

...New York and Washington I believe at Yankee Stadium a mass at the Nationals, where the Nationals play, a big meeting with interfaith people, including I believe ?Cozzini? uh between you and I, meeting with the pope, meeting at the John Paul II Center, which is a center in Washington D.C. financed in Gray Park by Detroiters, through Cardinal Mida, big controversy over that, but this is finally, you know a big to do that they can actually have in this august facility that is basically a black hole financially.

Gerri: Tell me about your background....

(TC: 3:26)

Well I grew up in Detroit and I went to high school about five blocks from here, I went to the University of Michigan where I was the editor of the Michigan Daily, and very involved in those days in the Anti-Apartheid activity on campus, I had left immediately when I was 22 and I've been in New York City, and Boston, and Providence, Rhode Island for 22 years until 2000 when I moved back to Detroit to come write for the Detroit news

Gerri: So you called your career swinging....

(TC: 4:06)

Swinging I guess that's a good word for it, it's about the most positive thing you can say about it I suppose.

Gerri: So you write newspapers....

(TC: 4:14)

Newspapers and magazines, the Boston Globe, and Providence Journal, a couple of small magazine in New York that no one's ever heard of, Sports Inc., the Sports Business Weekly, and I worked at American Lawyer Media, which I basically wrote for the Manhattan Lawyer but that's also the steeper operation that gave rise to Court TV, I did some very very early preliminary production work for Court TV.

Gerri: What brought you back home?

(TC: 4:43)

What brought me back home was a desire to have a big writing job in my hometown basically.

Gerri: So the first beat you covered when you came to the news was...

(TC: 6:12)

Well it wasn't necessarily a beat, I was sort of a general assignment big hit for Sunday page one kind of thing, and we did a whole lot of stuff and we still do, the business has changed a lot there are fewer resources so we try to stay flexible on a lot of things, I've produced projects on mental health and poverty and asthma and you know just sort of all over the lot, all the while having a special interest in the Arab and Muslim communities here in metro Detroit, and these days I cover a lot of religion stories, along with the Arab and Muslim communities, but I also do other things.

Gerri: Where does your special interest come from?

(TC: 6:55)

I think my interest in this community comes from really the immigrant experience in America with which I've been familiar with since I was a little boy, I am second generation Polish American, in one of the larger Polish communities in the country, and heard a lot from my parents and grandparents about their experience when we were the new immigrants with the strange language and the odd religion, in Detroit back in the 1920's and when the Klan showed up and they weren't only looking for our African American brothers and sisters they were looking for the Catholics too, so to me the situation with Arabs in America and Muslims too is one thing that I think we should not lose focus of on is that there's a commonality of the experience that they share, there's a commonality of prejudice, there's a commonality of social, religious and economic hurdles that really have affected all populations whether Irish, Italian or Poles, or African Americans, or what have you, now obviously the African American experience is a particular experience and I think probably the Arab

experience is increasingly particular too but I think perhaps up until 9/11 for much of Arab America there was a lot more that was similar to the immigrant experiences that occurred before and the fact that this still goes on in what is by in large a great country, is really interesting to me.

Gerri: Do you think your coverage has changed since 9/11?
(TC: 8:41)

Yes it's changed in terms of emphasis and in really what we look at, we did not emphasize so much civil liberties before 9/11 and obviously this is a major concern not only in the Arab and Muslim communities in Detroit but really among people who believe in democracy, how do we balance national security with our freedoms and are we really letting Osama bin-laden win when we curtail our freedoms and become something that is different from America. So we've really ratcheted up our coverage in response to the fact that it's simply a much more interest situation since 9/11 obviously. Not that Arabs and Muslims did not face prejudice to a significant degree before 9/11 but certainly since 9/11 that has been ratcheted up.

Gerri: How does the current Arab American community compare to the Arab American community of your youth?
(TC: 9:45)

It's significantly larger, more immigration has occurred, we know that part of the reason that immigration is such a big issue in our country is that we're really at one of the peak episodes/eras of immigration to this country, so we have more people of Arab descent here, this is an old Arab community much like the Arab community in Brooklyn, New York for example which was established to great degree not only Arab Christians but Arab Muslims by the 1890's, it has been established here in Detroit since Henry Ford began hiring people who are of Arab descent people back in Arab countries finding out about that and coming to join their aunts and uncles and brothers and sisters, the first mosque in metro Detroit was located right next to Henry Ford's Model T plant which still exists still on Woodward, and that mosque moved with Henry Ford when he moved from that smaller plant to that large industrial complex river rouge, the mosque went with it. So it goes back that far and things have changed because again the issues are much more pointed certainly and the population is significantly larger too. Most Arab Americans will tell you that there's 300,000 – 400,000 Arab Americans here in Detroit, the census would indicate that it's more like 190,000 or 200,000, part of the disagreement there of course this immigrant community like many immigrant communities isn't always easy to count for official government people they tend not to have the socialization to want to necessarily respond to government authorities given the experience with government authorities in their own country and also the language barrier. But another reason for the diversion of the miscount is that some people will count Chaldeans as part of the Arab American population of course Chaldeans are not of Arab descent.

Gerri: As a reporter, what have been some of your frustrations with covering the Arab American community?
(TC: 12:35)

I think the biggest frustration is the haters; there is a significant group of people who simple won't tolerate any positive coverage of people of Arab descent or the Muslim faith. And I hear from them a lot, daily volumes of it, and the bigotry can be frustrating, and I think that it hasn't been frustrating it's been overall just a wonderful professional experience, unfortunately in our business, when things are bad for people we get good stories and that's something one goes through in the long course of a career, and the particular difficulties of Arab Americans and Muslims these days have given rise to what are some very interesting and poignant stories really about the American experience really, how does one of Arab descent and the Muslim faith become American, evolve in that way over the course of you know the first few generations of arriving in this country, so I really have no frustrations actually in covering them other than the frustrations that human beings share about the hatred that is ramping and is at large in the country, it also has increased in the years since 9/11, it is not diminished or worn off, it actually seem to be increasing as we go along, so I think that would be the frustrations just out of the sense of common humanity with people that that's occurring. But I have

found the community of Arab and Muslims in metro Detroit extremely willing to explain their experience and talk about what's going on their lives they're some of the best Americans we know their patriotism, you know they came to this country because of what this country is, I mean they came to this country because they wanted to be here, they're often reminded by many of the Imams? that I've heard speaking that they are freer to practice their faith here despite what's going on despite the hatred despite the confusion of what Islam really is, freer to practice it here than they were in their own countries and this is acknowledged by most Muslims and Arabs that I know, so not really a lot of frustrations, just frustrations in that you know people kind of take the easy route out rather than trying to understand who Arabs and Muslims are, we get the generalizations that they are all bad and there is something fundamentally wrong with Islam that leads people to be violent for example so that's frustrating, but I don't think that it's frustrating as a professional, in a way that circumstance gives rise to good stories so that's kind of the duality of being a newspaper man or a journalist.

Geri: You mentioned haters, are they from certain groups or individuals are they sending emails or calling you....

(TC: 16:05)

Well there's certainly some organizations that ratchet up campaigns to decry positive coverage of people of Arab descent and Muslims, there are organizations that engage in that activity as part of their purpose for existing. There are more of them and there are also just regular folk who are sort of ignorant of the facts if I can put it that way, and wonder why I would dare to write about those people who flew into our buildings, and the last time I checked there weren't millions of people flying into our buildings, there were these misguided souls who have hijacked what is a true and honorable faith and used it and bent it and distorted it for their own purpose.

Geri: As a journalist have you had any issues of getting access to Arab Americans because of language barriers or their perception of the media...

(TC: 17:25)

Yes but it doesn't amount to frustration, and understand that a lot of people don't like talking, appearing on camera or talking to the media, people get nervous about that, and I think the less you have an experience of American and American media to are sort of predisposed to having some concern about that. In addition, great many of these countries that are Arab and Muslim populations are from the amount of authoritarianism in those societies' leads people to be conditioned against coming forward and stating their beliefs and talking candidly. So I have had people, who would prefer not to be interviewed, but that doesn't amount to frustration, to me I mean I understand why they don't want to be interviewed and there's always another person to talk to, so I don't think it's a lack of access I think one weapon that I don't have in my quiver for my job is the knowledge of the Arabic language, I would like to be reading some of the Arab publications in Arabic I would like to be understanding some of the Imams and others who give speeches in Arabic I would prefer to know what they are saying as they are saying it rather than walking up to them afterwards and saying to them what did you say? So maybe in terms of the way you've defined frustration, I guess my biggest concern that I have is that I do not know Arabic.

Geri: Are you in the process of learning it?

(TC: 19:07)

I've tried to take some classes but it's a very difficult process, you know we are very busy in our business these days, so yeah I would fault myself for having not yet learned Arabic but I have to tell you I'm not sure a year from now I'm going to be in a lot better position with them.

Geri's camera guy: Do you think that the current political climate in this country has gotten in the way of you getting your stories that you try to report on the Arab community?

(TC: 19:45)

No

Geri's camera guy: You don't think people are afraid to come forward and talk about anything for fear of....

I think it's more likely that because of the concerns that people have that there is a willingness to talk about those concerns rather than a bunker mentality. The average person on the street can be shy about coming forward and being quoted but I don't think that is a significant hinder at all to my reporting and I think it is perhaps inspired by concerns about the average Joe, who might think well you know most people might disregard what I say anyway so why should I talk with this reporter, perhaps that comes up sometimes, but it does not in any way hinder my reporting, it may mean a second phone call or walking down the block and talking to another person but I don't view that as frustration or a hindrance or a bar at all.

Geri's camera guy: So Patriot Act fears don't play a part in this at all?
Play into what?

Geri's camera guy: Play into reporting and getting stories....
(TC: 21:13)

I think that if there are people who are in this country illegally, that they're less likely to want to talk and give their names. But I think that's true in the Latino community, that's true in the Polish community, I think it's true in any community where people might not be properly documented and in this country. The Patriot Act to me has encouraged people to talk about the unfairness from their perspective of provisions of the Patriot Act. The anti civil liberties sets of the Patriot Act and we've covered a lot of those issues but my sense of it is, is that people are very eager to talk about the promise of America, the Bill of Rights, civil liberties, and how we balance all of that with concerns about national security which are concerns that the Arab community and Muslims share go a great extent, and not only share, but I think we're not mindful of the fact that they're the primary victims of this extremism, they're the primary victims of those that have hijacked Islam and perverted it for a violent purpose, they are more likely and their families are more likely to be injured than Americans because it's happening every day overseas, so no I don't think that people are hesitant to talk about the Patriot Act or hesitant to talk in the current climate, my sense is that the current climate has invigorated the Arab community, it's caused some political formation, it's caused them to evaluate the very meaning of America in their lives and who they are as Americans, I think those things have actually encouraged them wanting to talk to me, them wanting stories about their situation, now does it encourage them to leave ethnic enclaves and be out in the general population, that's a different story than you asking me about my work, and I have a different answer to that question. My sense from Arabs who talk to me and many Muslims who talk to me is that they do more keep to themselves communally in the wake of the tragedy of 9/11, but I think in a way they are more willing to talk about the situation with the media.

Geri: How have you prepared yourself to cover this beat?
(TC: 24:02)

I've read a lot about Islam, I've from a very early age in college had a great deal of interest in the conflict over Palestine. Or what we often call the Israeli-Arab conflict. And I read widely, I'm always looking at the Al-Arabi websites the Al-Jazeera websites, the websites of many of the Israeli papers, reading a lot of books, professor Esposito's books in particular are extremely helpful, I do a lot that involves me not really making any notes or conducting any interviews, you know just being out in mosques and just out in the Arab and Muslim communities and talking with people, ?hot-eds? You know I read daily, great perspectives on the Palestinian situation in the Israeli papers, much more coverage of that, much fair coverage I would argue than in many of the American papers in the Israeli papers, I think a lot of Americans would be surprised by the tone of the coverage of Palestinians in some of the Israeli papers and how fundamentally fair and expansive and exhaustive it is.

Geri: I have read some of your stories and you have used Osama Sablani? As one of your sources, can you talk about; does he represent the Arab American community?
(TC: 25:58)

Osama Sablani is the publisher of the Arab American News which says it's the largest publication on the Arab American community nationally and he also is an organizer of the Arab American political action committee and he's very active as a leader in the Arab community, does he speak for the Arab community? Or the Muslim community clearly not, there are many people who of Arab descent who would tell you that Osama Sablani does not speak for us, and they would say that about other Arab American leaders, an expression that is frequently used with me by some Arab Americans is these quote unquote Arab American leaders, so Osama is a leader, he is vocal, he is powerful, he has a publication and he is very active and he's done a lot of good work, but I think he speaks for the community in a way that he is a leader he believes that he's trying to represent opinion within the community but he's certainly not an elected leader and he's certainly not the only spokesman out there, Osama is not a person that I quote with great frequency but yeah I do quote him he's certainly on the scene and active and very involved.

Geri: How could you improve coverage of the community?

(TC: 28:36)

Well we've talked about the language thing, I think if we maybe had more time and more resources, we face a situation in our business of declining resources, maybe if I could ONLY cover the community, I would be doing longer more exhaustive pieces about it, but that's not a realistic aspiration right now, you know given what's affecting newspapers big and small in this country, you know people under 40 don't read newspapers, so I guess that would be it if I could dedicate my full time to it and if I could dedicate it in a more extensive way, but before we went on camera I outlined the five or six things I'm doing today and if I was JUST covering Arab-American and Muslims today and every day that I work here, I think we would have more exhaustive coverage perhaps maybe a little more in depth, perhaps there are some stories out there that I would like to get to that take some time and because of other things that are going on, they take even longer to get to, so I guess it would be both learning the language and if I had the ability to dedicate time only to that then I think there would be some value there certainly. But then we would lose the other coverage that I am not doing and of course there are people associated with those other communities who would then have their concerns about how we were distributing our resources.

Geri: Who are some of the sources you use the most?

(TC: 30:31)

Well all of the Imams I am in frequent contact with them, I am in frequent contact with civil rights organizations like the American Anti-Discrimination Committee and the council on American Islamic relations, and then there are people who are simply active, Muslims who are really dedicated to the task of a better explanation of Islam. Muslims who are dedicated to the task of particularly American form of Islam, and you know over the course of the last five or six years that I've been doing this, you gather a lot of people that are really dedicated in the community to that cause, so you know, my goodness the list is extensive of sources as you can imagine but there's probably a core group of a couple of dozen people with whom I am in contact with on a very frequent basis.

Geri: What do think of your newspapers editorial stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

(TC: 31:52)

My opinion which does not always enter into my reporting is that we do not pay enough attention in this country generally to the Palestinian side of this affair. We are not well enough informed on the Palestinian side of this affair to make all the best informed judgments we could on the state of affairs there, and again I would point to publications like hot ads and I would points to Israeli society where the contemplation on the state of being Palestinian is much more in depth, much more divergent and dissonant from the majority view and where criticism of Israel is much more tolerated than it is here in the states.

Geri: What is your response to people who say you're anti-Semitic or pro-Palestine?

(TC: 33:05)

No one has told me I'm anti-Semitic so I have no reaction to that, as a Pole, I'm of Polish descent, anti-Semitism is a particularly ugly matter for which I feel sort of by heritage partially responsible for, Polish Catholics as I hope John Paul II explained fairly well to people, have our own history or prejudice, bigotry and violence against the Jewish people and Anti-Semitism is every bit as ugly as any other prejudice or what have you, I guess my reaction in general, when critics of Israel are accused of anti-Semitism that's a pretty easy tactic. Well I'm pro people, and I do give a voice to the Arab American community as well as the Jewish community in Detroit about these issues as I cover religion I'm covering Jews in metro Detroit and the Jewish community in metro Detroit, and yeah the criticism that I get is not that I'm anti-Semitic those words have not been used, although again it's brandished as a very easy way of cutting off debate, cutting off information about the plight of Palestinians, in terms of being pro Palestinian, you know I'm not sure I'm pro Palestinian either, I mean I would not identify it that way, I am absolutely certain that I'm one of the reporters in this country who gives them a voice.

Geri: Is that something you have...that critics have....
(TC: 35:35)

Yes there are people who don't want to hear about this there are people who don't want to hear that side of the story and again I refer back to my statements about more so here than in Israel actually, I think that a lot of American would be relatively surprised of the nature of the open discourse and great democracy that the state of Israel is on this issue in particular.

Questions: Earlier you talked about communication from people who disagree with your paper's stance, you also eluded to organization that do the same, and you noted that it sometimes leads you to good stories, could you point to some stories that you have done that have been like that?

(TC: 36:34)

I think you're conflating a couple of things that I said, I don't think that the hate groups are constructive and give rise to publicity, I think the Patriot Act gave rise to a political formation in the Arab American and Muslim community and to a political activism and to a willingness to be more aggressive in addressing those issues, I don't think the haters are playing a constructive role at all, I don't think that by a virtue of their hatred that it's leading to...well I think I'll take that back, I think we have people in the interfaith community in metro Detroit, which is a very strong interfaith community in metro Detroit, you know Adam Cardinal Mida, the Catholic Archbishop of Detroit was in the largest mosque in America within days of the 9/11 attack, expressing a solidarity based on the fact that we all pray to the same god among other things, so I think the interfaith community in metro Detroit has had a proper very active response to the hatred, but I don't think the haters are helping me produce stories I think the haters are hating

Question: Can you point to a specific organization that we might be able to find material from?

(TC: 38:11)

I think they exist online and a little googling will get you there and yeah I can share some of the emails with you, to quote you the name of organizations who are authors of hate right now I am not prepared to do that in this interview, in part because I don't read most of these hate filled messages or the blogs that I understand take me to task on a regular basis, I generally remain uninformed of those things, to be frank, I know that there are organizations that are spreading hate and Islamophobia, and they do contact me all the time, but I am honest to say that I don't have their names at the tip of my tongue because I think of what is just a natural reaction of any good or well intentioned well formed person of god and you know an American patriot that you know, these groups are so nefarious as to, I think part of the reaction to sort of figuratively hold up your hands and just keep them at bay and I think that's part of my response to them.

Geri: What's great about Detroit is that they have these huge ethnic groups, in particular with the Arab American community, what is their relationship with other ethnic groups?

(TC: 40:03)

Well I think that there is a troubled relationship between Arab Americans and Muslims in a society at large to the degree that there's misinformation about who they are and what they do and how they live, basically. I think that there is clearly some conflict that becomes peaked at times between the Jewish community and the Arab community, and I think that also we have a big racial divide in Detroit, we are the most segregated community by housing in the country and there are some conflicts between Arabs and African Americans sort of as a subset of sort of whites and African Americans, so that's sort of where the conflicts would be, at the same time not only are there interfaith efforts between the Jewish and interfaith communities, I recently wrote a story about a group of students at the University of Michigan who were going down to New Orleans for spring break rather than partying, this is not an unusual story except for the fact that this was a group of Muslim and Jewish students who got together to go down there and they were getting together and knowing each other and to see these kids or I shouldn't call them kids, I should call them young adults, in Ann Arbor, Michigan sitting around a room with their Hejobs? and Yamakas? All talking to each other was a great experience, it is also true that somewhere right now more than likely in our metropolis, there is an Arab doctor standing next to a Jewish doctor performing life-saving surgery on some Catholic and it's a little bit difficult to hate when you wake up and realize that the guys that just pulled your life out of the fire were a Jew and a Muslim or a Jew and an Arab. So we have these common experiences which we sort of grow to understand our shared humanity and that happens a lot in Detroit I think like in a lot of big cities there are ethnic divides and they play out in different ways, you know Boston, Massachusetts and Providence, Rhode Island sometimes it's still the Italians against the Irish and you know in Detroit it plays out in many ways.

Geri: I attended an interfaith meeting and was surprised by how small the audience was, has that been your experience?

(TC: 42:51)

Well I could take you to Catholic events where the audience is pretty small you know, so I don't know what you mean, maybe it wasn't well publicized, I don't know if the turnout is necessarily representative of a great number of people in this community who yearn for that certain common meeting of minds of mid spirituality. I'm not sure that I can absolutely guarantee you that 99.9 percent of the people who are interested in that were not in that meeting, you know what tends to attract people to those meetings are people are very active in that area and people who it may actually be their job to be at that meeting, so I'm not sure what meeting it was or what have you, is there not enough of that sort of work, I think there is not enough of that sort of work, there is still fear, I talk with people who are harshly critical of this lamb about whether they've been in a mosque, have they ever talked with a Muslim about Islam, do they talk in their workplace about Islam, and many do not, I know that the people who call here and email me and betray a prejudice and a bigotry are often the people who have the least experience with the other, and yet their prejudice against the other and I think that's why we use the word ignorance, we mean ignorance not as hey you're stupid, we mean ignorant as in hey you don't know, you need a familiarize yourself you need to take those steps, but that said, you know I'm aware of concern among activists, interfaith activists that there aren't enough of them, that not enough is being done, but you know I could take you to a meeting today on hunger and we would both be disappointed at the number of activists working to ameliorate the problem we have in metro Detroit with hunger is not enough either, there may be two of three people sitting around that table.

Geri: I just wanted to get a sense of how many people are associated with interfaith....

(TC: 45:17)

Well I don't have a number for you, the activism is strong, again I think that some of the activists are disappointed with the numbers, I think some of the activists have been disappointed in the response of disparate communities since 9/11, since the second Lebanon war, the willingness of people to cross lines of faith and greet each other and meet on common ground I think the activists themselves would tell you that they do have some disappointment that their numbers are not larger and that beyond the number of activists that beyond the number of activists just the everyday sorts of people who are not activists but who are people of faith not enough of them are willing to

participate in interfaith activity and to acknowledge one another. You know I have a lot of people to call me here and say we don't pray to the same god, their god is Allah, and that's different from god, and of course Allah means god in Arabic, so you try and explain that to them.

Geri: You referred to the Lebanon war, did you mean the July 2006 war?

(TC: 46:41)

Yes

Geri: We talked to several other people and they said that they did not cover the rallies correctly on the families in Lebanon, what is your reaction to that?

(TC: 47:03)

Well they're wrong, sometimes we're the first newspaper to report the absolute outrage in the Lebanese community about the conduct of the war, a war that the foreign minister of Israel herself has said that she thought would only go on for a few days, and the disproportionate response, the Lebanese believe of disproportionate response to the raid by Hezbollah militia's that killed I believe eight soldiers and took others captive. The response in Lebanon was disproportionate.

(TC: 47:46) We are also one of the few newspapers that has reported the extent to which cluster bombs were used as a weapon of terror in Lebanon. And the extent to which the Israeli government to this day according to the UN has not provided the full reports on where those bombs are and how the use of those cluster bombs was ratcheted up in the closing days of that war as it became clear that an agreement was about to be signed and that there would be a cease fire. So we're the paper who did all of that, I'm aware of Osama and Imad's complaints about this, what Osama and Imad complained about is that when we went to a demonstration at which there were 10,000 participants in Dearborn, we reported the cheering for and the signs that support Hezbollah, I know what Osama and Imad think about our coverage of those demonstrations, and because there was this outpouring of support for the Hezbollah militia's that stopped for the first time in history or in recent history, the Israeli Defense Forces have actually now been stopped by an Arab army and that Arab army is Hezbollah. And when an Arab army does that Arabs rally to that cause, now two years later, most of the Lebanese who were very grateful for Hezbollah stopping the IDF are apoplectic in their anger at Hezbollah for in their point of view causing major disruptions in the politics of Lebanon, for their support of serious hegemony over Lebanon and so forth, these very same people who at times support Hezbollah, will tell you they think they are being forced to support Hezbollah because it's the only means of defense in southern Lebanon, they believe.

(TC: 50:37) But when we went to cover these demonstrations we pointed out here's all the support of Hezbollah, and Osama and Imad believe that the overall message of peace now in Lebanon, Condoleezza Rice, peace now, George Bush, peace now, today cease fire today in Lebanon, Ehud Olmert, Aipmni Lipmni thought there would be a cease fire early in the war, was lost amid this publicity about Hezbollah. I disagree with them, I think if you go back and look at the coverage of those rallies, and I was not the author of those stories, I was working on other stories at the same time about the war when other reporters were out covering the actual demonstrations, I think those stories make very clear the intense desire on the part of the Arab American community in metro Detroit for a quick halt to the hostilities end this stop this, we have 7,000 residents, 7,000 Americans either by virtue of citizenship or residence in the warzone at that time and a delayed halting response by the American administration to get American citizens out of a war zone, all other European nations responded sooner than the Americans to their citizens in the war zone of south Lebanon, that is inarguable, the Lebanese said that that day we covered that, the Arab said that let's get a cease fire right now, Condoleezza Rice we want a cease fire, we don't want you over there saying oh we'll have a cease fire next week while we drop some more cluster bombs, that was all in that story, the Hezbollah angle of the presence of support for Hezbollah was also in that story, if readers choose to read those stories and only focus on the Hezbollah angle and not the cease fire now angle, not the why aren't we protecting American citizens in a war zone angle, I think that's something that the readers choose to do, and

I'm not sure we can make that decision for them, by not writing about the fact that there was support for Hezbollah at that rally.

(TC: 53:13) I can also tell you that there's a divergence opinion in the Arab American community, I mean we talked before about does Osama speak for the Arab community, I can tell you that in this regard he doesn't, because there was a lot of disagreement about the tactics in that demonstration within the Arab community. There were older residents of Arab descent walking through the crowd telling younger residents you have a swastika on that flag, swastika is a hateful message not only to Jews but to Christians, to Muslims and to others, get rid of that swastika and equating that with the state of Israel. That is hateful, uncalled for not accurate and shouldn't be a part of this demonstration. Muslim leaders who saw that swastika called here during that demonstration to say we know you've got reporters there, we've seen the sign with the swastika, this is forbidden we have asked them to get rid of that, Also more of the support for Hezbollah at that demonstration it needed to be textured, people needed to explain why they had feelings of support for Hezbollah and when, when Hezbollah is the only provider of social and health services in southern Lebanon to the oppressed Shea, majority of southern Lebanon. Then they hold a special place in the Arab community, and they defend Arab land against invaders they hold a special place in the Arab community, but when they foam at the sort of discord that we're seeing today that is stanching the development of a free democratic Lebanon, Hezbollah is bitterly criticized in some circles, in the Arab community, so Hezbollah is many things, and I think what Imad and Osama especially were objecting to is that some people read our reports or saw them on TV and choose to focus solely on the pro Hezbollah sympathies that were expressed in that demonstration.

Geri: On another note they had wonderful things to say about you as a reporter, what do you have to say about that?

(TC: 55:35)

Well you know I appreciate that and I think it's not me, it's just any reporter who would decide to go cover a particular group of Americans most of whom are quite recent immigrants who are facing a number of hurdles in terms of establishing themselves and their ethnic groups and their religion as a presence in American life, and I think any reporter who would cover that on an objective honest basis would be you know people would be grateful about that, and it happens here in metro Detroit, you know I've heard many leaders in the Arab and Muslim communities say that you know they're really grateful for the coverage that happens here, but when I hear that you know I say you're welcome and thank you for contributing to that but in a way it's just a matter of this is what's going on and we cover what's going on in our business, so I'm not sure I'm doing anything more than just being a newspaper reporter.