

SBIA MEDIA COMMITTEE

MEDIA AND ISLAM

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MUSLIMS REACT TO RACIAL PROFILING

AMAN MEHRZAI

Racial Profiling

When 19-year-old Shakir Eljurf left class at De Anza College on Friday, November 11th, he noticed an angry crowd gathered around the Flint Center chanting and waving signs. Eljurf, along with fellow classmate Aiman Eltilib, 17, decided to see what the commotion was about. The two were attending a two-weekend seminar on the History of the Khulafah and were dressed in Islamic attire. To their surprise, they witnessed a Muslim dressed in a *thobe* being chased by officers on motorbikes. Upon closer inspection, they recognized him as 19-year-old friend and classmate Abdul Kareem Al-Hayek. Concerned for his

friend's safety, Eltilib yelled out for him to stop running. When Al-Hayek paused, an undercover agent tackled him with full force and sprayed him in the face with mace. "I told them to let Kareem go," said Eltilib, "But an officer told me 'Do you want to end up like him?' I responded, 'your hurting him, he didn't do anything.' That is when an officer choked me." The officer put his left arm around the minor's neck and choked his Adams apple with the fingertips of his right hand until he collapsed to the ground. Eljurf, with books still under his right arm, was shocked at what he was seeing and attempted to explain to the officers that they just left class but to his dismay, a third officer

twisted his left arm behind his back without warning, but was alarmed to find an angry mob pursuing them from behind. All three were then quickly released as the officers retreated to take cover from the approaching mob. Later that night, the three were followed and arrested by officers as they were going to their cars to go home.

Three other Muslims who were wearing Middle Eastern attire were also followed, beaten, and arrested that same night along with an African American who was associated with Muslim speakers such as Amir Abdul-Malik from Oakland.

Police have been accused of using racial profiling and excessive force while arrest-

ing activists during the demonstrations.

The only Caucasian to be arrested was Brian Helmle, whose goal was to disrupt Powell's speech by blowing a whistle. Helmle claimed that he was treated with courtesy and respect by officers, who released him without taking him to jail.

All other arrestees were taken to jail and treated harshly with their civil rights denied, according to attorneys.

Some arrestees were asked what their religion was, what mosque their parents

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YEAR IN REVIEW— MUSLIMS IN THE MEDIA IN 2005

STAFF WRITERS

The SBIA Media Committee continuously monitors the media to gauge the number and types of stories of Muslims presented in the media. For the year of 2005, we found that there were a number of stories offered to the public regarding Muslims. A lot of the stories in the mainstream media were

actually positive. Many of these were about Ramadan since the community members tend to invite reporters to these events. Also, there were a few positive stories about the Muslim community involvement to aid the people devastated by the Pakistan earthquake.

Other positive and neutral

stories were ones in which Muslims were interviewed, such one person interviewed at the Muslim Unity Day at Great America and another individual interviewed by SF Gate about why she wears the hijab. The McNeil Lehrer News Hour even featured a round

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 1/21—*Media Committee Meeting at SBIA*
- 2/3—*Family Night at SBIA*

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SBIA AND THE MOVIES: GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK/SYRIANA

RUTH ROBERTSON

Hollywood films have a long history of grappling with political issues affecting the world, despite the seemingly endless spate of blockbusters. Recently film and television actor George Clooney has embarked upon a path of politically conscious filmmaking to reflect US policy in the 21st century. It was recently revealed that the FBI has broadened its definition of domestic terrorism to cover law abiding political organizations including the *American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee* (ADC). ACLU California affiliates are demanding the release of documents relating to the ADC and other peaceful organizations from *CodePink* to *College Not Combat*.

Good Night and Good Luck (2005, directed by George Clooney) is a flashback to the 1950's that resonates strongly with this

week's revelations. Playing true-to-form, if not handsome and debonair, Clooney shines as CBS news producer Fred Friendly. Alongside history's most respected newsman Edward Murrow, Clooney's character fights to bring the truth about the tyranny of McCarthyism to television audiences. Friendly risked career suicide by producing a TV news show in which Murrow debated on-air with US Senator Joseph McCarthy (who gave his name to the "ism" that still haunts us today). Clooney's film turns up the pressure in the CBS newsroom, creating a hotbed of intrigue and fear. Clooney's real political views and those of his character coincide. Despite the threat to their careers, the CBS Newsroom staff of the McCarthy era is what we wish television news programming would be today--a force willing to challenge

and criticize government actions.

In *Syriana* (2005, directed by Stephen Gaghan), Clooney plays Robert Barnes, a middle aged, slightly stooped and worn-down career CIA agent, far from the good looking Dr. Douglas Ross of television's "ER". Having worked for years in the Middle East watching the destruction caused by US intelligence interventions, Barnes takes brave steps to try to prevent a US government plot to assassinate a leader bent on working for social justice in the Middle East. As an Arabic-speaking American forced to masquerade as Canadian, Clooney's Barnes evokes compassion and sympathy in the viewers. However, he is not the only sympathetic character in this movie of multiple plots and subplots. Filmed in Europe, the Middle East, the United

Kingdom and Washington DC, *Syriana* shows how interconnected the world's dependence on oil has become.

Syriana has received much acclaim as the "film that shows terrorists as people" (Scott Bowles, USA Today, December 21, 2005) and two of the most sympathetic characters are recruited into a radical group to attack a US oil tanker. The viewer is spared of the fiery explosions that the movie industry usually produces at such great expense. Instead, we see the face of fear and resolve as the Muslim men aim their motorboats loaded with dynamite directly into the side of the tanker, their expressions more powerful than Hollywood's best pyrotechnics.

Where is Hollywood headed with this trend in movies? "More people are beginning to look critically at what our government is doing," explained George Clooney when asked about his new direction in film. Hollywood has a responsibility to bring politically conscious films out of the independent market and into the mainstream spotlight.

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MUSLIMS REACT TO RACIAL PROFILING

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went to, and if they were related to any terrorist organization. Others were prevented to see their lawyers and denied medical attention from injuries received by the officers who attacked them.

Cause of Dissent

The protests were part of a three-day rally against former Secretary of State Colin Powell who was a guest speaker at the college. About three hundred protesters, mostly Caucasian, listened to speakers and onlookers such as Cindy Sheehan and Yuri Kochiyama express concern about Powell's handling of Middle East and other world affairs.

The first two days of the rally were relatively quiet with the third turning violent when groups of white radicals decided to cause physical destruction of property with bats, metals, and other weapons. Much of this destruction was done in plain view of many witnesses, police officers and

reporters alike.

Community concern developed when police targeted and arrested only Middle-Eastern/Muslim individuals, although they had no association with the violent acts committed.

One officer, who was at the protests said, "Although profiling shouldn't happen, when certain people dress the way they do they become a target. It shouldn't happen, but the reality is that when most officers see someone dressed in that kind of clothes [Middle Eastern], they associate that with terrorism." The officer said that they regularly attend terrorism-training classes, and that many officers associate such garb to terrorists because of the training videos they see in which "terrorists prepare themselves for Jihad and martyrdom."

Statements like this one triggered outrage and lead to investigations before the Santa Clara Human Relations Commission who will

hold a forum in January in the presence of the public and Santa Clara County Sheriff Laurie Smith.

Muslim Reaction

Muslim reaction to the events at De Anza College reflect a larger dilemma of apologetics plaguing Muslims in the West who search for a formidable identity, yet are careful with what 'battles' to choose in the spotlight of the media.

Many community leaders have expressed concern yet refrained from condemning the alleged brutality and profiling of the police until mainstream media started picking up on the events.

Independent media such as KPFA and others were the first to respond to the events and many times aired the Muslim arrestees on nationwide programs.

Soon after, Channel 7 and Channel 11 news did specials putting Santa Clara District Attorney George Kennedy on the spotlight. CAIR also

responded with several press releases and is currently working to involve more Masaajids to raise awareness of Muslim civil rights.

"Muslims have not responded enough," said Mahmud Suleimani, member of the Muslim Community Association (MCA).

"Unfortunately, you see the non-Muslims leading the effort to denounce these acts against our brothers, yet our own Muslims want to somehow find a way to blame them. It is as if saying a woman who is raped deserved it. I have yet to see anything about this at our Mosque although the fathers of these poor kids attend this Mosque. Why?"

Those interested in attaining more information or would like to assist or attend the next Santa Clara County Human Relations Committee meeting regarding this event can contact Janeean Reavis at janeean@yahoo.com or Hani Zaki at hannyzaki@yahoo.com.

YEAR IN REVIEW— MUSLIMS IN THE MEDIA IN 2005

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table discussion with Muslims.

Negative portrayals of Muslims were usually kept out of the local news but made it into the TV shows that many watch. An episode of *Bones* on FOX depicted Muslims as suicide bombers that wanted to bomb a peace conference. An explanation for the motives was not even given. Yet *E-Ring*, a show on NBC, featured not Muslim terrorists, but Christian fundamentalists bent on a 'Holy War' against American Muslims.

Looking back at 2005, it is safe to say that the image of Muslims has progressed somewhat in the eyes of the media. Yes, a few TV shows entertained at our expense, but the reputable news outlets are now more aware of the positive aspects of Islam and Muslims and now may be more inclined to continue to seek positive and accurate media stories about Muslims.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LISTENING

IMAM BILAL IBNMUHAMMAD AP.L

Bismе-Allah Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem

Assalaamu-Alaykum

It has been said in earlier scripture and wisely so: "whoever has ears to listen, let him listen" and "pay attention to what you are hearing." It must become our **will** to not allow Shaytaan to mislead us due to a lack of conscious listening.

In the **Creation or Picture Meaning** of fusha arabic, **Isfaa' Elaa - Listening To**, means giving Khaleefah or undivided attention with your ears to get the heart of the meaning of what you hear. It also means squaring or reconciling what you hear with what you see.

We see people in a positive sense meditating voluntarily closing their eyes. We see people in a positive sense disciplining themselves voluntarily keeping their mouths shut - not talking. How often have you seen anyone seeking spiritual discipline or meditating wearing ear plugs? So listening for most of us is an involuntary experience.

It is narrated by Anas that he never saw Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. engaged in discussion without giving due attention to the party speaking to him. The Prophet was seen giving respectful attention until the person speaking finished or moved on. This is related by Abu Dawud.

Today this sunnah-practice is translated into English as **Proactive- Listening**. This is the **Applied Psychology** science we are now uncovering that has given our competition the upper hand.

The lesson: What is the science surrounding **Proactive-Listening**? It is this! Whenever anyone speaks, always remember they are sending out and signaling two different messages:

The basic message comes from the head - what the person knows and understands i.e. words, information, and ideas etc; and the other message comes from the heart - what the person feels, believes and intends to get across.

So the surface message gives you the contents and the context, and the substance message gives you the attitude and the relationship. Because of worldwide mass conditioning, 99% of the people catch the words, the information and the ideas - the contents and the context, the surface. However, only 1% are trained to linguistically catch how the words, ideas and concepts influence and psychologically control our behavior.

In conclusion, 99% of us listen from the head-level. We are conditioned to listen for facts and figures; to listen for logic and analysis. In **Applied Psychology**, this is also called **Left or West-Brain** listening. The Chinese call it **Yang-Listening**.

The training we now are undergoing has been monopolized by the 1%; to learn to listen from our hearts; to learn to listen for attitudes; to learn to listen for relationships; to learn to listen from our **Right or East-Brain**; what the Chinese call **Ying-Listening**.

Jazakum Allah Bi-Khairi

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