

Interview 15

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: 48

Q. Well, I'd like to ask you first a few questions about yourself. Okay? Where were you born?

A. I was born in a small town called [name] in North Wales.

Q. And where did you grow up?

A. I grew up in Wales in [name], and then we emigrated to England.

Q. And when did you come to live in the United States?

A. In 1968.

Q. And so you are first generation?

A. Yeah.

Q. And where were your parents born?

A. My parents were both born in the same town, [name], in Wales.

Q. And your ethnic background is?

A. Welsh.

Q. Okay. And what is your religious affiliation?

A. I am secular. I was a Muslim. I converted to Islam in '73 but the last few years I've become secular.

Q. Okay. And are you a U.S. citizen?

A. Yeah.

Q. What is your highest level of education?

A. I have a Masters in Mass Communication and culture.

Q. From where did you graduate?

A. Hunter College. I received my degree in January last year.

Q. Okay. And what is your main occupation?

A. I work for an office manager-facilities manager at the [name of center]. It's a nonprofit organization that works with community courts in .. in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens.

Q. And what is it that you exactly do?

A. I do a lot of facilities management to make sure that everything is in good working order, and I do financial analysis.

Q. And what is your marital status?

A. I'm married.

Q. And do you have any children?

A. No.

Q. Before we continue I'd like for you to mention when and how you became active or aware of the Arab-American community?

A. When I came in '6--'68 I used to hang around the Village. You know? It was the place to be. And I bumped into all kinds of Arabs from Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt and I got invited to their homes and I was very impressed by... by the family ties, the, you know, the big... the... the caring that they all had for each other. And I met an Armenian, a Lebanese-Armenian woman who... we started hanging out together and she asked me be-
- ... It was by then 1974 and Arafat was coming to the States and we... she was working on a huge demonstration and she asked me if I would like to get involved. And I did and I

was... from there we moved to other things, like organizing in the community with the... the Popular Front. You know, they used to have little groups for the Popular Front, the Democratic Front. And we do fund-raising and community awareness. From there I was invited -- you know -- to interview for a job ... at the Libyan Mission working on their archives, and then from there I went to work for the PLO mission. I was at the Libyan mission for three-and-a-half years and then at the PLO for eleven-and-a-half years. And, yeah, I've done everything possible. You know? I've walked the streets, I've handed out flyers, done everything I ... I possibly can.

Q. Now I would like to ask you a few questions about how you experienced September 11th. Where were you on that day around 9 a.m.?

A. I was on the subway going into... into work. And the train stopped and nobody was saying anything. And I... I called... tried calling my office and I couldn't get anybody and so I called home and my husband broke the news to me.

Q. And what was your first reaction? Were you still on the subway at the time?

A. I was in the... Yeah. I was actually on the subway platform and I didn't believe him. I said to him "You're joking," I said, "and that's a pretty sick joke." And he said, "It's true," he said. "Both the Towers have gone." I said, "It's impossible," and I thought my God, I just hope... I hope it's nobody from the community because I knew there would be an incredible backlash. And I went out on the street and from nine o'clock in the morning till three in the afternoon I was trying to take, you know, to get home. And it was only when I was crossing over the 59th Street Bridge and I looked across, you know, it became real to me and my gut reaction was, my God, it's like looking at pictures of Beirut in 1982.

Q. Um-hum. How did you feel? You mentioned about being afraid that it could be Middle Eastern because of the backlash. What was your reaction to that... to the possibility that it could be or probably was?

A. I... I was scared for the community. I was scared, you know, not just the community in New York but throughout the United States. I mean I felt a loss. I mean, I loved the Twin Towers. I mean, used to take all... friends and relatives there, but I... I wasn't as appalled as most people. It was a terrible thing to have happened but, you know, I'm also aware of... of history and politics and this country's his, you know, history. And actually, what came to mind was Malcolm X's, you know, saying: Well, the chickens have come home to roost. And I was re-- I was told by several people that's inappropriate. You know? But...

Q. Why? Why would people tell you that?

A. Because America basically had a clean slate.

Q. Okay.

A. And you just could not talk in any rational form that, you know, we need to look what caused... I mean, on television they were saying: Well, these people that did it were jealous of our life styles, you know, and of everything we have. And I thought: you know how stupid and how immature and how it negated any possibility to have a real discussion of what causes people to do such desperate--and I think they're desperate -- acts.

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

A. Well, I started seeing pictures--you know--in the newspapers of... I think it was in the *Daily News* and it was kill Arabs and, you know, I... I watch the news. Actually, my husband and I stayed up most of the night watching the news, watching, watching for information. The... what... the next day my neighbor, and let me know if I'm jumping ahead, -- ... I own a co-op with my husband in Forest Hills which is a primarily Jewish neighborhood. And there was somebody outside my apartment door, and it was like nine o'clock in the morning, screaming Ramadan. And this is going on and on and on and I thought, well, enough is enough and I went to the door. And it's a woman from across the hallway and she... she asked me-she said, "Is that Spick in there," and I said... which is a derogatory term for a ... a Latino.

Q. Yes.

A. So I said, "Is the what?" She said, "That Spick you live with." I said... I said, "Could you be more specific?" And she said, "The Spick. The Spick." So I move out of my apartment towards her and I said, "Are you talking about my husband?" And she starts screaming, "Bomb Iraq!" and this is going on. My Israeli neighbor comes out and she said, "I've tried calling the office to complain about him." She was very sympathetic, the Israeli, to what was happening to me. So anyway, she locked herself in the apartment. I tried to report her to the... building manager who was totally uncooperative. I ended up calling the police and the police came and actually... because she was still screaming off her terrace at that point, and they... actually took her away. They said that she was off her medication and....

Q. Oh.

A. But I felt very, very threatened. And a couple of days later my husband and I were walking down the street... actually he came home and he said, "I want you to get the camera and come with me." And I said, "What happened?" He said, "I'm not telling you. Get your camera." So we're walking down the street and a few hundred yards down the street there's a pole and on there it said, "Death to... Islam."

Q. This is in Forest Hills?

A. In Forest Hills. And it had the Star of David, and underneath it said JDL. We took a photograph of that, I came back home, I called the police, I called the FBI – the police same. They were very sympathetic and, you know, they said... we got a call hours later saying that this... from this cop saying he thought it was a... a... an act of bigotry against both Muslims and Jews. And we said "that's stupid. The JDL is, you know, a terrorist group. It's recognized by the FBI as a terrorist group. And the police actually had gone in the neighborhood and they had found it in several places. And for the last... well, since September the 11th, no sooner that they're down, you know, they're back up again, you know, no Arabs. It's all over the place. I even called the local -- I forget her name,-- the councilwoman to complain and never got anything back. But I felt very... I felt threatened. I was very angry. I had at the time also been tutoring on weekends at the Arab-American Family Support Center in Brooklyn, and going there made me realize how... how threatened the community was, that it wasn't just... I wasn't just an isolated person, you know, sitting in my apartment really worried about what was going to happen to me, but it was, like, a whole community thing. I was... I got involved in escorting Arab women from the Center after, you know, tutoring their kids, to their homes 'cause they were terrified. We'd have to send a car to pick them up. And then the night of the vigil in

Brooklyn I escorted a Moroccan family who wanted to go to the vigil. But it was ... it was ... it was terrible and you could see that the community was terrified. And I think they had a right to be terrified because they were under threat. I mean, even the Center was getting death threats. They had to put police outside this Family Center. It was... it was pretty... It was strange. It was surreal. You know? It's like, here you are living .. living in a country that supposed -- puts itself on, you know, a high moral plane that we treat everybody equally, and all of a sudden, you know, we're ... we're outcasts. We're the other. We're the other I had been studying for, you know, all these years at Hunter College.

Q. Yes.

A. And I felt, you know, I felt I had to talk... try and talk to Americans, try to explain that... You know, it fell on deaf ears! And the interesting thing is that the... the Jewish community was far more responsive, and including my Israeli neighbors, to, you know, people I was working with and I found that quite ironic. And I think it's probably because they understood the frustration of... of the people. There was a case... I received a phone call actually from one of the women at the Arab-American Family Support Center one night asking me if I would, you know, be willing to meet her. Actually, she called me at work. I'm sorry. Her daughter had been acting very strangely. She goes ... she goes to high -- Oh God! I can't remember the name of the high school in Brooklyn, [Name] High School, and she had been behaving very peculiar for a couple of days. This is like the week after 9-11. And I said, "What's been going on?" And she finally found out from her daughter's social worker that the teacher had said something extremely racist about Palestinians, which the family is, and about Muslims. And she said, "Would you come to

the high school with me. I have an appointment with the headmistress." So I actually called the Department of Justice and I got a very positive response. And the gentleman I spoke to actually drew up an outline over the phone of what I should say, when I should say it.

Q. Um-hum.

A. And ... he called me back the next day after I'd been to the... to the high school. They were extremely arrogant. The headmistress was very, very rude. She had a flag of Israel in her office, which I consider very inappropriate for a public school.

Q. A public school. Yes.

A. Yeah. And the teacher who had been involved was very cocky, very arrogant, when she came in, and it was at that point that I told her that I was a friend of the family and I had been in touch with the Department of Justice and that they were considering this a violation of the young woman's civil rights under, you know, and I gave the section of the Act, etc., and her attitude changed.

Q. Wow.

A. She became so nice and I..... She said, "I don't... I'm not going to apologize," she said, "cause I don't think I did anything wrong." She said, "I just read from a newspaper..." And I said, "Well, what did you read?" And she said, "Well, I... I don't remember." I said, "What was it?" And she said, "Well, it was a picture." And she said [that] it was a picture ... of Palestinian children ... celebrating 9/11. "And you made the comment that – you know – all Palestinians are terrorists and all Muslims are raised to be terrorists and this picture proved it?" I said. ... "And it's a very poor choice," I said -- you know – "to use."

Q. Oh, wow.

A. Really... And she said, "Well, I'm not going to apologize." But what she did was invite us to make a presentation before her class, 'cause I told her if she wouldn't resolve the issue the Department of Justice was going to take up the matter. And then the headmistress asked us if we would do a presentation before the PTA. We... the... I sent a letter. I called the... the Department of State called me, I sent them all the correspondence, and then we got a letter, -- we didn't get a letter, -- we got a phone call: the teacher reneged on us talking in front of her class.

Q. Wow.

A. But I sent a letter to the headmistress saying that since I wouldn't be able to go there ... I didn't think that it was appropriate for me to go there, though I feel part of the community. I wanted a Palestinian to go and I asked ... [name] who is the Director of the Center, to go with ... with the woman and her family. And the headmistress was demanding to know what the handout was going to be about and we didn't tell her anything. But they... But [name of director of center] went there and she is a Palestinian Christian. And the mother is a Palestinian Muslim so it sort of gave them -- you know -- an idea that -- you know -- it's not just an issue of ... it's not a Muslim thing.

Q. Um-hum.

A. But there were lots of cases, lots of cases like that. And kids were terrified because -- they felt they would get into trouble. A ... lot of the community didn't want to report anything because of their ... their status here as undocumented workers. It ... was terrible. And if I'd ever, ever in my life had a doubt of where I belonged on this planet it was confirmed for me that I am part of the community here and in the Middle East.

Q. The Arab-American community?

A. The Arab-American community, and I am very much part of the Arab world. It consolidated any -- you know -- any doubts I had about my identity.

Q. You mentioned before that immediately after 9-11 you felt threatened and angry.

Have your feelings changed since the events?

A. Oh God! I'm even more angry.

Q. Really?

A. I am, absolutely, I think the bombing of Afghanistan has been a terrible crime, far worse than the -- you know -- the bringing down of the Towers. I think that it's... I think it's a... a war crime. I think the constant threats against Iraq are just horrendous, and I think the fact that everybody is ignoring what's happening in ... occupied Palestine ... I mean, I'm at the point of being so furious that I... I don't know what to do with this... with this anger. You know? And it's a feeling of being terribly angry and being totally helpless.

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

A. Walking across the bridge and looking over and seeing pictures of Beirut in 1982. That's the only way I can describe it. That's the only way I saw it -- you know? -- and thinking how many times something like... It doesn't matter how big the buildings are, but how many times it ... has happened -- you know -- in the Middle East. How many times it happened to Beirut, that you would see pictures... and you still see pictures that... You can go into the archives.

Q. You mentioned before that any questions or doubts you may have had about your identity have been consolidated after 9-11. When Americans have asked you about your ethnic background before September 11th what did you tell them?

A. I was American.

Q. And do you mention that you feel like you're a part of the Arab community?

A. Oh yeah. I make it very, very clear, very, very clear that I am -- you know -- I am part of the community. I identify with the community. You know, it's... In fact, I'm urging my husband to move to Brooklyn so we can be not so isolated out here in Queens. And you know, when people ask me about my religion and in many ways -- you know -- they say, well... I'm secular. I made the decision based on -- you know -- lots of rational thinking. And then people say, you know, why did you become a Muslim, and I said, well, at the time it seemed like the right thing to do and it... That served me well. And if I had to have any religion, if it was the only mandatory thing I had to do in my life, I would be a Muslim. You know? And then I've got to go into a whole other spiel of things. My God! Then it brings on all these diatribes about women and ... You know, you can't talk rationally to anybody.

Q. (laughs) Have your feelings toward the United states changed since 9-11.

A. Yes.

Q. How so?

A. Very negatively.

Q. In what sense, politically or...

A. Politically, socially. I don't feel... I have never really felt as home in the States. I've always wanted to move to the Middle East. You know? I always feel like it's moving back home. And...

Q. Well, was this before 9-11 as well?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay.

A. And always being here I say to my husband, you know, we need... we need to leave. We need to go there. Now I feel that I have to get out of here, you know? ... that this is... it's not a place I want to live in. Here I thought I had some level of civil rights, some level of protection, some level of free speech. And I know in the Middle East there are very limited levels of free speech, but I would much rather live in a country where I know what the limits are and I can deal with that. Here you never know if your belief you ... is going to cost you your job; is going to cost you your friends. I know working for the PLO cost me a lot of my friends and...and that was fine. You know? I don't want to be friends with people who are anti-Palestinian. For me it's, you know ... If you want to be my... my friend I need to know your... your position on the Palestinians.

Q. Okay.

A. But now it's like there's nothing for me. I'm not interested... I think this is the most immature, most racist, backward thinking country I've lived in. It's... it's terrible. I have such negative, negative feelings about it. I...

Q. About domestic policy as well as foreign policy?

A. Oh, domestic policy towards Arab-Americans, Muslim-Americans, you know, the fact that they can be rounded up at will and held without bail, incognito, you know, for no

reason you... just on suspicion or belonging to the out group, I think that's criminal. Politically too. I mean, the fact that they are absolutely -- excuse the term --screwing the Palestinians, demanding so much, giving the green light to Israel to do what they want to these people -- you know? -- ... threatening Saddam Hussein. You know, it's meaningless threatening Saddam Hussein, but we know what they're doing. They're threatening the integrity of Iraq. You can see more deaths. I mean, there's no consciousness -- there's no level of consciousness about the terrible cruelty that's being practiced in the name of American citizens. And I don't want to be an American citizen... citizen. You know? I'm not going to have this done in my name.

Q. Do you think... Well, you mentioned before that there has been a change in the way people from the Middle East have been treated since 9-11. Can you mention some more things? How ... how do you... do you think that there has been a change?

A. Yeah. I think people are more suspicious. I mean, you can just read the newspapers or news reports. And I don't give too much credence all the time. But the alternate press you ... you read these stories about Arabs being removed on planes because they were talking Arabic, or people that looked as if they might be Middle Eastern removed from planes.

Q. Um-hum.

A. I mean, what gives the right of any American to pass judgment on somebody like -- you know -- I don't want to be on the same plane as this person.

Q. Um-hum.

A. I think that's downright racist and I think this country has become a very racist country.

Q. Since 9-11?

A. Well, I... it was before, but more so [now]. I mean, before, you know, they... they felt that it was okay to pick on Arabs. You know? You had the stereotype jack ass is written about. But now it's like, everybody who looks as if he's different is targeted. You have light skinned blacks who are being targets and accused of being Arabs, and it's... it's not seen as wrong. You know? This has given the green light to people: yeah, carry out your fantasies. You know? Do your Arnold Schwarzenegger thing. You know? You can all save the United States. Go out there, beat up a few Arabs. It's okay. We're not going to do anything about it. So it... it makes me very angry. And actually I... I want to just mention to you.

Q. Okay.

A. Before this current job... I still work for the same organization, which is the [name of organization], it's a non- – large – nonprofit. And it is very funny because I... when I got my Master's, I had talked about what I was doing my Master's in and my thesis was called [title removed]. And it was very controversial and I was told that by Hunter College and I discussed it with several people. When I got my degree it was, i.e., the first time there was no... no celebration, no congratulations at the office. I felt...

Q. At your office?

A. At my office. And before when people had gotten degrees, even bachelor's, there'd been at least, you know like a pizza lunch or a cake.

Q. Okay.

A. And a couple of people passed comments to me that they felt it was very strange. And then after 9-11, I... in many ways I felt very marginalized by the executive about what

was happening. And then in ... 'cause I, you know, I would talk about it. And then I was told in March that I was going to be transferred to another office and basically I had no choice. You know? If I didn't go, there was the possibility that I wouldn't have [a job] ... I had no option. And I don't know if it's fair... you know, being... starting to be paranoid -- you know -- that the Government and racism is behind every door that... that I open, but I felt it was very, very strange. But I... when I got to... -- you know, when I went to see the people I was going to be working with, because it didn't affect my salary or my position or anything; it was just transfer to a new place supposedly... supposedly temporarily, I gave them my resume which clearly states that I had worked for the PLO and I thought if they don't like it, they can refuse to have me. Let them be the ones. And I found a lot of them very interested in discussing the Palestinian issue.

Q. Wow! Really?

A. Yeah, and even saying that -- you know -- how I got involved, what I was doing, what I had done and several of them were working for, like, the Peace Now organization in... in occupied Palestine.

Q. You mentioned some backlash that you have experienced since 9-11. You mentioned the incident at your building and the posters that said "death to Islam." Did you experience any other backlash such as harassment or racial profiling or some kind of discrimination?

A. No.

Q. Has a member of your family experienced backlash?

A. Only the -- you know -- the screaming at my husband -- you know -- calling him a Spick. You know, the woman is a moron. I guess she couldn't find a racist term to call an

Arab. No. But when I used the subway several times and if there's another Arab on... on the subway we -- you know -- we watch out for them. You know? We make sure that -- you know -- that we're close to them should something happen especially if they're reading an Arabic newspaper.

Q. Did anything ever happen or...

A. No.

Q. Okay.

A. No, but we're just very cautious about it -- just very, very cautious.

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

A. No. Actually, I ... I canceled my membership with ADC and I'd been a member for years, from the time that it was started because I think they really cow-towed to American policy -- you know -- and ... this war on terrorism. You know? They supported it knowing full well that it was going to go beyond Afghanistan. I think Jim Zogby ...

Q. Okay.

A. Has been incredible. I think he's... he's known how to work with the American press. I think he's been very vocal. I think Rania Masri has been exceptional too. I think she's really learned. I think they've both learned what should have been done years ago, is not to be drowned out.

Q. Can you briefly just state what they have done?

A. They've known their facts. They've been very clear about their facts.

Q. Okay.

A. They haven't been some who went off into a tangent, -- you know -- about other issues. Rania Masri was on one... one program on Netanyahu was on there and he wanted to divert the whole thing on the Pal -- what was happening in Jenin to the issue of Iraq and -- you know -- and she held her -- you know -- she held her point. She... she wasn't distracted.

Q. Okay.

A. Which is... which used to be the problem all the time in the past. You know? It was a clever trick on the part of the Israelis to turn the topic around and away from Palestine. So I think Jim Zogby has been absolutely incredible, and that's not just because he's an old friend, but I think it's... he's been really good and so has Rania Masri. I don't know how well the dem--.... The demonstrations have been good, but I have been demonstrating since '73 on the streets of New York and now I see the children of the people that I used to demonstrate with. And it's like, how much demonstrating and -- you know -- do you have to do for anybody to take notice. I don't think demonstrations have worked.

Q. Okay. Do you... So would you say these organizations have maybe managed to organize or mobilize the community politically?

A. I think there's so much... Oh how would I... I would... there's a sense of community, but there are so many political and religious factions within the community I... I think it's very difficult for them to act as a whole the way the Jewish community -- the Zionist community does. You know? You snap your finger; they're all there. They've got a -- you know -- a telephone tree. They can do mass call-ins -- you know -- to the newspapers.

Q. Yeah.

A. We haven't got to that stage. I mean, I've been involved since '73 and we still haven't got to that point. You have individual groups doing it and we seem to spend most of our time talking to each other about the situation instead of becoming a really strong political force.

Q. What do you think organizations can do better?

A. I think working closer together than they have done. But -- you know -- but there again when you think of the power of the finest lobby in this country... On the other hand, I... I don't know how well you could function? They have so much power, they have bought out many American politicians... You just have to go to Paul Finley's book to read about how they have actually paid off -- you know -- hundreds of our representatives. They have caused others to be so intimidated by calling them anti-Semites, even if they're not. I mean, they call their own people, you know, self-haters if they speak out and say no; no -- you know? -- you're not going to commit these crimes against Palestinians. I don't know... frankly, I don't know how much political organizing will help. I don't think we have the money that's needed. And frankly, I... I would think very poorly of the Arab-American community if we had to start buying American politicians to support our cause.

Q. Um-hum. You mentioned that you canceled your membership with ADC. Have you joined any other organizations since 9-11?

A. Not dues paying organizations. You know? You know I'm on the AOSA list.

Q. Okay.

A. I--you know,--get messages from Al-awda, on some Palestinian... the Occupied Territories list and... and that's about it.

Q. Okay. In your opinion what is the nature of the relationships between Arab-Americans and others in the United States at this time?

A. I... I think it's a very fragile relationship. I think you might find the exceptional -- you know -- European-American or Jewish American or African-American who understands and is very sympathetic and understands what causes acts like 9-11. I mean, you have exceptional people like Noam Chomsky, Edward Herman who understand and -- you know -- who can talk and try to convince people we need to look at what's going on. But I think for the majority of Arab-Americans they are more outsiders now than before.

Q. What do you think members of the Arab-American community can do to improve the relationships between ethnic groups?

A. I don't think they should be the ones to have to make the move.

Q. Um-hum.

A. If this is the multi-ethnic -- you know -- the melting pot of ... the world that it claims to be, if it -- you know -- claims to be the greatest democracy in the world, let them reach out to the Arab-American community, regardless of whether they're Christians or Muslims or -- you know -- secular and to -- you know -- and offer the hand of friendship and to stop all these mass arrests. I don't think we have to make the move.

Q. Okay.

A. We are the victims. I mean, we are surviving a terrible thing that happened. You know? You hear about the victims of 9-11. Well, I think the Arab-American community are also victims and they are survivors And I think we need to be reached out to and... and for people to say enough is enough. You know? Leave them alone.

Q. Do you think organizations can do anything to improve the relationship between the groups?

A. I think we've done enough. I think we have done enough.

Q. Okay.

A. I think the only way to resolve ... these antagonistic relations between the majority of Americans and the Arab-American community is to understand that what happened is a result of the occupation of Palestine.

Q. Okay.

A. They have to understand what -- you know -- what causes such terrible acts of desperation. It takes a hell of a lot of courage to ... whether you agree with what happened or not, it takes a hell of a lot of courage to give up one's life for something they believe in.

Q. Given your understanding of the status of Middle Eastern immigrant groups after 9-11 is, would you encourage people from these people to emigrate to the U.S.?

A. No.

Q. Why?

A. Because I don't think they will ever ... I think there was, at one point, when ... the first wave of Arabs came to this country and they were able to be absorbed and they sort of melded in, everybody was coming at that -- you know -- that time. Now no. I think they'll have hard time getting visas to come into the country anyway. I can't be -- you know -- be appalled at what -- you know -- the bombing of Beirut and the bombing of Jenin and not be also appalled by what happened in New York. This is the city I live in, but I understand why it happened. I don't have to condone it; I don't have to condemn it. I

understand it. And ... it's terrible that these kind of things have to happen to -- you know -- tell the Americans wake up to what you're doing.

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

A. Oh God, no. I... I think they're so... I think they're obsessed with things American. I mean, the fact you can go to a movie in Beirut where, you know -- an American movie where you've got the Arabs as the -- you know -- the terrorists and -- you know -- the Americans as the good guys, -- and the names of these movies fail me at the moment, -- but you have them cheering. Like in "the Executive Decision" -- you know -- where ... where you've got a whole group of so-called Arab terrorists -- you know -- on the Presidential plane and you've got Arabs (laughs) cheering for the Americans. No. I think I think there's something very peculiar about not just Arabs but non-western people that they're so damned hospitable that no ... I mean, you... you find it in India. No matter how bad the... the Brits were to the Indians they still accept them warmly into their countries and into their homes. I think it's... there's a kind of friendliness and openness and kindness to others we've lost over here.

Q. Um-hum.

A. And I think quite honestly ... the fact that you have Americans going over to Palestine to work -- you know -- and there are exceptional Americans who are going over. And the fact that they're welcomed into Palestinian homes.... One of my former colleagues was saying, "I would love to go to Syria and to Jordan," and I said "go." He said, "But -- you know -- what would they do to me?" I said, "Nothing." I said, "You'll have a wonderful time." And he came back and said he had never had such a good holiday; that he never had so much tea and free meals; that everybody he met would say: You come to my

house tonight for dinner. You know? They're extremely, extremely hospitable. And I think this is something that has been forgotten now over here and also in England. You don't know how to be good hosts. You don't know how... We don't know how to be kind to -- you know -- people different from us. We have no interest in getting to know them.

Q. What do you think the United States can do to resolve the problem of terrorism directly against it?

A. A little bit of parity towards people in developing countries. I think it needs to recognize it's history of terrorism against people. I think it has to recognize it's... the fact that it's aiding Israel militarily, economically, the fact that we're spending millions of dollars every year to support an occupying state, a racist state. I think it has to realized what it's doing. And I think it's very... it's going to be very difficult when the Zionists have so much power over the government, over the media. And I'm saying Zionists because you don't just have to be Jewish to be a Zionist.

Q. Yeah.

A. I mean Anwar al-Sadat was the perfect example of an Arab Zionist. I ... I think... I don't think Americans at this point have enough sophistication to understand what happened to them, why it happened -- and I think primarily the way they have in the past, they just want to get revenge. You know? It's like they're still fighting the war in Vietnam. They don't realize that the Vietnamese won. God, I'm so negative.

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

A. The right of return of the Palestinians. You know?

Q. Okay.

A. I think it's absolutely appalling that Arafat and the Palestinians have been asked to give up their right of return, which is protected -- you know -- under international law. And it's the same way that America seems to be giving the green light for the Israelis to deport and expel Palestinians which is a violation of international law. In fact, after the Palestinians were held up in Bethlehem in the church and they're deported, you know, and the Europeans, the big cowards that they are, when it comes to... You know, they're all -- you know -- big mouths when it's, Oh, you're doing the wrong thing, America, and when America does it they all back off. They are such cowards when it comes to American foreign policy. They're all talk and no show.

Q. Okay. Thank you very much for this interview

A. You're welcome.

Q. And your cooperation.

A. Oh, you're welcome.