



P.O.V.

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Season

22

New Muslim Cool

A film by Jennifer Maytorena Taylor

Co-produced by Hana Siddiqi and Kauthar Umar



www.pbs.org/pov



LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKER

SAN FRANCISCO, MAY 2009

Dear Viewer,

I had an accidental start as a documentary filmmaker. Injuries ended my modern-dance career before it really began, and during my recuperation I spent a few years teaching in New York City and San Francisco Head Start and special-education classrooms. I started to learn that everybody has a story worth listening to, if you can just take the time and really open your ears and mind. And “normal” is usually in the eye of the beholder.

I alternated those teaching gigs with time spent living in Brazil and Argentina, at a time when both countries were transitioning to elected governments from the military dictatorships of the '70s and '80s. Watching my friends and relatives in those countries emerge from the trauma of those years, I was struck by how powerfully each country's pop culture was helping people express themselves collectively and individually.

Flash forward to the period right after 9/11: I was working as a producer at San Francisco's PBS affiliate, KQED, where I was offered the chance to do some pieces on South Asian youth in the Bay Area. In the course of my research, I discovered a thriving Muslim hip-hop scene in Oakland. There, an incredibly diverse group of young Muslim men and women — some of them converts and some of them born into the faith — were collaborating to create a culture that expressed their faith and reaffirmed their American-ness.

It struck me that these young artists were using pop culture in much the same way those Brazilian and Argentine musicians had a decade earlier — to coalesce as a community after a terrible event, while making new space for individual expression that would further the evolution of a shared national identity.

Thinking of other seminal cultural and musical moments, I came up with a be-bop inspired title, **New Muslim Cool**. Then I put together a team that included my two amazing co-producers Kauthar Umar and Hana Siddiqi, raised some initial funds and started filming.

At first we planned to make a “survey” film about American Muslim youth culture, a sort of ensemble piece featuring several intersecting characters on the road with a small Muslim hip-hop label. We imagined that film would explore the diversity and dynamism of this young American community, examine hip-hop as the lingua franca of youth everywhere, and show how young American Muslims — like so many other people — were using new technologies to bring together faith and pop culture.

All of those cultural themes do run through the finished film, but once we decided to focus on Hamza Pérez and his family and community in Pittsburgh, Pa., the project took on a whole other life and deeper meaning. Hip-hop culture became less the focus of the film and more the context, and Hamza and his wife Rafiah's day-to-day and spiritual life became the real heart of the film.



Director Jennifer Maytorena Taylor.
Photo courtesy of Lynnlly Labovitz



LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKER

We followed Hamza, Rafiah and their community as they faced the ups and downs of life over three years. They confronted everyday challenges, such as getting to know their in-laws and coping with Rafiah giving birth by C-section, and not-so-everyday challenges, such as suspecting they were under some form of surveillance. Often these disparate circumstances were overlaid one atop the other, so in the space of two minutes during an interview Rafiah would wonder about a mysterious van parked outside her house and then ask who had neglected to put the lid on the peanut butter. It was a little surreal sometimes, but so is real life.

At the outset of this project when we were picturing the result as a cool and clever film about hip-hop culture, I'm not sure any of us — the crew or the people featured in the film — anticipated how deeply we would end up exploring the elemental processes that make us human: the search for some form of faith, for goodness, for ways to maintain hope, find forgiveness and fall in love. But part of the magic of making a long-form documentary is not knowing where it will end up. Inevitably, though, you discover you've been profoundly changed, for the better, by the journey.

I invite you to share part of this journey with Hamza and Rafiah and their circle of friends and family. I hope the film gives you a glimpse into the diversity of the American Muslim experience as it becomes more and more a part of our national life. I also hope that — no matter your own religious background or beliefs (or no religious beliefs)—you accept our invitation to look for reflections of yourself in this story.

Jennifer Maytorena Taylor,

Filmmaker, **NEW MUSLIM COOL**



Co-producer Hana Siddiqi.
Photo courtesy of Kauthar Umar



Co-Producer Kauthar Umar.
Photo courtesy of Kauthar Umar



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INTRODUCTION



Puerto Rican-American rapper Hamza Pérez pulled himself out of drug dealing and street life 12 years ago and became a Muslim. Now he's moved to the tough North Side of Pittsburgh, Pa., to start a new religious community, rebuild his shattered family and reach out to the neighborhood with the message that faith is a better response than crime to poverty and injustice.

When the FBI raids his mosque, Hamza must confront the realities of the post-9/11 world, and himself. In his younger days, the raid might have fueled his rage, and certainly mass media portrayals of Muslims have conditioned many of us to expect just such an angry response. But fatherhood, maturity and Hamza's quest for a deeper understanding of Islam lead him in a different direction. Seeking to act on a more universal understanding of faith, Hamza becomes a prison outreach worker and finds Christian allies. He gains perspective and a new friend from an interfaith dialogue with a

Jewish woman and affirms bonds with his Christian family, even as they struggle to understand his conversion. And the content of his music begins to shift from expressions of anger and protest to visions of healing and hope.

New Muslim Cool, a feature length (90-minute) documentary, follows Hamza over three years as he attempts to find spiritual fulfillment and real-world success as a father, husband and community leader. It takes viewers to both familiar and surprising places in an America that never stops changing. As an outreach tool, the film offers models of reconciliation and provides an excellent springboard for people interested in reaching across traditional divides.

Hamza Pérez.
Photo courtesy of Kauthar Umar



POTENTIAL PARTNERS

KEY ISSUES

New Muslim Cool is well suited for use in a variety of settings and is especially recommended for use with:

- **Your local PBS station**
- **Groups that have discussed previous PBS and P.O.V. films relating to Muslims in the United States, prejudice, interfaith dialogue or hip-hop, including *Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes*, *Race is the Place*, *Frontline: Muslims*, *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet*, *Hiding and Seeking: Faith and Tolerance after the Holocaust* or *Promises*.**
- **Groups focused on any of the issues listed in the “Key Issues” section**
- **High school students**
- **Faith-based and interfaith organizations and institutions**
- **Cultural, art or historical organizations, institutions, or museums**
- **Civic, fraternal and community groups**
- **Academic departments or student groups at colleges, universities and high schools**
- **Community organizations with a mission to promote education and learning, such as local libraries**

New Muslim Cool is an excellent tool for outreach and will be of special interest to people interested in the topics below:

- **American Muslims**
- **Arts and community**
- **Civic engagement**
- **Civil liberties**
- **Community organizing**
- **Conflict resolution**
- **Family**
- **Hip-hop**
- **Interfaith dialogue**
- **Islam**
- **Latinos**
- **Leadership**
- **Minorities in the United States**
- **Muslim-Jewish relations**
- **Muslim youth**
- **Pluralism**
- **Poverty**
- **Prejudice**
- **Prisons / jails and chaplaincy**
- **Profiling**
- **Proselytizing**
- **Religion**
- **Religion and identity**
- **Religious conversion**
- **Youth leadership**



USING THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to help you use **New Muslim Cool** as the centerpiece of a community event. It contains suggestions for organizing such an event, as well as ideas for how to help participants think more deeply about the issues in the film.

People looking for a primer on the basic tenets of Islam won't find it in **New Muslim Cool**. Instead, they will discover a window into a community that is largely invisible in mainstream media. As the film humanizes the label "Muslim," it also provides an opportunity to improve understanding, not only of others but also of ourselves. Ideally, that increased understanding will inspire people to advocate for one another, openly challenging discrimination and demanding that the values of pluralism and universal human dignity be reflected in the nation's public policy.

The discussion questions in this guide are designed for a very wide range of audiences. Rather than attempting to address them all, choose one or two that best meet the needs and interests of your group.

Planning an Event

Not only do screenings of P.O.V. films showcase documentary film as an art form, but they also can be used to present information, get people interested in taking action on an issue, provide opportunities for people from different groups or perspectives to exchange views and create space for reflection. Use the questions that follow as a planning checklist to help you create a high-quality, high-impact event.

- **Have you defined your goals?** Set realistic goals with your partners — what do you want to happen as a result of your event? Are you hoping to increase awareness or knowledge? Change attitudes or behavior? Help people network in ways that spark energy and ongoing connection? Keep in mind that some goals are easier to accomplish than others: Adding to a person's knowledge base is easier than changing beliefs and behaviors, for example. Being clear about your goals will make it easier to decide how to structure the event (whether as a single meeting or an ongoing project, for example), target publicity and evaluate results.
- **Does the way you are planning to structure the event fit your goals?** Do you need an outside facilitator, translator or sign language interpreter? If your goal is to share information, are there local experts on the topic who should be present? How large an audience do you want? (Large groups are appropriate for information exchanges. Small groups allow for more intensive dialogue.)
- **Have you arranged to involve all stakeholders?** It is especially important that people be allowed to speak for themselves. If your group is planning to take action that affects people other than those present, how will you give voice to those not in the room?
- **Is the event being held in a space where all participants will feel comfortable?** Is it wheelchair accessible? Is it in a part of town that's easy to reach by various kinds of transportation? If you are bringing together different constituencies, is it neutral territory? Does the physical configuration allow for the kind of discussion you hope to have?
- **Will the way that the room is set up help you meet your goals?** Is it comfortable? If you intend to have a discussion, will people be able to see one another? Are there spaces to use for small breakout groups? Will everyone be able to easily see the screen and hear the film?
- **Have you scheduled time to plan for action?** Planning next steps can help people leave the room feeling energized and optimistic, even if the discussion has been difficult. Action steps are especially important for people who already have a good deal of experience talking about the issues on the table. For those who are new to the issues, just engaging in public discussion serves as an action step.



FACILITATING A DISCUSSION

Finding a Facilitator

Controversial topics often make for excellent discussions. But by their nature, those same topics can also give rise to deep emotions and strongly held beliefs. As a facilitator, you can create an atmosphere in which people feel safe, encouraged and respected, making it more likely that they will be willing to share their ideas openly and honestly. Here's how:

Preparing Yourself

Identify your own hot-button issues.

View the film before your event and give yourself time to reflect so you aren't dealing with raw emotions at the same time that you are trying to facilitate a discussion.

Be knowledgeable.

You don't need to be an expert on Islam, American Muslims or the role of hip-hop in modern American Muslim culture, but knowing the basics can help you keep a discussion on track and gently correct misstatements of fact. In addition to reviewing the "Background Information" section in this guide, you may want to take a look at the websites and articles suggested in the "Resources" section.

Be clear about your role.

You may find yourself taking on several roles for an event, including host, organizer, even projectionist. If you are also planning to serve as facilitator, be sure that you can focus on that responsibility and avoid distractions during the discussion. Keep in mind that being a facilitator is not the same as being a teacher. A teacher's job is to convey specific information. In contrast, a facilitator remains neutral, helping to move the discussion along without imposing his or her views on the dialogue.

Who Should Facilitate?

You may or may not be the best person to facilitate, especially if you have multiple responsibilities for your event. Also, if you are particularly invested in a topic, it might be wise to ask someone more neutral to guide the dialogue.

If you need to find someone else to facilitate, some university professors, human resource professionals, clergy and youth leaders may be specially trained in facilitation. In addition to these local resources, groups such as the National Conference for Community and Justice and the National Association for Community Mediation may be able to provide or help you locate skilled facilitators. Be sure that your facilitator receives a copy of this guide well in advance of your event.

Know your group.

Issues can play out very differently for different groups of people. Is your group new to the issue, or have they dealt with it before? Factors like geography, age, race, religion and socioeconomic class can all have an impact on comfort levels, speaking styles and prior knowledge. Take care not to assume that all members of a particular group share the same point of view. If you are bringing together different segments of your community, we strongly recommend hiring an experienced facilitator.



FACILITATING A DISCUSSION

Preparing the Group

Consider how well group members know one another. If you are bringing together people who have never met, you may want to devote some time to introductions at the beginning of the event.

Agree to ground rules regarding language. Involve the group in establishing some basic rules to ensure respect and aid clarity. Typically, such rules include prohibiting yelling and the use of slurs as well as asking participants to speak in the first person (“I think ...”) rather than generalizing for others (“Everyone knows that ...”).

Try to give everyone an opportunity to be heard. Be clear about how people will take turns or indicate that they want to speak. Plan a strategy for preventing one or two people from dominating the discussion. If the group is large, are there plans to break into small groups or partners? Or should attendance be limited?

Talk about the difference between dialogue and debate. In a debate, participants try to convince others that they are right. In a dialogue, participants try to understand one another and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and listening actively. Remind people that they are engaged in a dialogue. This will be especially important in preventing a discussion from dissolving into a repetitive, rhetorical, political or religious debate.

Encourage active listening. Ask the group to think of the event as being about listening as well as discussing. Participants can be encouraged to listen for things that challenge as well as reinforce their own ideas. You may also consider asking people to practice formal “active listening,” where participants listen without interrupting the speaker, then rephrase what was said to make sure they have heard it correctly.

Remind participants that everyone sees through the lens of their own experience. Who we are influences how we

interpret what we see. Everyone in the group may have a different view about the content and meaning of the film they have just seen, and each of them may be accurate. It can help people understand one another’s perspectives if speakers identify the evidence on which they base their opinions as well as sharing their views.

Take care of yourself and group members. If the intensity level rises, pause to let everyone take a deep breath. You might also consider providing a safe space for participants to “vent,” perhaps with a partner or in a small group of familiar faces. If you anticipate that your topic may upset people, be prepared to refer them to local support agencies or have local professionals present. Think carefully about what you ask people to share publicly, and explain things like confidentiality and whether or not press will be present.

Additional event planning tips and resources for interfaith and other cross-sector discussions are available online at www.NewMuslimCool.com



BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The Raid

In the film, we see Hamza relocate to Pittsburgh's North Side in order to help build a Muslim community for African-American and Latino Muslims, including a school and the Light of the Age mosque. On June 30, 2006, the FBI raided that mosque just as its members were gathering for the Friday communal prayer. Hamza and several other men were detained on the street for questioning.

About an hour prior to the raid, the FBI had arrested a mosque member outside the building. Several days earlier, the same member had been stopped in Utah and found in illegal possession of firearms, but released. After the Pittsburgh arrest, he pleaded guilty to the firearms charge but no evidence of any criminal activity was ever found in the mosque and no charges were brought against any of the other members. Since the incident, Hamza has continued to perform with his brother and to pursue his outreach work.

Hamza Pérez

Photo courtesy of Carolyn Lambert

With the mosque director, Luqmon Abdus Salaam, and many of its members, Hamza has increasingly focused his community work with non-Muslims and people of other faith communities.

Sources:

"Mystery Surrounds FBI Raid on North Side Mosque." Moustafa Ayad. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. July 1, 2006; "Mosque members denounce FBI raid as desecration." Ervin Dyer. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. July 8, 2006; "Muslims Call Fed Raid 'Invasion.'" Jill King Greenwood. *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. July 7, 2006.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Islam and Hip-Hop

There has long been a connection between Islam and aspects of hip-hop culture in America—dating at least to the '80s, when Public Enemy incorporated Malcolm X's words into their music. One early connection was visible in the affinity between the messages of socially conscious hip-hop and the teachings of the Nation of Islam, which have inspired homage even from secular rappers.

Explicitly Islamic hip-hop, in which devout performers convey a religious message through their work, is a more recent development. As hip-hop grew in popularity and its audience expanded to encompass the whole world, performers of all backgrounds began to embrace it as a means of reaching out, in order to encourage converts, affirm their faith, make political or religious statements or for other purposes.

Hamza and Suliman Pérez, the brothers behind Mujahideen Team, have said that they intend their music to address so-

Hamza and Suliman rapping as M-Team.

Photo courtesy of Kauthar Umar

cial and political issues, including poverty, injustice and human rights. The duo cites influences including Hector Lavoe, Ismael Rivera, Afro Boricua, Ruben Blades and Kool G. Rap.

Sources:

"Muslim Rappers Combine Beliefs With Hip-hop." Associated Press. November 24, 2004;
 "Making Music With a Message." Frances Harrison. BBC News. December 27, 2007;
 "Hip-Hop's Islamic Influence." Marian Liu. *San Jose Mercury News*. April 23, 2003;
 "M-Team Interview." MuslimHipHop.com; M-Team blog. <http://mujahideenteam.blogspot.com>



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Basic Islamic Beliefs and Practices

Islam is the second most common religion in the world, after Christianity, one of the three major Abrahamic traditions (Judaism, Islam and Christianity). There are different denominations within Islam but they all share some fundamental beliefs: that there is only one God (“Allah” means “God” in Arabic), the Qur’an is the word of Allah and Muhammad was the last in a series of prophets—including Moses and Jesus—who were sent to instruct humanity about how to live in accordance with God’s law. Other tenets shared across the sects are the five pillars of the faith, which include the declaration of belief or shahada, five daily prayers, giving to charity, fasting and making a pilgrimage to Mecca, Islam’s holiest city.



Suliman Pérez with his daughter Asia at Hamza and Rafiah’s wedding.
Photo courtesy of Kauthar Umar

Source

“Muslims.” *Frontline*. May 9, 2002; “Islam at a Glance.” BBC. September 8, 2006.

Muslims in the United States

Worldwide, there are approximately 1.2 billion Muslims, and they comprise 22 percent of the world’s population. Only 15 percent of Muslims are Arab, while 30 percent live in India or Pakistan, 17 percent in southeastern Asia and 10 percent in the former Soviet states. The nation with the largest Muslim population is Indonesia. There are widely varying estimates of how many Muslims live in the United States. The Institute of Islamic Population and Education says there are approximately 7.5 million Muslims in the United States (about 2.5 percent of the population), while the CIA estimates that there are fewer than 2 million. In 2005, the Association of Religion Data Archives cited the number as nearly 4.8 million.

There are significant numbers of Muslims in every region of the United States. Predictably, many large communities are located in urban centers. There is an especially large con-

centration in southeast Michigan (in the Detroit area).

The Pew Research Center has found that most American Muslims self-identify as middle class and mainstream. About two-thirds are foreign born. As is true in the world at large, the majority of Muslims in the United States identify as Sunni. About 16 percent identify as Shi’a, and approximately 20 percent say they are Muslim without any particular affiliation. A full 77 percent report that they have always been Muslim while 23 percent converted to Islam. Of converts, nine in ten are American born and 59 percent are African-American.

The racial and ethnic composition of American Muslims is diverse. According to Pew, the breakdown is 37 percent Caucasian, 24 percent African-American, 20 percent Asian, 4 percent Latino, and 15 percent other or multiracial.

Sources:

www.iiie.net/node/65; www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html;
www.thearda.com/QuickLists/QuickList_47.asp;
<http://pewresearch.org/assets/pdf/muslim-americans.pdf>;



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The USA PATRIOT Act

The USA PATRIOT Act was passed by Congress in 2001 and reauthorized in 2006. “USA PATRIOT” is an acronym that stands for “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism.” Originally designed to “deter and punish terrorist acts in the United States and around the world, to enhance law enforcement investigatory tools and for other purposes,” the law has since garnered much criticism. According to the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union), Section 215 of the “Patriot Act,” as it has come to be known, vastly expanded the FBI’s power to spy on ordinary people living in the United States, including U.S. citizens and permanent residents. The law states:

- The FBI need not show probable cause, nor even reasonable grounds to believe, that the person whose records it seeks is engaged in criminal activity;
- The FBI need not have any suspicion that the subject of the investigation is a foreign power or agent of a foreign power;
- The FBI can investigate United States persons based in part on their exercise of First Amendment rights, including criticizing government policy.

To read the Act in its entirety, please visit the Library of Congress’s website:

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d107:H.R.3162:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d107:H.R.3162)

Source:

<http://action.aclu.org/reformthepatriotact/primer.html>

Glossary Of Terms in The Film

dawa—religious outreach

imam—religious leader / teacher

hijab—head covering

inshallah—God willing, similar to “ojala” in Spanish

jihad—struggle

khutba—sermon

mashallah—literally “as God wills it”—colloquial use:
“that’s the way it goes”

masjid—Muslim community center or mosque

masjid masallah—mosque prayer room

nafs—ego, lower self

nikah—marriage contract

shahada—declaration of faith at moment of conversion,
stating the person bears witness that there is no
God but God and Muhammad is his messenger



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Selected People Featured in New Muslim Cool



Hamza (Jason) Pérez was born in Brooklyn and grew up in Worcester, Mass. and Puerto Rico. He was raised as a Catholic in a close-knit family and converted to Islam about a dozen years ago. Hamza admits that he spent many of his younger years involved in drug sales and other street activities, but says that he has turned his life around since his conversion.

After his conversion, Hamza relocated to Pittsburgh's North Side from Massachusetts in order to help build a Muslim community for African-American and Latino Muslims, including a school and the Light of the Age mosque. He still lives in that North Side neighborhood, where he works as a drug and gang violence prevention counselor for a social service agency and as an educator with groups of prisoners. He also continues to record and perform with his brother, Suliman Pérez, as part of the hip-hop duo Mujahideen Team, also known as M-Team, and is very active with the Crossing Limits interfaith poetry collaborative.

Hamza Pérez.
Photo courtesy of Carolyn Lambert



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

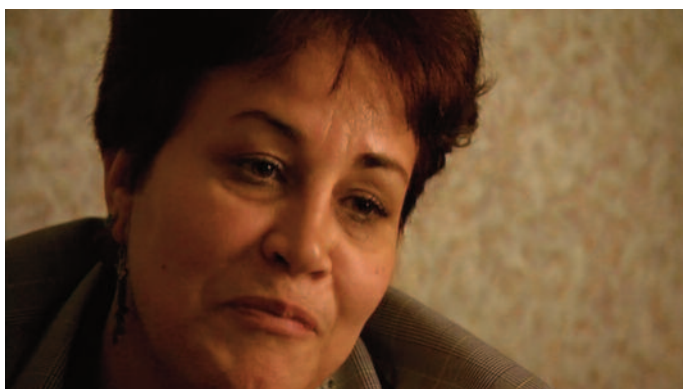
Selected People Featured in New Muslim Cool



Rafiah Daughtry, Hamza's wife, is currently working as a mom and planning a new career as a chef.



Suliman Pérez, Hamza's brother and partner in their hip-hop duo, M-Team, works as a youth counselor, nonprofit administrator, and sports coach. He's married and has four kids.



Gladys Pérez, Hamza and Suliman's mother, works as a dental hygienist and community volunteer.



Carol Elkind is a life-long Pittsburgh resident, real estate broker, community activist and poetry editor whose previous work was the book *Crossing Limits: African Americans and American Jews — Poetry From Pittsburgh*.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Selected People Featured in New Muslim Cool



Lynn Yeso is the Director of Chaplaincy at the Allegheny County Jail.



Luqmon Abdus Salaam is director of the Light of Age mosque and a well-known Pittsburgh community activist, youth counselor and poet.



Moustafa Ayad is a journalist who worked for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette at the time of the raid.



Tahir Abdallah is a fellow member of the Light of Age mosque.



GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Immediately after the film, you may want to give people a few quiet moments to reflect on what they have seen. If the mood seems tense, you can pose a general question and give people some time to themselves to jot down or think about their answers before opening the discussion.

Unless you think participants are so uncomfortable that they can't engage until they have had a break, don't encourage people to leave the room between the film and the discussion. If you save your break for an appropriate moment during the discussion, you won't lose the feeling of the film as you begin your dialogue.

One way to get a discussion going is to pose a general question such as:

- If you could ask anyone in the film a single question, who would you ask and what would you ask them?
- What did you learn from this film? What insights did it provide?
- Describe a moment or scene in the film that you found particularly disturbing, interesting, or moving. What was it about that scene that was especially compelling for you?



Hamza Pérez.
Photo courtesy of Carolyn Lambert



DISCUSSION PROMPTS



Islam

- What did you learn about Islam from this film? How do Hamza's interpretations of Islamic teachings compare with your own?
- Describe the role of Islam in Hamza's life. What did he find in Islam that helped him escape his street life as a crack dealer or contradict his prediction that at 21 he would be dead or in prison? In Hamza's view, what is the promise of Islam for making his community better, for uniting disparate groups or for getting drug dealers to stop their trade?
- What do you learn from Hamza about what Islam, Christianity and Judaism have in common?
- What do you learn from Hamza about what his faith offers him in terms of tools or inspiration for community organizing, social justice work or interfaith cooperation?
- How would you describe Rafiah and Hamza's relation-

ship? How do their interactions and issues compare to those of other young married couples that you know? What are some of your perceptions about gender roles in Islam? Does their relationship challenge or enforce your original thoughts?

Photo courtesy of Kauthar Umar

Crossing Lines / Making Connections

- What did you learn from the interaction between Carol and Hamza? How do they demonstrate openness and respect, even when it is clear that they have a lot to learn about one another's cultures and religion (e.g., Carol unsure of proper etiquette in the mosque or Hamza not recognizing *shalom aleichem* as Hebrew for *salaam alaykum*)?



DISCUSSION PROMPTS



- Carol shares that before she worked with Hamza and Luqmon to find Muslim poets, “I think all I saw were the extreme fundamentalists. Now, it’s a whole different story. And I’m not afraid.” What was it that changed Carol’s perceptions? How might you replicate those circumstances or opportunities in your community?
- Hamza says that he started on his path with a “real activist Muslim mentality” but that his understanding of Muhammad’s example changed. What did Hamza mean by “activist mentality” and why didn’t it serve him well when he wanted to connect with people beyond his neighborhood or *masjid*? What changed in terms of his understanding of Islam that opened him to the possibilities of connecting with people like Carol or the Christian inmates in the jail?
- ACLU lawyers remind Hamza of an old interview in which he said, “Stop collaborating and sleeping with the snake. . . . The government doesn’t give a crap about us so don’t kiss their ass.” Hamza responds, “Oh my God, yeah. I

Hamza tells his grandmother about losing
his security clearance.

Photo courtesy of Carolyn Lambert

mean like that’s so young of me.” Do you think maturity plays a role in Hamza’s ability to reach out and connect with others? Why or why not? Some people become more stubborn and entrenched in their ideology as they age. What factors led Hamza to become more open?

- In considering the type of poetry that might be submitted to their project, Carol says, “There’s nothing wrong with anger. . . . If it’s expressed appropriately, you can dialogue. We don’t want all this sweet stuff where there is no dialogue.” How do you appropriately express anger? How do you engage in dialogue when people say things that are hard for you to hear?



DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- Hamza's mother, Gladys, recalls teaching her son that "you have to give in life to take." What do you think she meant? In what ways did Hamza take that message and use it as a foundation for fighting injustice?
- Hamza sees the jail inmates as "opportunities for me to get closer to God." How is this different than approaching others as possible converts, i.e., helping them get closer to God?
- In one of his prison sermons, Hamza says, "You can't just repent to God and then think everything's all hunky-dory." He explains that you also have to ask for forgiveness from the people you hurt. How does making things right with people, and not just with God, provide opportunities for community building?
- Hamza's imam reminds the congregation, "We all came from the same mother, the same father. How you gonna be fighting each other? . . . Hold on to the rope all together and do not become divided." What would change in your neighborhood or community if everyone "held on to the rope together"?

Stereotypes, Prejudice and Discrimination

- Suliman explains that "*jihad*" doesn't mean holy war." Rather, it refers to a struggle with "our lower desires." Why do many people who are not Muslim hear *jihad* as a description of what terrorists do? What are the consequences of this distortion? How does Suliman's understanding of the word lend itself to fighting street crime or reaching out to gang members?
- Prior to viewing the film, when someone said the word "Muslim," "Jew," "Christian," "Latino," "Puerto Rican" or "hip-hop artist," what images came to mind? In what ways did the film affirm or challenge your ideas? What kinds of actions could you take to ensure that people in your community have accurate information about all the groups of people represented in the film?
- Interviewing Hamza and Suliman on the radio, Imam Talib jokingly points out that they are Muslim, American, Puerto Rican, from the hood, artists and rappers, then adds, "Sounds like America's worst nightmare!" Why would that comment resonate with their fans? What is it about these particular identities that mainstream society might find threatening?

- On stage, Hamza revs up the audience saying "FTG. Flag the government. We don't care about no Patriot Act. We don't care about surveillance. We don't care about the FBI agents in the crowd." He follows with lyrics that include:

Bin Laden didn't blow up the projects. It was you!

Tell the truth!

Saudi Arabia's in bed with America.

Israel, England's in bed with America.

No Vaseline when you sleep with the predator.

There's only one God and Muhammad is his messenger.

Cocaine business controls America.

Zionist business controls America.

Masonic business controls America.

What is he saying about the United States? What is he saying about Saudi Arabia, Israel and England? In your view, is this a fair critique?

The lyrics include the line, "Zionist business controls America." What do you think this line means? How could the phrase "Zionist business" feed into anti-Semitic stereotypes? How might the political point be re-phrased in a way that would not evoke negative stereotypes?

What do you think Hamza learned along his journey about other faiths, especially Judaism, through his relationship with non-Muslims like Carol? Do you have such relationships across major lines of difference? Are they an effective way for interfaith exchange to take place?

The Raid

- What was your reaction to the raid on the *masjid* and police surveillance of the building?
- Moustafa notes that the raid happened during prayer time and asks, "Could this happen on a Sunday at a church?" In your view, does the government have reasonable justification for treating mosques differently than other religious centers? What are the constitutional implications of targeting mosques?
- Hamza points to a camera on the corner across from the mosque and says the FBI put it there to watch everyone coming and going from the *masjid*. How would it feel to think that the government was watching your religious or fraternal gathering place? How might such surveillance influence your attitude towards your government?



DISCUSSION PROMPTS



Wall mural.

Photo courtesy of Kauthar Umar

- Tahir labels the surveillance and raid “harassment.” Is there a difference between security surveillance and harassment? Where would you draw the line?
- Hamza says, “It’s hard for you to tell someone who was a gangster, who’s trying to live a religious life, that if someone smacks them they have to turn their cheek. They don’t understand that language. They don’t understand that someone’s going to invade your home and you have to turn your cheek and forgive them.” In what ways did the raid make Hamza’s efforts to improve his community more difficult? What are the ripple effects of the raid on the members of the surrounding community?

The Role of the Government, Public Policy and Law

- Hamza’s supervisor at the jail, Lynn, is surprised when Hamza’s clearance is pulled. She points out that no one was given a reason for this and that “under the Patriot Act, my understanding is reasons don’t have to be given.” In your view, in what ways does it increase or decrease security for the government to be able to act without providing reasons? Would you support reauthorization of the provision in the Patriot Act that allows for such actions? Why or why not?



DISCUSSION PROMPTS



- The ACLU considers helping Hamza regain his jail clearance. Why might they think he has a case? What rights or laws were violated?
- Hamza notes that there are many programs to help drug users stop using, but none to help drug dealers stop dealing. How would you respond to his suggestion that communities need to initiate programs targeting drug dealers that don't involve arresting them?
- In his music, Hamza equates government and corporate power and actions with criminal activity: "It's all pimping and ho'ing, right?" Do you find his analysis to be helpful? In what ways does comparing government or corporate action to dealing crack further and/or hinder efforts to achieve social justice?

DP Jon Shenk with field recordist and composer Chris Strollo outside mosque during Hamza and Rafia's wedding.

Photo courtesy of Kauthar Umar

- In concerts, lyrics, and interviews, Hamza has expressed views highly critical of America and the government. In your opinion, are these views reasonable justification for withdrawal of Hamza's jail credentials or surveillance on his masjid? Why or why not?



DISCUSSION PROMPTS



Family

- Hamza's aunt Aurora says that, at first, his conversion from Catholicism to Islam was "a shocker," but the family appreciates the man he is becoming. What do you learn from Hamza's family about the role of religion in family identity, and parenting in the face of a child's choice to abandon the religion in which he was raised? How do you suppose the dynamics of your extended family would be affected by a family member's choice to convert to another religion?
- Hamza worries that the FBI could arrest him for being a Muslim doing community work: "I start thinking about my kids. Where would they go? You know what I'm saying? Who's gonna stay with them if I get locked up? Who's gonna inform my wife? Is she going to be all right where she is stay-

Hamza and his mother sit on stoop reading comics to Ismaelo, Hamza's son

Photo courtesy of Carolyn Lambert

ing?" How does Hamza's family both inspire and limit him? In what ways does having a wife and children transform him?

- In many ways, Hamza and Rafiah are a typical young American couple. They met online and have a blended family, and both parents work while Rafiah also is going to school. What strategies do they use to cope with the daily challenges they face and how do those strategies compare with those used by other families you know? How does their faith inform their choices?



DISCUSSION PROMPTS

THE MUSIC

Compare and contrast these excerpts from M-Team songs. How would you describe the worldview of each piece? In what ways might they inspire listeners to create better communities or work for social justice?

DAYS END*

I live my life trying to be a humble slave
 And find the answers to the questions in the grave
 That's how I spend my days, pretend I'm in the blaze
 And when I bend and pray, I try to mend my ways
 I try to lower my gaze, and stay modest
 And live life honest, tomorrow's not promised
 Take every step and every breath like it's my last
 And when the weapons blast, will I forget my past?
 Let's be honest, tomorrow's not promised
 Some may say that the last day's upon us
 When the days end, and heavens call us
 Who's gonna fall and who's standing tallest?
 Let's be honest, tomorrow's not promised
 Some may say that the last day's upon us
 When the days end, and heavens call us
 Who's gonna fall and who's standing tallest?

SO CLEAR*

Out from the slums of the concrete pavement
 The breeding ground for prison industrial enslavement
 We're either suspects or waiting for arraignment
 Hypnotized by televised lies for entertainment.
 Now what you see when you see me
 You see fear, you see hate, you see tears
 You see a face with a beard
 But you don't see clear cause you don't see fears
 Now what you see when you see me
 You see crime, you see killers
 You see knives and guerillas
 The time that they give us in the minds of the illers
 But you don't see clear 'cause you don't see pillars.**

**Refers to Islam's Pillars of Faith

WELCOME HOME*

Coming home out of the jails, out of the prisons, out of the
 slave plantations, man.
 Welcome home, all my soldiers that were locked.
 Welcome home, free from the prison blocks.
 Welcome home, a fresh new start from the past.
 Keep your head up and stay on the straight path.
 Welcome home, all my soldiers that were locked.
 Welcome home, free from the prison blocks.
 Welcome home, a fresh new start from the past.
 Keep your head up and stay on the straight path.

STRUGGLE AND FLOW*

Gotta keep struggling, gotta keep struggling
 If I stop struggling I'm a stop hustling
 If I stop hustling I'm a stop breathing.
 I just lost my job, times is getting hard
 I'm calling to God, we gonna make it right
 I done felt the pain, I done felt the rain
 I'm waiting for change, we gonna make it right
 Now I'm in a fight, fighting for my life
 I can see the light, we gonna make it right
 I walk down this road, I carry this load
 I can feel my soul, we gonna make it right.
 Can't stop breathing, gotta keep breathing
 Can't stop breathing, gotta keep breathing.

* All lyrics are by Suliman and Hamza Pérez.



TAKING ACTION



- Find or create opportunities in your community for interfaith dialogue. Consider discussing **New Muslim Cool** and/or some of M-Team's lyrics at one of your meetings.
- Hamza says, "I think we can teach Muslim youth how to deal with this anger they have built up inside through writing and poetry." Create a poetry writing workshop for young people in your community. Challenge participants to think about what their religious or ethnic identity means to them and where it provides opportunities to find common ground with others. Like Carol in the film, organize a poetry festival or publication based on an interfaith theme.
- Work with Muslims in your community to convene a public teach-in or webinar on Muslims in the United States. Invite speakers to address stereotypes and provide accurate information. Follow up with meetings with local news directors and newspaper editors to ensure accurate coverage of Muslims.
- To increase interfaith understanding, work with your local council of churches (or similar religious organization) to create a series of open houses at mosques, synagogues,

Group praying at Taking it to the Streets Festival.
Photo courtesy of Jennifer Maytorena Taylor

temples, churches and other religious institutions around your community.

- Investigate opportunities for outreach promoting interfaith understanding to inmates in jails and/or prisons.
- Use **New Muslim Cool** as the basis for intergenerational dialogue about social justice and working together to improve your community.
- Support or create efforts to track discrimination against Muslims and other religious minorities in your community, state or region. Publicize hate crimes with public statements or demonstrations indicating that actions based on prejudice or hate are unacceptable in your community.
- Carefully study the Patriot Act and laws governing profiling. Meet with elected officials and law enforcement to let them know how you want them to enforce or change existing policies.



RESOURCES

Original Online Content on P.O.V. Interactive (www.pbs.org/pov)

P.O.V.'s New Muslim Cool companion website
www.pbs.org/pov/newmuslimcool

To further enhance the broadcast, **P.O.V.** has produced an interactive website to enable viewers to explore the film in greater depth. The companion website to **New Muslim Cool** offers a streaming video trailer for the film; an interview with filmmaker Jennifer Maytorena Taylor; a list of related websites, organizations and books; a downloadable discussion guide; classroom activities and the following special features:

ISLAM AND HIP-HOP TIMELINE

Many Americans are not aware of the commingling of Islamic and African-American culture that has occurred over the past 40 years. One of the ways that influence can be understood is via popular hip-hop music. Spot the Islamic terminology, imagery and ideas in the lyrics of songs by artists such as Lauren Hill, Public Enemy and Puff Daddy, among others. (by Zaheer Ali)

ISLAMERICA PHOTO GALLERY

Learn more about American Muslims in this revealing gallery of images featuring young Muslims, excerpted from the pages of a new book entitled *IslamERICA*. (Narrated by editor Kauthar Umar.)

ADDITIONAL VIDEO

Learn more about American Muslim culture with these clips not included in the broadcast version of **New Muslim Cool**.

M-TEAM MUSIC

Listen to a selection of M-Team songs and read an interview with **New Muslim Cool** star, Hamza Pérez.

ASK THE FILMMAKER

Ask the filmmaker and the Pérez family questions.

What's Your P.O.V.?

Share your thoughts about **New Muslim Cool** by posting a comment on the P.O.V. Blog www.pbs.org/pov/blog or send an email to pbs@pov.org.

Film-related

NEW MUSLIM COOL

www.NewMuslimCool.com

Puerto Rican-American rapper Hamza Pérez ended his life as a drug dealer 12 years ago and started down a new path as a young Muslim. The official documentary film website addresses the nuances of being Muslim in post-9/11 America.

MUJAHIDEEN TEAM MYSPACE PAGE

www.myspace.com/mteam

The official website for the Mujahideen Team includes a compilation of their videos, songs and album, all of which can be purchased on the website.

National Partners

ACTIVE VOICE

www.activevoice.net

Active Voice uses film, television and digital media to spark social change. A team of strategic communications specialists works with filmmakers, funders, advocates and thought leaders to put a human face on the issues of our times.

AUBURN MEDIA AT AUBURN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

www.auburnmedia.org

Auburn Media provides religion expertise to the world of the media and media expertise to the world of religion. Auburn Media is a program of Auburn Theological Seminary, a nationally recognized theological center that provides innovative educational programs for a religiously diverse world. Founded in 1818 to train Presbyterian ministers, today Auburn prepares leaders of many faiths to meet the challenges of religious and public life. Auburn's Center for Multi-faith Education provides a range of multifaith educational



RESOURCES

programming, including Face to Face/Faith to Faith, an international conflict resolution program for teens in war-torn nations where war is defined by religious intolerance.

CENTER FOR ASIAN AMERICAN MEDIA

www.asianamericanmedia.org

The Center for Asian American Media (CAAM) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to presenting stories that convey the richness and diversity of Asian American experiences to the broadest audience possible. The group does this by funding, producing, distributing and exhibiting works in film, television and digital media.

HIP-HOP SUMMIT ACTION NETWORK

www.hsan.org/Content/Home.aspx?pagelId=241

Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN) is dedicated to harnessing the cultural relevance of Hip-Hop music to serve as a catalyst for education advocacy and other societal concerns fundamental to the empowerment of youth. HSAN is a nonprofit, non-partisan national coalition of Hip-Hop artists, entertainment industry leaders, education advocates, civil rights proponents and youth leaders united in the belief that hip-hop is an enormously influential agent for social change that must be responsibly and proactively utilized to fight the war on poverty and injustice.

INNER-CITY MUSLIM ACTION NETWORK

<http://imancentral.org>

The Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) is a community-based nonprofit that works for social justice, delivers a range of direct services and cultivates the arts in urban communities.

THE INTERFAITH YOUTH CORE

www.ifyc.org

The Interfaith Youth Core enables youths from around the world to engage one another with the goal of interacting with mutual respect for one another and engaging in religious pluralism. IFYC looks to provide international youths with leadership training, project resources and connection to broader movements throughout the world.

ISLAMIC NETWORKS GROUP (ING)

www.ing.org

This nonprofit organization promotes interfaith dialogues and education about world religions. ING has a large database of Islamic and Interfaith speakers who can deliver a variety of presentations.

NATIONAL COALITION-BUILDING INSTITUTE (NCBI)

<http://ncbi.org>

NCBI is an international nonprofit leadership development network dedicated to the elimination of racism and other forms of oppression. NCBI leaders work with public and private organizations to further cultural competence, collaboration and effective relationships within and across group identities.

PLURALISM PROJECT AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

www.pluralism.org

Dedicated to researching religious diversity in the United States, this project provides a 101 on pluralism, as well as a wealth of resources for people interested in studying about and promoting pluralism.

VOTO LATINO

www.votolatino.org

Founded in 2004, Voto Latino is a non-partisan, nonprofit voter engagement organization that works to promote an enfranchised America by leveraging celebrity voices, multi-media platforms and youth themselves to promote positive change. Voto Latino's mission is to engage a new generation of Americans in civic participation.

WORDS BEATS AND LIFE

www.wblinc.org

Words Beats and Life was founded as a hip-hop conference at the University of Maryland, College Park in the fall of 2000. Their website includes information about the organization's initiatives, which include the DC Urban Arts Academy, a multi-medium hip-hop arts Academy, Words Beats Life: The Global Journal of Hip-Hop and the University Project, which seeks to transform university classrooms and campuses through hip-hop culture via interactive workshops, exhibitions and gallery installations.



RESOURCES

Islam

ALTMUSLIM

www.AltMuslim.com

This website provides a multifaceted platform for Muslims and non-Muslims

alike to gather news information from around the world and also offers a space for Muslims who want to express their views to Muslims and non-Muslims around the world.

HALALAPALOOZA

www.Halalapalooza.com

This website allows Muslims to shop at Muslim online stores and was designed to make finding online stores that cater to the Muslim community easy, as well as to provide feedback from past and present customers.

ZABIHAH

www.zabihah.com

This website is dedicated to Halal cuisine and restaurants and provides a nationwide searchable database of businesses and restaurants that keep Halal within their establishments.

HIJAB MAN

www.Hijabman.com

This blog is meant to entertain and educate the believing and curious community. The website also allows users to post comments and buy things in the online store.

Muslims in the United States

**AFRICAN AMERICAN ISLAM BY DR. AMINAH MCCLOUD
(NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE, 1995)**

In this book, Aminah McCloud presents an introduction to the varied expressions of African-American Islam in the United States from the point of view of an Islamic scholar. African-American Islam is the largest ethnic component of the fastest growing religion in the United States, but most Americans know little about its beliefs, practices, or diversity.

AMERICAN MUSLIM COUNCIL

www.amcnational.org

The American Muslim Council provides statements on a variety of policies affecting Muslims in the United States. The site also includes details on Muslim participation in American electoral politics.

THE AMERICAN MUSLIM

www.theamericanmuslim.org

This Muslim organization promotes peace, reconciliation and social justice. Its website includes an extensive collection of articles on issues related to American Muslims, interfaith work, links to relevant news stories and reports of discrimination.

AMERICAN MUSLIMS INTENT ON LEARNING
AND ACTIVISM (AMILA)

<http://amila.org>

AMILA (which means “to work” or “to act” in Arabic) is an organization that helps build up the American Muslim community through activism, Islamic education, spirituality and networking with other Muslim groups. Now recognized as one of the nation’s most dynamic Muslim organizations, AMILA is entering its second decade as an influential voice among Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

COUNCIL ON AMERICAN-ISLAMIC RELATIONS (CAIR)

www.cair-net.org

CAIR was established to enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding. The site includes demographic information, information about civil rights and government relations and a search-by-zip-code service for mosques and other Muslim organizations.



RESOURCES

***CRESCENT* BY DIANA ABU-JABER (FICTION)**
(NEW YORK: W. W. NORTON & COMPANY, 2004)

This novel details the life of Sirine, a 39-year-old woman, never married, who lives in the Arab-American community of Los Angeles known as Irangeles. One day, a handsome professor of Arabic literature, an Iraqi exile, comes to the restaurant where she works, and Sirine finds herself falling in love. In the process, she starts questioning her identity as an Arab-American.

ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA (ISNA)
www.isna.net

The website of this national umbrella organization includes news releases about current issues (e.g., FBI surveillance of mosques), reports on interfaith projects and more. ISNA's efforts go beyond the Muslim community in North America to encompass projects that are more global. These include efforts to stop the human tragedy in Darfur and alleviate the plight of those hit by the tsunami in Southeast Asia, as well as working with state and civic structures in addressing the challenges that Muslims in the West face.

MUSLIMS FOR AMERICA
www.muslimsforamerica.us

Muslims For America is dedicated to bringing more American Muslims into the political system, for the purpose of making sure that United States foreign policy is written with an understanding of Islam and in a spirit of cooperation and peace. The website includes a blog, video highlights and an online newsroom.

MUSLIM ALLIANCE IN NORTH AMERICA (MANA)
www.mana-net.org

The website of this alliance of places of worship and Muslim organizations includes a variety of essays and resources designed to nurture religious practice and teaching in indigenous North American Muslim communities.

MUSLIM AMERICAN SOCIETY
www.masnet.org

The Muslim American Society runs the Islamic American University and supports a variety of other initiatives, including its own magazine. The site includes a collection of articles on the lives and concerns of Muslim Americans.

MUSLIMS FOR PROGRESSIVE VALUES
www.mpvusa.org

Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV) is a nonprofit organization that seeks to bring together progressive Muslims and friends who share their values to work for a more humane world.

***THE TROUBLE WITH ISLAM* BY IRSHAD MANJI**
(NEW YORK: MACMILLAN, 2004)

Irshad Manji offers a practical vision of how the United States and its allies can help Muslims undertake a reformation that empowers women, promotes respect for religious minorities and fosters a competition of ideas.

Interfaith

AUBURN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY:
THE CENTER FOR MULTIFAITH EDUCATION
www.auburnsem.org

The Center for Multifaith Education at Auburn Theological Seminary gives both devout and secular participants the opportunity to learn with teachers, engage sacred texts and discuss challenging issues. Their website has additional information about their educational offerings, such as Faith to Faith/Face to Face, the Auburn Media project and their women's multifaith program.

BELIEFNET
www.beliefnet.com

This website provides a place for people to explore many different religions and faith organizations and to exchange views and interact in an environment that promotes interfaith interactions and self-exploration without any specific religious agenda.



RESOURCES

CORDOBA INITIATIVE

www.cordobainitiative.org

The Cordoba Initiative, founded in 2002, is a multi-faith organization whose objective is to heal the relationship between the Islamic world and the United States through civil dialogue, policy initiatives, education and cultural programs.

THE COUNCIL OF ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS OF GREATER CHICAGO: INTERFAITH DIALOGUE IN CHICAGO

www.ciogc.org

The Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC) is an umbrella body that represents 50 formal Muslim organizations and a cross-section of over 400,000 Muslim Americans in the greater Chicago area. The website offers articles and viewpoints on interfaith dialogue, gives visitors general information about Islam and Muslims and also includes links to the different services the council provides and discusses the role of women and youth in Islam.

THE HISTORY OF GOD BY KAREN ARMSTRONG (NEW YORK: RANDOM HOUSE, 1994)

Karen Armstrong, one of Britain's foremost commentators on religious affairs, traces the history of how men and women have perceived and experienced God, from the time of Abraham to the present.

INTERFAITH NEWS

www.interfaithnews.net

This blog focuses primarily on positive interfaith and religious news, events and resources.

JEWISH-MUSLIM DIALOGUE GROUP OF LOS ANGELES

www.jewishmuslimdialogue.org

The website of this project includes descriptions of how the group works, ground rules for dialogue and other helpful resources for people wishing to start their own interfaith initiatives.

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR COMMUNITY AND JUSTICE

www.nccj.org

Formerly the National Council of Christians and Jews, this anti-bias organization promotes interfaith cooperation.

PROGRESSIVE MUSLIMS SPEAK BY OMID SAFI (OXFORD: ONEWORLD, 2003)

This collection of articles from 15 Muslim scholars and activists addresses the challenging and complex issues that confront Muslims today. Subjects range from the alienation of Muslim youth and the relationship between Islamic law, marriage and feminism to the role of democracy in Islam.

UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM

<http://urj.org/muslimdialogue>

The Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) has dedicated a section of its website to understanding Islam. That section includes basic information about Islam and excerpts from a URJ guide to Muslim-Jewish dialogue.

UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE

www.uri.org

United Religions Initiative (URI) was founded in 2000 by a global community committed to promoting enduring, daily interfaith cooperation and to ending religiously motivated violence.

WHAT'S RIGHT WITH ISLAM BY IMAM FEISAL RAUF (NEW YORK: HARPERCOLLINS, 2004)

This book systematically lays out the reasons for the current dissonance between cultures and offers a foundation and plan for improved relations. Wide-ranging in scope, What's Right with Islam elaborates a vision for a time when Jews, Christians, Muslims and all other faith traditions will live together in peace and prosperity.



RESOURCES

Hip-Hop and Islam

FRONTPAGE MAGAZINE: JIHADI RAP**www.frontpagemag.com**

In February 2004, a new rap music video created a stir on both sides of the Atlantic. The video, entitled “Dirty Kuffar” (*kuffar* being the Arabic term for non-believers),

was performed by the British group Sheikh Terra and the Soul Salah Crew. This article details the concept of “jihadi rap” and cites the Mujahideen Team as one group performing in that style. (November 10, 2004)

ILUME MAGAZINE: USING HIP-HOP TO DEFEAT THE DEVIL**www.illumemagazine.org**

Muhammad Sajid interviews Muslim hip-hop artist T-Kash and learns about his journey to Islam. (November 20, 2008)

MSNBC: MUSLIM RAPPERS COMBINE BELIEFS WITH HIP-HOP**www.msnbc.msn.com**

This article discusses how rap has gained popularity in the Muslim community as the number of artists and fans grows exponentially. (November 24, 2004)

Prison Outreach

FREEDOM OUTREACH CENTER**www.freedomoutreachcenter.org**

Rev. James H. Robinson founded the Freedom Outreach Center in 1992 to train, educate and mentor the underprivileged, those exhibiting criminal tendencies and those who have been incarcerated. The center has a trained staff of volunteers and instructors who promote training and education in both job and life skills while providing crisis intervention to offenders and ex-offenders.

INMATE OUTREACH PROGRAM**www.inmateoutreachproject.com**

The Inmate Outreach Project offers tutoring in jails and classes for inmates. The group coordinates partnerships with incarceration facilities and offers assistance for working in the criminal justice system, starting college student groups, directing programs and working with different university administrations.

THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH PRISON MINISTRY**www.theriversidechurchny.org**

This prison ministry has volunteers – laypeople, community workers, students, family members and people formerly incarcerated – who work inside the prisons as well as on the outside worshipping, assisting families and sponsoring prison reform.

THE ROUNDTABLE ON RELIGION AND SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY: GOVERNMENT PUTS FAITH IN RELIGIOUS PRISON PROGRAMS**www.socialpolicyandreligion.org**

This article speaks to how the U.S. government looks for alternative means to rehabilitate the inmate population and reduce the rate of recidivism by utilizing faith-based organizations in an attempt to keep inmates from returning to jail. (August 22, 2006)

Latino organizations

LATINO AMERICAN DAWAH ORGANIZATION (LADO)**www.latinodawah.org/index.html**

LADO is committed to promoting Islam among the Latino community within the United States. The organization's focus is to educate Latinos about Islam as a way of life. LADO's website offers more information about its array of programs, services and publications.



RESOURCES

PBS/NPR Links

PBS

THE MUSLIM AMERICANS**www.pbs.org**

Part of the *America at a Crossroads* series that premiered on PBS in 2007, "The Muslim Americans" explores the diversity of Muslims in America today, focusing on communities' experience after 9/11, and contrasting life for Muslims here in the United States compared to Muslims in Britain and Europe.

ONLINE NEWSHOUR: MUSLIM AMERICANS IN SAN FRANCISCO REFLECT ON SEPT. 11**www.pbs.org**

First in an ongoing series on the impact of 9/11 on life in the United States, Spencer Michels talks with members of the American Muslim community in San Francisco. (September 4, 2006)

FRONTLINE: MUSLIMS: PORTRAITS OF ORDINARY MUSLIMS**www.pbs.org**

Watch video excerpts of Yasemin Saib and Dr. Aminah McCloud as they talk about different issues facing Muslims and Muslim Americans.

IN THE MIX: THE NEW NORMAL**www.pbs.org**

In the Mix offers a special Post-9/11 series for teenagers. "Dealing with Differences," hosted by actor Jason Briggs, explores groups' and individuals' efforts to promote religious and cultural understanding.

NPR

NPR: BROTHER ALI: HIP-HOP FROM A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE**www.npr.org**

Brother Ali raps about being discriminated against, about being poor and about finally having success in the hip-hop world. Though the themes may be familiar, they come from an unusual perspective. (June 1, 2007)

NPR: GAZA PALESTINIANS VENT FRUSTRATIONS THROUGH RAP**www.npr.org**

This transcript addresses the global influence Hip Hop/Rap holds and how youths affected by political strife choose to express their frustrations by rapping about them. (October 6, 2005)

NPR: YOUNG MUSLIM AMERICANS STRUGGLE WITH IDENTITY**www.npr.org**

Sisters Assia and Iman Boundaoui grew up outside Chicago, their lives straddling what it is to be Muslim and American. Born to Algerian parents, they attended an Islamic school and a Sunni mosque around the corner from their home. This article addresses the issue of being Muslim in the U.S. through the experiences of two young sisters that identify with both of their cultures. (September 14, 2006)



HOW TO BUY THE FILM

To order **New Muslim Cool**, go to www.NewMuslimCool.com



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and beginning its 22nd season on PBS in 2009, the award-winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. P.O.V., which airs June through September with primetime specials during the year, has brought more than 275 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide, and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. Since 1988, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at www.pbs.org/pov.

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P.O.V. Interactive www.pbs.org/pov

P.O.V.'s award-winning Web department produces special features for every P.O.V. presentation, extending the life of our films through filmmaker interviews, story updates, podcasts, video and community-based and educational content that involves viewers in activities and feedback. P.O.V. Interactive also produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. In addition, the *P.O.V. Blog* is a gathering place for documentary fans and filmmakers to discuss and debate their favorite films, get the latest news and link to further resources. The P.O.V. website, blog and film archives form a unique and extensive online resource for documentary storytelling.

P.O.V. Community Engagement and Education

P.O.V. works with local PBS stations, educators and community organizations to present free screenings and discussion events to engage communities in vital conversations about our world. As a leading provider of quality nonfiction programming for use in public life, P.O.V. offers an extensive menu of resources, including free discussion guides and curriculum-based lesson plans. P.O.V.'s *Youth Views* works with youth organizers and students to provide them with resources and training to use independent documentaries as a catalyst for social change.

American Documentary, Inc. www.amdoc.org

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. *Simon Kilmurry is executive director of American Documentary | P.O.V.*

Front cover: Hamza Pérez and his brother Suliman, in a scene from **New Muslim Cool**.

Photo courtesy of Jennifer Maytorena Taylor

