

**ACTING PATRIOTIC COLLECTION
SEPTEMBER 11 DIGITAL ARCHIVE**

**INTERVIEW WITH NAVID AKRAM
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Q. I want to ask you...

A. Yes.

Q. First of all, what's your name and why are you here?

A. My name is Navid Akram. I'm here for the registration purposes.

Q. What do you mean?

A. for the Special Registration program...they have it for different countries...for different Muslim countries.

Q. And do you want to tell me where you're from and why...and how you found out that you had to register?

A. I'm from Pakistan and they...they issued a broad statement on television and news services that nationals from...Pakistanis and Saudi Arabians and the rest of the...the rest of the Muslim countries have to come down here by this date to get registered.

Q. What is...what is the objective? What do you think they want with this registration? And who's they?

A. They means Immigration and objective is whatever they're telling us is just to protect terrorism from these different countries. I don't know whether their objectives are...I hope...the objectives must be good. They've been very good with both...with me and with my friend. With both of us they were good to us. They didn't say anything. And so far it's just a hassle as you can see in the line. I mean, I've been standing over there four hours getting in there just to get registered basically for no reason, which I suspect.

Q2. Do you think that's an effective way to prevent terrorism?

A2. Oh, I think this line is...he's talking about something else.

A. Effective way to protect...

Q. To prevent terrorism?

A. I don't think so but I'm not a...I'm not a specialist in this particular field. But I don't know what this is going to help them to do. It seems like racial profiling to me.

Q. It seems like what?

A. Racial profiling to me.

Q. And what does racial profiling mean to you?

A. I mean, they just want to round up different Muslim countries, wanted to know what they're doing; wanted to interfere into my private life. That's basically what I thought of.

Q. Did they ask you private questions or...

Q2. What did they ask you?

A. Basically, you know, where I'm from, how I came down here, what I've been doing. Stuff like that--nothing...nothing, like, really, really personal or nothing.

Q. And you were saying you don't think this could help prevent ter---...Can you say that in a full thought to me?

A. I don't think...I don't think so. I mean, I don't know what this is going to help them in what sense. I mean, my community has been down here for a very long time. I mean, we never had no problems before. After 9-11 I understand that they have to keep an eye on the people, especially with the background of Pakistani or Saudis just to find out what they're doing, but still I don't know how they're going to figure out with this the...to prevent whatever the terrorist activities are. I mean, they've already had me for the past eight years; never had no criminal record and everything. Been very good citizens. They already checked it. That's why they're leaving me out here back on this...(inaudible)...

Q. How long did you wait today to get in?

A. At least four hours.

Q. Try to say it in full sentences 'cause I'm not getting her voice: that I waited for four hours to get in...

Q2. How long did you wait?

A. Four hours.

Q2. In a full sentences.

A. I waited here for four hours just to get into this building.

Q. Do you have to come back again?

A. No.

Q. Were you scared or...how do you think... (inaudible)...

A. Of course.

Q. Well, tell me about that.

A. Emotionally it's kind of disturbing, I mean, nothing else to think about, just think about that they're going to get me in for something which I really never committed before. And it's been really disturbing for the past...at least a month.

Q2. Do you know anyone who has been picked up by the INS?

A. Yes. Yes.

Q. Who? A close friend of yours or...

A. A friend of mine.

Q2. Can you tell about...

A. I've been in there for too...I've been in there...I got detained in there too for about twenty days.

Q. Wait! In...in where?

A. I was in East Brunswick. They got me for...because I had no status at that time and they got me in there, but...in East Brunswick on an overstay basis. They got the whole check up, the FBI, the criminal check up. They checked my background and I got bonded out for some money,-whatever-the procedure. And now I came down here to register and they said, you know, you're okay to go.

Q2. When was this?

A. I was...They got me on 29th of December and I came out, like, 17th or 18th of January. Yes.

Q. Where were you?

A. I was on Brunswick Correctional Department.

(Male voice) Pardon me. You're filming on government property so please step over to the other side over there. Thank you.

Q. Say that again?

A. Isn't government property for to serve the people?

A2. It's bizarre.

A. Whatever it is, I don't know.

Q. They're amazing.

A. Yes.

Q2. Can you tell us a little...the procedure that you think it was because of 9-11 why you were picked up?

A. I never had no problems before, to be honest with you. Never had it in my mind that...to go and leave here because everything was fine before 9-11. After 9-11 obviously things been changed. The concern of the government understandable, whatever they're doing. But I don't think that the way they are doing it is the right way to prevent the next...or to rout out whatever the terrorist activities might be. I think...I mean, whatever their...their intention is right but the way they re doing it is wrong, I guess.

Q2. Can you tell us how you were picked up or how did you ... (inaudible)...

A. I got picked up from a friend's house. I went to visit him and they were already there. Somebody complained about him. And I just rang the bell and they came out and got me too.

Q2. A neighbor complained about a friend of yours?

A. Yeah.

Q2. Do you know about the neighbor or...

A. No. The only thing I know they...they...So far I found out that they had a bad feeling about my friend so they complained about him and they got him too. But he got out too so I don't know.

Q. How long were you in detention?

A. About twenty days.

Q. And tell me what were those twenty days like for you? Tell me about those twenty days?

A. It's hard to tell.

Q. Why?

A. It's not...It was not easy 'cause I've never been in that kind of circumstances before ever in my life. I ran, or you can say escaped from my country for...for the stupid reason. And when you come down here you start to make a new life, and when you found out that this is the country...alright, where you can live happily and ever after. And after eight years you come to think of again, oh, this is not my place again. I have to run somewhere else, you can imagine.

Q2. Was there ill treatment of the detainees?

A. Excuse me?

Q2. Were you ill treated in this detention ... (inaudible)...

A. Well, it was the Correctional Department basically. We were in with criminals. Our...yeah. It was kind of very weird fitting in. It was very hard but what you going to do? You had to fit in.

Q. Did it cost you a lot of money?

A. Ten grand.

Q. What do you mean ten grand?

A. I paid eight hundred...eight thousand dollars for my bond and two thousand dollars to my lawyer.

Q. Are you going to get that money back?

A. Yeah. Right. No.

Q2. Has it changed...changed how you feel about this country?

A. I love this town. If I ever had the chance to just stay here and just to be a part of this town, I mean, nobody else have a problem with me. So, I mean, if not, what I'm going to go? Going to go somewhere else.

Q. What kind of work do you do?

A. I'm a computer technician. I did my MCSC and I work for a private company.

Q. You're highly skilled.

A. Cannot say highly, but yeah, I'm trying. I'm just trying to be part of society.

Q2. Where do you live?

Q. Say that again.

A. I'm just trying to be a part of society. That's all.

Q. Where do you live?

Q. Like, what I'm hearing from you is that you...you're a good citizen; like, you're a good civilian. You're a good...

A. That's what I feel.

Q. You're a good person in terms of, like, the whole thing. So this whole thing must be, like, racking your brain.

A. I don't know. It's...it's hard to express your feelings, I mean, especially like this, but, yeah, I've been...it's been hard, especially those twenty days were really hard for me. It wasn't easy. I'm never going to forget that.

Q. Do you have children and a wife and...

A. Thank God, so far no. Otherwise that would be more tension. That would be more...more tension and more, you know, frustrating for me. So far I'm single. That's why I'm probably holding onto myself like that.

Q2. Where do you live?

A. Flushing, Queens. You can release whatever you like to.

Q. Okay.

A. I mean, whatever I said is okay.

Q Okay. Tell me your name?

A. My name is Navid.

Q. Navid?

A. Yeah.

Q. No last name. You don't want a last name.

A. No, I don't want to use it.

(second male voice) Okay.

A. Alright. Thank you.

Q. Is there anything else you want to say to us that we didn't ask you, anything about your experience or feelings or...

A. Whatever it is. Love New York and just please treat us like human beings. I mean, we...we like human, I mean. We're part of the society and nothing wrong with us and st--stop staring at us. That's all. You know what I mean? That's all. Thank you.