure like this to

say: we're dying every day. You're going to know what it feels like to do the same. And it's completely wrong and you know, accomplishes nothing. If anything, it's detrimental. Civilians have no responsibility for what's happening in the world. But I really think that's the reason it happened.

Q. Do you think that the Arabs or the Muslims in the Middle East hate America?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. Because I know the Arabs and the Muslims in the Middle East and... and they don't. If anything they're dying to come here.

Q. What do you think the U.S. can do to resolve the problem of terrorism directed against it?

A. What do I think the U.S. can do to resolve the problem of terrorism? I don't... You know, I don't know the answer to that question because I feel like terrorism is such you know an uncontrollable kind of thing and you can't rationally... You can't... You know, you can't sit and be rational with terrorists. You can't bargain with terrorists. If they want to do it, they're going to do it. There's nothing that anyone can do to stop terrorism. There really isn't. You know? And in a country like this where you know, it's... it's not a country that's an occupier or it's not a country that's colonizing a certain place ... acts of terrorism in the United States are haphazard. You're never going to be able to satisfy every zealot group. You know? Acts of terrorism abroad, those, on the other hand, have ways of being stopped because I think they're a direct reaction to what's happening to certain groups of people. But in the United States I really don't think... I think that if they conceded to every single thing that every single Arab and every single Muslim group wanted they'd still have domestic terrorism. They'd still have, you know, the one person that still thinks that they didn't do enough. I really don't think there's any way to do it.

Q. Are there any other issues or points that you'd like to comment on that we haven't mentioned in this interview?

A. About what's happened post-September 11th?

Q. Um-hum.

A. No. I'd just like to reiterate that I have a... a fear that this country that I was born and raised in is slowly but surely disintegrating into a racist nation again and I hope to God that this becomes evident to the rest of the people in the world and that it stops. And I don't think that out of fear we should sacrifice everything that the country does represent.

Q. Okay. Well, thank you very much for your cooperation.

A. Thank you so much.