

Interview 34

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 – June 2003)

Gender of respondent: Male

Age: 43

Q. Where were you born?

A. Alexandria, Egypt.

Q. How old were you when you came to live in the United States?

A. I was, say, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two years old.

Q. And where was your father born?

A. In Egypt.

Q. And your mother?

A. Alexandria.

Q. So you're first generation foreign born. And what do you consider to be your ethnic background?

A. Egyptian.

Q. And what is your religious affiliation?

A. Muslim.

Q. How old are you now if you don't mind?

A. I'm forty-three years old.

Q. You look very young.

A. Oh, no.

Q. And are you a U.S. citizen or a Green Card holder?

A. A U.S. citizen.

Q. What is your highest level of education?

A. I have a Master's degree in International Law.

Q. That's great. Where did you obtain your education? Where did you get your Masters?

A. From Alexandria University. In Egypt.

Q. What is your main occupation, like, your job title right now and if you can briefly explain what is it that you do?

A. I'm a waiter in the floor ... so I'm serving customer Italian foods so that's 'cause I'm familiar with Italian food. I've been doing that for my many years. That's where my experience... .

Q. Is this a full time job or a part-time?

A. It's a full time job.

Q. Do you work for a private company or a...

A. It's a private company.

Q. What is your marital status?

A. I'm married.

Q. Any children?

A. Two kids.

Q. Oh, that's nice. Now I'm going to go ahead and ask you a few questions about how you experienced September 11th. Where were you on that day around 9am and how did you hear of the attacks?

A. I was working here and unfortunately somebody walked in and said did you see what happened in World Trade Center? Something hit the World Trade Center. We all got

shocked because everybody thought it's an accident. And like, half an hour later I said no, it wasn't an accident. Another ... have another dangerous hit the south tower--you know? So and I was shocked too. All had to run outside to see. And we see the smoke coming all over and I tell you, my tears kind of stopped 'cause I was wondering whatever it's in there what's going to happen. And actually that's my way every day from Second Avenue where I'm coming from down there. And I said I'm glad it happened now rather than it happened later. That's what happened.

Q. So what was your first reaction when you heard this?

A. I didn't believe it, to be honest with you. I was, like, shocked. And so it's kind of ... As I told you everybody thought it's ... Everybody said it's ... it's a accident or just, well, it's happened. You know? But, like, one hour later I found out no, no, it's no accident because they have a second plane going there. And so it was ... shocked that's ... because I know many people there. I know some friends who used to work in Window of the World up there. I have three guys -- even Egyptian guys --it's a friend of mind that lived there --I mean, worked in there. And unfortunately it was, like, for a moment I can't stop my tears. That's it. I, like...

Q. Did you think that this is ... if this is a terrorist attack it's got to be Muslims?

A. No. ... No, no, no. I won't. I won't ... I won't say. I don't know because, like, it don't have to be Muslim because whatever -- I'm sorry for saying, ... whatever...

Q. No. Go ahead. Say whatever you want.

A. Whatever [sic] does this is the devil and this has nothing to do with religion. This has nothing to do with a human being because it's different fault. It's a different fault, believe me. Like, it's ... even if I' angry with you so your family never going to pay the price. I'm

angry with some person so I could revenge with this person. I don't revenge with innocent people just, I'm coming from nowhere--I hate you because I don't like your Mom or I don't like your Dad; don't like your sister. So it has nothing to do with... .

Q. So at that time when the rumors came out that the terrorist attack was done by Muslims did that flash your mind actually?

A. Actually they didn't, like, in ... I didn't know. Then we know after that. We didn't know in the meantime when that happened--when we see the scene--I didn't know what's who's by ... It's like, terrorism attack or something. I didn't know. It never ... like, it never come up into your mind such a thing because it's unbelievable thing that's happened, like. Usually we know something bombing here, bombing there, but you never expected something coming from there. And to be honest with you, I never thought that way, something's going to happen from there. So that's why it's never come ...

Q. What do you think is the most vivid memory in your mind, something that stands out that you think that you will never forget from September 11th?

A. All these people jumping off the windows, jumping from the floor. They have no choice, either to stay in or to jump. Do you imagine? To put yourself in there and every ... I can't sleep. I couldn't sleep when I ... especially when I thought about my friends because usually they're working 107th floor, Window of the World, so ... and I can't ... I put myself in their situation. Can you imagine being up there? And so that's ... like, you have choice to die: if you were inside, burn or going outside, jumping. Jumping from where? From 107th floor. That's still, until this moment, the names would be ... until this moment it's still in my mind. It's still on my mind 'cause I ... because it can happen anywhere. You know--and nobody knows because it's a ... the Tower. It could happened

anywhere. I thought about what if I'm up there, what is my choice? Me as I told you, like, it's unbelievable. They were going to attack my wife. Once we went to downtown to see [the site], ... maybe six months after it, so I just was smelling [the smell of burning] on everything. ...

Q. So what were your feelings about what happened immediately afterwards? Did you feel anger, pain, sadness?

A. Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. [There] is no doubt. Absolutely. I feel very angry even if ... I'm sorry if I hurt Muslims it's ... I'm what do you call ... this kind of people because it's a very bad influence about our religion. You know? I'm proud to be a Muslim. I love to be a Muslim. And if you see Muslim roots always talked about peace and talked about, like, forgiveness and everything. And it don't matter ... Never take any matter in your hand unless somebody just put his hand in you. But to come and this thing and say it's ... it's related to Islam or related to Muslims, that's why I won't accept it 'cause I tell you, I have a tongue, I have a personality. I have many ways to kind of solve any problem. When you do such a thing that's ... I'm sorry, ignorant, no religion, no nothing, even if you were doing this for God, God doesn't say that well because if you are in Prophet Muhammad's time you see how much he suffered; how much Muslim people suffered but none of that thing it happened. You imagine all the follower who can do such a thing after that happened. And Prophet Muhammad time there were such things that happened which this could be happened, but nothing happened. Can you imagine the followers could do worse? No, I won't accept that, to be honest with you. I won't accept it at all for whatever it is.

Q. Did you feel any kind of guilt being a Muslim?

A. No. No, of course not. To be honest. Of course not. No, no. I ... felt sad for [what] ever happened. But to be a Muslim, no. This have nothing to do with this ..., as I tell you, that don't judge the Muslims by the way they do that. They said Muslims. It could be somebody from somewhere and say they're Muslim. I'm sorry. Muslims, like, if you study Islamic religion, it's--I'll tell you--developed in peace. You know? If you just go any university--maybe you don't study--just go any universities, just ask what the Islamic means ... that's peace and simple things, that humanity--you know?--and they have many examples of that. So this have noting to do with the Muslim religion. It has nothing to do with Islam. And, I'm sorry, if these people they said they are Muslim, I'm sorry, they are not Muslim.

Q. So have your feelings changed ever since the events, that feeling of anger, sadness and grief?

A. How could it because they make bad influence about Muslims. That's why I ...

Q. So have those feelings changed ever since September 11th?

A. Exactly. Exactly because, look, I don't like disconnecting people because you don't have to force me to be ... agree whatever you do because you are Muslim. I'm sorry. No, I'm not going to agree with you because you say such a thing. It's freedom, especially around here. I have more freedom than our countries, to be honest with you. So you can say it. But it doesn't mean ... You are not my enemies. You're still my friends. You don't have to agree with me with whatever I say, but you still ... we're still friends. That's healthy. You know? When you ... when you object with me for some opinion it's healthy. It's not ... it's not ... it's not bad here because you have to hear another side. But it doesn't

matter. You have to take your ... your mud on your hands. 'Cause I'm not agree with you that's mean you're my enemy? No. It's not that way.

Q. So when Americans asked you about your ethnic background -- like, where were you from--before September 11th what did you tell them? And how about after September 11th?

A. Same thing. Same thing I told you. I'm a person. I'm not ... I'm not going to change. I'm proud to be Egyptian. I['m] proud to be a Muslim. I'm proud to be here because I'm still talking to anybody. They point to the Islamic religion, as anything, no. Islam is not the way you think. Islam is the way we think. Islam is the way we live. So you don't have to make by individual man and said here because he's Muslim he might be some good. What about ... if you remember this group, there was the Oklahoma ...

Q. Oklahoma bombing—McVeigh?

A. It's a bad American. They're not ... they are American and young American, younger generation, but they're serving in the army. They're being very high educated because wherever he does this is very smart. It's not ... I'm sorry. It's not going I tell you terrorist guys very stupid. No. They're very smart and they are American. ... But as I tell you, this example, [is] same thing. They are Americans. Same thing's going to happen when ... I don't know when this religion they have in Texas or something, and General Attorney they have to bomb the camp because they came out to some kind of religion, the black ... so but they are American. They are not from nowhere. But as I tell you, everybody want ... to his religion very... . That's why you're going to find many difference coming everywhere.

Q. Have your feelings towards the United States changed since 9-11?

A. Yeah, to be honest ... You have to understand, the people live with you. But thank God, all my neighbors, all my workers, all my ... the people that I live around them do know me enough, so thank God I haven't seen any change from treat me as different. But from my friends--from somebody I know, they have felt it because sometimes ... or something like that, they feel like they're going through even by eyes or by talking and by some kind of feeling, they make you feel dirty because you are from Middle East or because you are Muslim and which is wrong, as I tell you. Like, if your sister did some crime you have to pay the sentence? No. Your sister have to pay the ... that's what happened. Unfortunately, these people they are Muslim--they say they are Muslims from Arabic country or from Middle East, wherever it is, and they did such a thing. Nobody expected such a thing [to] happen.

Q. Has your level of political awareness changed in any way, increased or decreased? Have you--I mean, before September 11th and now--how did you view the domestic policy and the foreign policy of the United States?

A. ... It's not changed, I tell you, but sometimes like, when American policy here they didn't pay much attention to what's going on in Middle East because it's so far away. Even if such a thing could happen there, it's not going to affect us, or something. That's what happened. Like, they lit a fire here, that's why the smoke came to the United States. I know the fire over there not the smoke ... came with, what you call it, with a cloud, came with the sky. They come to ask you. And unfortunately, because of our foreign policy, ... If you see Jewish people, if you see Jewish religion, they're very, very peaceful as well, the same thing. But who creates this problem? The[re are] fanatic people from both sides, not from just our side, from both sides. Because I have Jewish friends, they're

very nice. They [do] not agree with whatever it happened. They [do] not agree whatever it happened in Israel. But unfortunately, it still back up [Israel], whether it's right or wrong, they still backing up Israel. That's why they make influence of the people just angry, over there. Of course, people over there it's poor. They couldn't find jobs. They couldn't find such things. What they have to do, they have to turn politics. ... All [the] administration[s] of the Middle East, they're all loyal to United States, which is okay. But meanwhile, to see donations in each country, they are not stick within administrations. That's what happened. ... Like, after we graduate from school, from college, they cannot find ... easy jobs ... it's not basically easy. You have to work hard for your job ... So why ... [I am] here? To be honest with you, I'm here to looking for bits of bread, and this country open the arm and the hearts for us and that's [why] I love the United States. You know?

Q. So do you feel a sense of belonging here in the United States? Do you feel at home here?

A. Of course, of course. I've been here for eighteen years so I feel like that. I feel at home in the United States.

Q. Have you always felt like this?

A. I always ... and I go back and forth to ... to Egypt every year and I have my family back and forth here, so I feel really I'm home. You know?

Q. Okay. Do you think that there has been a change in the way people from the Middle East in the United States are treated since September 11th?

A. Lately yes, it having been kind of [hard] ... I'm telling you myself, thank God, I'm okay. There's nothing to be mentioned. But for my friends, these people, they [are] going

to the mosque, these people, they are not feel[ing] like free as before, even if they are citizens. Even if they are very high ranks, ... very skilled people. [The] unskilled, they are not welcome, they say. I mean, imagine you have your kids ... that's what sometimes is just kill[ing] me because, like, you take your kids and look at you ... Because I'm hanging out with friends. I'm not hanging out by myself. By myself I know I can't control myself. [I can] control my family very well even if [something]thing happens so I know how to defend myself. But I'm still ... [likely to be] influenced [by friends].... [If] you hang out with friends, Muslim or American, whatever it is, and some people just give you a bad influence [i.e., make you feel bad] because you are Middle Eastern[er]. ... [They] don't make you feel comfortable. ... You want to argue or you want to do something? That's ... why I don't like this moment just came up. I still believe in the United States, state of freedom, you know? You have a state of all religions. That's what our Constitution said But sometimes you can't ... you kept it inside in your back mind. So you feel like you cannot mention one of these days, ... because you are Muslim, I'm afraid ... [of speaking out].

Q. Have you personally experienced any discrimination or harassment?

A. No. No.

Q. Ever since September 11th, at work or any where else?

A. No. No, no, no. No, thank God. For me, no. But as I tell you, my friends [have] ...

Q. Would you like to share that experience?

A. ... Like for instance, I have a friend, he working as a cabdriver, and always cab drivers put his name or his badge in the back there. And unfortunately, some of customers they just mention, Oh, you're from Middle East, yes, yes, so, so and so. And ... you talk to the

public so you have to ... as I said before, we are a free country ... don't be afraid to say it, just say it. And he's speaking with the customers, no problem. And unfortunately, what happened is this customer he just took the cab ... and they searched his van. ...

Q. Like what?

A. Yeah! That's what make you mad. Just conversation doesn't mean nothing. Doesn't mean that you are from somewhere. Of course I love my country. I mean, I really love my country and I love this my country. I'm very loyal to this country but it doesn't mean I have to change my opinion because [of] what ... happened, no. I'm still the same person. As I tell you, if you agree with me it's okay. If ... not, it's not a problem. So when I hear such a thing, like, this I said no. It's insane. This happened in the United States? I said: Yeah, it's happening in the United States. Of course ... I won't believe it. And unfortunately, I have to believe it because it's like, a close friend it's happened with and I just said no. That means something wrong? Of course, this affects you because ... when you see ... some people coming from Egypt and they just send them back. I don't know [maybe it is an] individual case. He said, yeah, because of September [11]. Could be an individual case but it never happened before. Some people, because they don't have [a] Green Card or something, because of that, from Middle East, they deport them [back to] Egypt. And meanwhile you have a lot of Mexicans, a lot of Spanish people, a lot of things, they are revoking the visa and they're violating everything and they're still working. That's ... when you hear such a thing like this that's why it make you pay attention. For us, okay, we live normally. And I'm telling you nothing happened to me, but you don't wait for the moment it's [going to] happen to you. Like, as I told you, United States now ... you have to make very good security, you have to make alerts

everywhere ... it's healthy. But meanwhile, just you're going to put innocent people [in jail] ... we're still paying the price.

Q. So has your wife or your children experienced anything?

A. As I tell you, personally nor my wife nor my family ... I'm telling you, just, thank God, until this moment, nothing. But I'm ready. And I hope it's not happening but I'm ready. But my wife she mentioned just once she went to the mall ... just people just came and said, Honey, don't worry about it. You're an American citizen, and, yeah, which is true. Was an American citizen, we have nothing to hide. We're proud to be a Muslim, so as long as you don't do anything wrong so you tell me, I said. But you I know, kind it's hurt[s] me and hurt[s] my kids. I said, of course. People have to be angry. Understand? You have to put yourself in this situation. We're angry. Wherever it happens it's not easy. It's not easy. That's why, thank God, we are educated people so as to understand, to observe the situation. But if something, as I tell you, be over limits, enough is enough. I could... . Yeah, I could understand people are angry and I see ... and I tell you, I'm personally I have nothing to do with this, but I cried for innocent people. I put myself in the same situation, I wouldn't accept it, so I understand how these people [are] angry... We love this country. We pay taxes. We are tax payers like anybody. ...

Q. So do you think that the Middle Eastern organizations have been effective in handling the backlash? Like, a lot of people did get discriminated against. A few people died as well. Do you think these organizations were effective in handling the situation?

A. No, no, no, unfortunately. That's only bad thing about our culture, I can say. Why not get together as a Muslim. Don't worry where you [are] from, from Pakistan, from China,

wherever But meanwhile, the organizations here I did not hear any strong organizations taking a stand ... [defending] our rights. That's what [they] are supposed to... . We're supposed to... educate ... the Middle Easterners here, citizen or whatever. Any Muslim citizen [has] ... rights. If ... you have any discrimination, well then just call this number. At least you find help. At least you find somebody, even if you don't speak the language, you are not good with the language, at least ... somebody [will] show you ... the way to stand for your rights. But we don't have it here, or if you have it you see it's a minority because they never stick together. That's our problem here in ... our country and sometimes you feel like you couldn't find a way to represent yourself. When you talk of Islam it's like you talk about somebody friends but you can't ... tell to the public only about Muslim religion ... never think to do such a thing. A lot of these people be fanatic. If we are fanatic that's mean you have to ... force me to agree with you. Of course, it wouldn't be accepted. It's not a religion thing. You know? That's what happened. Now, about the organization is nothing effective to my knowledge. Maybe it's somewhere else but not here.

Q. Have you joined any ethnic or religious organization?

A. No, I didn't, no.

Q. In your opinion, what is the nature of the relationship between your ethnic group--like, between the Muslims and the Egyptians--and others in the United states--like the Pakistanis or the Jews? Do you think they're more harmonious and tolerant of each other or they're more strained and oppositional?

A. ... No. They're very nice. As I told you, I have a Jewish friend. I have Muslim friend. I have ... Christian friend. You know? I'm liberal.

Q. Any change after September 11th?

A. No, no, no. Whatever the people allowing me I tell you. Thank God, I was lucky. Thank God I was really lucky. Even my neighbor, even my work ... as you see, I've been with them for many years. I've been in the states now for eighteen years, thank God. Like, you know? My neighbors, they know me very well for many years. The same thing goes at my job ... I've been insulted, to be honest with you, but as I told you, I'm not going to wait until the day comes to make me feel, because I feel bad for some people else.

Q. So, some of the stories you've heard maybe from some other people, how do you think that the relationship can be, or how do you think it is?

A. Honestly, everything could be straight out, as I tell you, even you don't be afraid to pronounce your religion. You don't be afraid, no matter Jewish, no matter Muslim, no matter Christian, religion is religion. As long we all believe in God, that's it. But we make the difference. People make the difference, connecting people. That's why they changed the world. They change everything and they make it different for such reasons. I don't know what these reasons, -- you understand ... I'm an ordinary Muslim guy, I mean, praying five times. I pray. You can ask my colleagues. You can ask my neighborhood. Thank God, I ... I have a good relationship with everybody, with the Jews or the Christians, with everybody. As a practice[ing] Muslim I'm not a fanatic. But if you're a fanatic, I'm sorry, don't look at me ... you are a bad influence for Muslims. [If you are a Muslim] ... you have to give good influence ... the way you talk, for the way you're treating people, for the way you behave in your neighborhood, with your children, with your wife, with your sister, with your brother... .

Q. What do you think that the members of your community, like the Egyptian community, can do to improve the relations amongst the other groups?

A. They have to speak up. That's the bad thing about what you call, our Arab or Egyptian leaders. But don't forget you are living in the United States. You are not living in Egypt. You are not living in Pakistan. ... I'm telling you, that's the bad thing about our people. They always close the door in themselves. They doesn't want to know anything ... they don't even see American news. So why [do] you live in this country? Your families, your children, in this country, you have to go open the door ... get inside this society and see it. Like, just try to represent yourself as a Muslim and tell them ... I'm a Muslim and I never do such a thing. I never came with such a thing. That's the bad thing about our people, they always close the door. Just go outside! Just be ... be friendly ... don't be afraid. Let me give you an example... before you go outside you check the weather channel. When I live in New York ... I have to be a New Yorker, so I have to wear a jacket like them [before] I have to go out [into the cold]. That's the healthy way. You know? You just don't close the door ... take your kids out. Let them play with another kids. That's the only way to represent yourself, represent your religion, represent ... your personality. And you can see fifteen people around you and you just can argue. That's the healthy way. But as long as you close the door you don't know what's going [on] outside. You just go grab some food and you go inside the door and that's it. You are not here just to eat ... and to work, no. Some people do that [though]... .

Q. You have to socialize.

A. Exactly, exactly, exactly. That's the right word. You have to socialize. That's the missing part in our people. They come in here just to looking for a piece of bread? Okay,

I'm going to stay in United States one year, two years, three years, maybe five years, after that go back. And they find themselves ... they get stuck here and they have family here, they get married here, they have kids here, so change yourself. Try to present yourself to [your neighbors], as you said, socialize. You have to be active, let your kids go around with them. Why? Because you represent Islam at this time. We are not fanatic ... we are not fanatic or nothing. That's the Islamic way. It doesn't tell me don't go outside... .

Q. Given your understanding of treatment of Middle Eastern people over here and the immigrant groups in the United States after September 11th, would you still encourage these people to emigrate to the United States?

A. It's kind of tough but, hey, life has to go on. You know? It's kind of tough now.

Q. What would you say to them?

A. Of course, come! Of course, come! The opportunity have to be open, I tell you, this is a land of immigrants. They ... built this country. It's been an opportunity for me ... for many [in my] generation like me, so it's never going to stop. If ... it stops this thing it's not healthy. That's the greatest thing about the United States, to always keep the door open, because sometimes I'm not agreeing with ... my colleague over there. When I come here, I tell you, I found my opportunity, I find my life, I made my house. You know? We love this country. So the same thing has to be for another generation because another generation going to be like us. The ... young, they will have the opportunity if they want it... .

Q. So far we've spoken about the negative consequences of September 11th. Do you think that there were any positive outcomes that stemmed from September 11th?

A. Yeah, of course, of course, a lot of positive thing.

Q. Such as?

A. It's about time for the United States just to wake up, because unfortunately, as I tell you, this land of freedom everybody does what he wants and that's ... I'm sorry. Sometimes too much freedom is not healthy as well. That's why because people, they take this for granted. Okay. It's a free country but you have to behave. Before you know it's free, you have to know your obligations to this country. That's ... healthy. If you're driving and somebody cuts you off its not [good] behavior. If you respect me, I'll respect you. The law is [made] to be respect[ed]... don't make it by force. One positive thing after September 11th, [is the chance for] everybody [to] wake up. You're welcome to be [an] immigrant to this country just follow the whole procedure. Welcome! Make your paperwork. At least I know ... who you are. ... Some guys, everybody ... make like fixed paper, funny ... Green Cards. Something like this, it's ... affecting us. ... Wherever they're going to come from they're not going to find the opportunity to bomb the World Trade Center. Why? Because we are ... organizing people and we have the best system ever in the world. But ... we lose our freedom. And if the United States will try to take our freedom from us that will be biggest mistake for the United States because this [is the] land of freedom and has to be ever. You know? I've been in Europe before and I always say God bless America. Why? Because not such a thing would happen in the United States like it happened in Europe. So ... we should be proud of that. But that means we have to be alert ... like for security reasons some ... just you have to be alert from this point [on].

Q. What do you think about, more visibility of the Muslims and the Islamic religion? People became more aware of Islam. Do you think that was a positive?

A. That's a positive, yes. Yes. Now, like, even American people, they're paying attention. Before ... as I told you ... nobody [was paying] attention to whatever that's happening in [the] Middle East. ... Nobody paid attention. Maybe they pay attention to basketball or ... [other] game more than people get killed over there. That's a positive thing. Now the whole world, not just the United States, the whole world [is] paying attention. If you want to keep the fire down you have to resolve the Middle East situations. If you resolve the Middle East situation [you'll] just have no problem. They're not going to be fanatic. Why? Because a lot of people, they use this situation to get what they want. And they try to use the Islamic as cover. You know? Could be it's not Muslims. Could be a billion people. But the suicide bombers they got paid. Okay, I said. Okay, I'll get paid? Okay. If I make my family happy [it's] okay. How much are you going to pay me, a million dollars? Okay I'll go for it. At least I die ... I know my family [is] going to ... the rest of their lives they're going to be [rich] ... which [is] stupid really. Unfortunately, a lot of Americans now reading about Islam and they will be very happy with Islam, and if you see that Islam is get increase in the United States more than before ... it's happening from God. ... You know? Before, my wife she didn't wear the veil but for now she' wearing the veil and she's proud to be a Muslim.

Q. Why do you think that the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon happened? Do you think the Arabs and the Muslims in the Middle East hate America?

A. It's not Arabs or Muslims. America because it's the [most] powerful country in the world ... even [more than] Europe.... People just try to use the circumstances because it happened between Arabs and the United Sates, they try to use this thing, but it's not, no....

[There are] many [Arabs who] love ... the United States. Just take an individual, if you are a very great person or a very powerful person at least you have some fans for you and you have some people hate you because everybody want[s] to be in your position. Don't think ... [that] after we get over Russia and we got over Europe and all ... these people hate us ...even in Japan. You know the Red Army, they hate the United States. Go to Cairo. Go to anywhere and ... ask them. They hate America. Puerto Rico, they hate America. France, they hate America. So it don't have to do anything with the Arabs ... I'm sorry. Unfortunately the media here is not honest as before, to be honest with you, because now the media ... are not, like--you know, trying to say the media here is controlled by Jewish, but which Jewish? Fanatic Jewish, and they try to brainwash some Americans and they intend to prove that's what happened. And we've been suffering from this, to be honest with you.

Q. What do you think the United States can do to resolve this issue of terrorism which is directed against it?

A. As I tell you, the more important issue to resolve [is] the Middle Eastern thing because the terrorism, they have the purpose and said: Okay, we did such a thing because of Palestine. If the United States hopefully help[s the] Palestinian people, to get them land, to be a nice neighbor with Israel and everything, believe me, there's not going to be terrorism. Why? Because now the fanatic people they said: Okay, yeah, because the United States is not playing the right balance between the Arabs and Israel. They're always getting on Israel's side more than the Arabs' side. So as a result this problem President Sadat, he did it in 1977, if you remember ... I have no problem with ... Israel. No problem. It's not going to take one year, ten years. It's going to take generations.

Q. If the security measures were much stronger before September 11th do you think that this terrorist attack could have been prevented?

A. No, no, no, no, no. I'm not really [buying] this point, to be honest with you. They're thinking evil thoughts, as I tell you. Who expected somebody ... enemy coming from up there and use your own planes and use your own ... everything. That's mean you're dealing with very, very high ... level people. So it doesn't mean if you had put hundred security [measures this would not happen]... .

Q. How secure do you feel now? I mean, if you were to travel by plane... . Have you traveled after September 11th?

A. I do. I did ... I did actually. I did.

Q. Do you feel more secure now?

A. Most ... most ways I'm not ... I [do] not mind to be security everywhere. Even if they take me out it's no problem. You know? But as I tell you, I'm not used to seeing this in the United States. But it's good to see it in the United States. As I tell you, at least when I take my ... my kids and my wife, whatever, anybody ...[on] a plane [it's] good to have security ... as long as you follow the regular procedures it's okay.

Q. Are there any other issues or points that you would like to comment on that we haven't mentioned maybe?

A. Yes, yes. As I tell you, this ... this has nothing to do with Islam, because before you argue with this issue you have to know what Islam means, what the basis of Islam is. If you ... if you are ... person and you never know anything about Islam ... don't judge Muslim peoples because of what ... happened. Muslim it's a religion and it's part of the Jewish and Christian religion and you can see Islam it's kind of ... like the Prophet

Muhammad said, it's kind of ... the last stone. It's being in the building and I come in to build it to look perfect. You know? So Islam doesn't mean a hater. Islam is ... it's a lover. You know? So if before you argue with anybody or you hate anybody you have to know what Islam is. If you know what Islam means you will be agree with me. You will not agree with these people. You know? Don't put Islam or judge Islam in individual cases like fanatic people because fanatic people they have ... they are not going to speak for Islam. Because if they spoke, they spoke by the bomb. No. We spoke by the tongue and by the book. So that's mean you try to make me equal with somebody I don't even like. He's a Muslim but I don't like him. It's not about because he's Muslim, no, because he use Islamic or maybe he work the mind thing and over himself as a Muslim. But he's not Muslim. He's not religious because if you go by the book as I tell you, Islam is said peace. Even the name of Islam that's mean peace. The name of Islam that's mean peace. How can I mention this and I kill you? It's two different words. And it's say, "As-Salaam-a-Laikum," peace on you. You know?

Q. Right. Peace on you.

A. So how ... so how can I use it and I kill you. It's got a different sound. So that's maybe the last thing I could ... I could say: don't judge people by the way and these terrorism did. Terrorism doesn't represent Islam, doesn't represent any government, doesn't represent any administration, doesn't represent anything. It doesn't represent me 'cause I'm not proud of that. I'm not proud whatever they do. Even if I'm ... even if I doesn't like what the United States does in the foreign policy that doesn't mean I kill you. I take them out of my hands. Unless somebody touch me, that's different story. I have to defend myself. That's what Islamic ... our religion say. But if the people here in the United States

unfortunately judge us by whatever these [terrorists] did, that's going to be a bad thing, I'm telling you. It's going to be a bad influence for everybody because now we're taking innocent people as well. Like, these people made a mistake and they're going to make a mistake now. Now you're going to make me charge for something I didn't do it. Because I'm a Muslim now you just want to take part of your hand and you revenge of me when I never see these people. I'm not even agree with whatever they did.

Q. Well, thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

A. You're very welcome, a pleasure.

A. This was wonderful. Thank you so much.

A. I hope I did like, little things.

Q. You did excellent.