

Interview 6

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: Male

Age: 41

Q. The project I'm working on is called the September 11th Digital Archive, and I'm going to be asking you some questions about yourself and about how you feel about September 11th and everything that's happened afterwards. There is no right or wrong answer. And if there's any question you don't want to answer just tell me.

Where were you born?

A. In Beirut.

Q. And where did you grow up?

A. In Beirut.

Q. When did you come to the United States?

A. 1989.

Q. Where was your father born?

A. Beirut.

Q. And your mom?

A. Beirut. All of them from Beirut.

Q. Okay. What's your religious affiliation?

A. Religion? Muslim.

Q. And your age?

A. Forty-one.

Q. So are you a U.S. citizen or green card holder?

A. Yes, citizen.

Q. Thank you. What is your highest level of education?

A. ... from Poland.

Q. I'm sorry.

A. Technician from ... for dentist.

Q. In Poland?

A. Yeah, in Poland.

Q. What is your main occupation?

A. [Dentist]

Q. And your marital status?

A. I am married.

Q. Do you have children?

A. Yeah, three.

Q. What are their ages?

A. [Ages of children].

Q. And the seven year old is male?

A. A girl and two boys, [ages].

Q. Now I'd like to ask you a couple of questions about September 11th and how you experienced it. Where were you that day around 9 o'clock in the morning?

A. I was at work.

Q. How did you hear about the attacks?

A. From the TV.

Q. What was your first reaction?

A. Oh, I was ... was sad.

Q. Did you think at all that it might be Muslims that were behind it?

A. No. I don't think that at all.

Q. What is your most vivid memory of September 11th? Is there anything that you're never going to forget from that day?

A. So I lost my friends, two friends.

Q. They were working in the World Trade Center?

A. Yeah. They lived there in Eighth Avenue.

Q. So what were your feelings about what happened right afterwards? Were you angry or...

A. Of course, angry. Everyone ... everybody got angry this happened.

Q. So who were ... who were you angry at?

A. All my family was angry.

Q. Angry at...

A. That's happened, of course.

Q. But at whom? To whoever did it or to the government?

A. No, for ... for who did this ... these criminals.

Q. Have your feelings changed after?

A. Eh, a little bit.

Q. How? How have they changed?

A. Changed because what's ... what's happened is no good at all. Everyone gets sad.

Every Arabic person is sad that it's happened because they live here. He lived here the

last twenty years, something like twenty-seven years. Everyone ... You know, he grew up here, like me. I'm here like thirteen years. So everyone was ... get angry.

Q. Before September 11th when somebody asked you what your nationality is what would you say?

A. Of course, I am a Muslim.

Q. Now when people ask you that...

A. I say Arabic Muslim. I cannot change it. Can't change to Christian Arab.

Q. No.

A. Still Muslim.

Q. Have your feelings toward the United States changed after September 11th?

A. Some things they've changed, yeah, about the Arabs, yeah, the ... or the ... They feel about ... about them bad. My friend, they deported him.

Q. Really? So how do you feel about the government though?

A. I like the government. I have nothing about the government. It's politics.

Q. Do you feel like you're at home here?

A. Of course.

Q. Have you always felt that way?

A. Of course, I ... I feel like that. It's now like my country.

Q. Do you think there's been a change in the way Arabs and Muslims are treated?

A. Yeah, maybe a little changed.

Q. How do you think?

A. They'll be better.

Q. Have you experienced any kind of attacks or discrimination? Has anyone made fun of you?

A. No, none at all.

Q. Any of your family members or friends? You haven't witnessed anything? You haven't seen anything like that? Do you think that Middle Eastern organizations are doing enough to stop these attacks?

A. I don't know exactly about ... about them because I don't read newspaper, no more ... News from TV is ... because it's no good.

Q. Have you joined any ethnic or religious groups?

A. No. That's ridiculous.

Q. What do you think that member of the Arabic community can do to improve relations between Americans and Arabs?

A. You cannot have ?? because the ... the Arab community here because the Arab community has to protect their ... their people.

Q. You don't think they're doing that right now?

A. No. They are weak.

Q. Why do you think they're weak?

A. Because they don't have nobody.

Q. The way that you see Arabs treated right now, would you tell someone from an Arabic country to emigrate here?

A. Of course. I can't tell somebody they can treat them no good ... the response as they cannot call them.

Q. But let's just say that you were to meet somebody, just an example. Would you...

A. I help him.

Q. Right. What kind of advice would you tell them? Would you tell them that they're better off here or they're better off staying home?

A. To stay here, to work hard, to protect this country 'cause you live here you ... everyone has family here.

Q. Do you see anything good coming out of the attacks?

A. Nothing good.

Q. You don't think that maybe there's more understanding of Islam, more understanding of Arab culture?

A. No.

Q. Why do you think that the attacks happened?

A. They deserve it. It's politics. I don't know exactly. Yeah, between ... between Arab and Israel and America. You know? There's politics in the whole world.

Q. Do you think that Muslims hate Americans?

A. No. No. No, no, no, no.

Q. Overseas?

A. A lot of ... There are ten millions here they live in America. How could they hate it?

Q. But the Muslims overseas. Do you think that they hate Americans?

A. No, because Americans they are mixed of all the world, all people. They're from Cuba, from Palestine, from India. It's not one country, one ... one nationality. It's a lot of nationalities. So who said is hate America is wrong.

Q. What do you think the United States can do to stop terrorism?

A. Stop the violence from all the world. That's all I can say.

Q. How can they stop the violence though?

A. To have the ... all the countries ... the all governments help them they can stop it.

Q. Is there anything else that you want to comment on or anything else that you want to say? Do you have any questions?

A. Nothing.

Q. Thank you for helping me. Thank you for answering my questions.

A. You're welcome. Thank you very much.