

Interviewer: 0:02

Alright, what church or other religious organizations have you participated, please provide names, location, and dates you were active.

Mazz 0:13

So I am a Muslim, and basically I follow the religion of Islam, and I have followed this my entire life.

Interviewer: 0:24

Alright so, can you tell us anything about the founding. In the early days of the organization. Do you know of...

Mazz: 0:36

Yeah, so, Islam is one of the three Abraham, Abrahamic religions, meaning we all believe in Abraham. So Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all related to each other. Islam is the latest religion. And it's also the last one. Or that's what we believe. We believe it is the last religion. So we follow the book called Quran, and we believe in one God. And we have....

(long pause)

Interviewer: 1:25

Alright. How did you come to be involved in it? And did you have anything like any person or thing towards their religious organization of this type, such as like, where you've been raised with like Muslim parents, or is there like another experience that you learn about Islam?

Mazz: 1:50

Yeah. So my parents, are Muslims. Well my entire family is Muslim. So it was not really, it was, it was quite easy for me to just follow the same religion my family is following. And that's basically how we learned about it.

Interviewer: 2:08

So, there wasn't any like... you didn't read books that kind of gave you an idea about like Islam.

Mazz:

Well I did learn more about Islam as...

Interviewer:

you grew up?

Mazz:

Yeah. And I learned in school and from my parents but that was basically it.

Interviewer: 2:27

How did your membership and participation affect your own private life outside the religious group? In other words like, was your behavior affected by the group ideas? Has being a member changed you? If you have left the group has it had an ongoing impact on your later life? I don't think you left the group, so... How did how did the organization change you. How did Islam change you?.

Mazz:

Yeah, So, because I follow the religion, I have to follow some certain rules. So, which adds more...

(long pause)

Interviewer: 3:13

Like praying?

Mazz:

Yeah. Adds more restrictions, basically to what I can do, what I cannot.

Interviewer:

Okay. You mean like the way you eat?

Mazz:

Yes, the way I eat, what things I cannot eat. What behavior or what actions I can take, what actions I cannot take, all of that stuff.

Interviewer: 3:36

Okay, so give us an example, like how do people relate to each other. And, like, how do you treat other people, in Islam?

Mazz: 3:49

Yeah. So, in our religion we treat each other as as brothers and sisters. Right. So we call other Muslims, brothers. So instead of calling their name we say, brother Ferris, or Brother whatever their name is. So we try to live as a family, and we live peacefully.

Interviewer 4:13

All right. Oh, what about your relationship with other people who are not like muslims?.

Mazz: 4:23

So, in Quran there is a verse that talks about how we should treat people from all different religions same as we treat our brothers, and how we should respect their religion because it's their own choice. So I tried to, I tried to treat my, my friends like they're my brothers, or like their

my close family members.

Interviewer: 4:56

Oh. What kind of practices were involved in the group? Like, tell us about the rituals and ceremonies.

Mazz:

Yeah, so we have to pray five times a day. The first one is in the morning before sun rises. Second one is when the sun is right above our head, or noon. And the third one is after evening. And the fourth one is by dawn [dusk], and the fifth one is after the sun basically sets. And in terms of religion, of religious holidays. We have two religious holidays, they are called Eid. One of them is after Ramadan, which is the month of fasting, and the second one is after...

(pause)

Interviewer: 5:42

It's like three months after

Mazz:

Yeah after Ramadan.

Interviewer: 5:58

Did food figure into your religious life? Like do you guys have potluck meals? Do you guys like... I mean, do you guys go picnic? Is there any...

Mazz: 6:10

Yeah so on Eid we have a potluck. It's organized by the mosque, where all the people from the mosque get together and we have our own party. Yeah.

Interviewer: 6:32

What, what do you know, do you know about the organization, about the mosque? Do you know the economic arrangement of the group? Like how was the money raised, who made the spending decision, who makes the spending decisions? Who owned the group property?

Mazz:

Yeah, so the way it works is that every Muslim is required to give zakat which is basically charity. And we give to the mosque. And we just go straight to the mosque, and they basically make all the financial decisions based on that. And if the mosque needs more money they can just ask for fundraising, usually on Fridays. And yeah that's basically it.

Interviewer: 7:33

What kind of issues involving personal interactions, including for example conflicts, were present, how were they resolved? Did you have any personal interaction that caused you to like

have a conflict with the religion?

Unknown 7:56

I personally never had that problem. Mostly because, like I said before we treat each other like brothers. So we never had an issue. If you ever have an issue we just try to negotiate, and try to figure it out without any conflict.

Interviewer: 8:17

Let's go back about the mosque, do you know how it's like governed? Do you know about the leadership, like who leads the group or the organization like the mosque?

Mazz: 8:29

Well, we have our own board members. They make all the decisions. Yeah, they basically control everything.

Interviewer:

Do you know, like how many board members there are?

Mazz: 8:42

I think there are around 10, but i'm not a hundred percent sure.

Interviewer: 8:46

And how are they like, are they elected or?

Mazz:

Yeah, we just had elections, last week. But they're basically elected by the people in the mosque.

Interviewer: 9:01

Did the group own real estate own buildings? How're such holdings paid for?

Mazz: 9:09

Well, the current mosque we have was basically a church, and the people who owned the church were leaving so they basically just sold it. And all the Muslims of that time raised money. Then we ended up buying that church, then we converted that to a mosque.

Interviewer:

How were new members recruited and what was the process of joining? Do you have any idea?

Mazz: 9:39

Well, we don't really have a process. Basically if you're Muslim you can come. But if you're not Muslim you are still invited. You can come to learn more about our religion. You can learn the way we live, the way we, the way the mosque is run, and all of that stuff. But there is no actual

process.

Interviewer 9:59

Is there like people who goes and advertise the religion or like recruit people? Like I mean like tell people, maybe to come to the mosque?

Mazz: 10:12

Not really, but sometimes we do have days where we invite other people from our neighbors, neighborhood to come and sit with us, to learn more about religion, usually during Ramadan. They can come and sit next to us, they can break their fast with us.

Interviewer: 10:38

Is there like any rules, or agreements regarding dress or matters of style? Is there like rules about how people should be dressed in the mosque, or outside the mosque?

Mazz:

Well, there are no actual rules, but if you're going to pray, then you have your own rules. For example, you're supposed to cover your body, from your shoulders till your knees, and that's during prayer. After that I think your fine to...

Interviewer 11:19

Oh what relations with surrounding culture like? Were there conflicts over zoning, traffic, parking, sanitation, or other such things?

Mazz:

No we never had any of those problems.

Interviewer:

What kind of relation did the group have with other local religious organizations?

Mazz:

Well we basically try to treat our neighbors peacefully. We try and tell them that we are here to live peacefully. We don't want any conflict with them. And that's basically it.

Interviewer: 12:08

Oh what were the people like? Who are the unforgettable characters? Do you know, if there was like someone who was, I mean, really, a legend, for the mosque.

Mazz: 12:25

Well, we do have some people who are really active in the mosque, and come every single day. They take care of, pretty much everything. They organize all the stuff.

Interviewer: 12:44

How, how are children handle in the mosque? Is there any like educational program for children?

Mazz: 12:51

Yes, so we do have a Sunday school. That's when kids can come and learn how to read Quran. They can learn, they can come to learn more about Islam. It's usually aimed towards the youth, and that's led by one of, I think one of the greatest people we have in the mosque.

Interviewer: 13:17

Is there other activities for children?

Mazz: 13:20

We also have a youth group. We meet every Friday after our prayer.

Unknown 13:29

Oh, what do you guys do in the youth club?.

Mazz: 13:34

Well we basically have a discussion about any of the hot trending topics. It can be about science it can be about politics, it can...

Interviewer:

So it doesn't have to be religion?

Mazz:

No, it doesn't have to be religion. It can be about anything. Sometimes we do try to make...

Interviewer: 13:58

Religious connections?

Mazz:

Yeah, we try to make connections with religion.

Interviewer: 14:10

Was there any education programs for adults, apart from the regular worship service?

Mazz:

Well, we don't have a program, but we do have Quran and Hadith here so that they can come and read whenever they want.

Interviewer: 14:31

What kind of, what kind of community service activities were undertaken?

Mazz: 14:40

Well, so the mosque is pretty close to the Allen Fieldhouse, so we do sell the parking spaces to people to park. And I think it's \$20 per car, so people can come and park your car and pay \$20, and go to the games.

Interviewer: 15:04

Yeah, it's kind of cheap. So, it's like a service to people.

Mazz:

Yeah it's really cheap.

Interviewer:

Were there treatment program for drug or alcohol abuse?

Mazz:

No

Interviewer: 15:14

Or physical or mental abuse?

Mazz:

No, no

Interviewer: 15:19

Were there special interest groups, such as groups for single or seniors, groups based on common interest, such as hobbies?

Mazz: 15:30

Not really. But usually, people of all ages come and they talk about, they have a good discussion sometimes.

Interviewer: 15:41

Do you know like what day is it, or is it any day?

Mazz:

Well usually people show up on Fridays. Yeah. Because of the weekends, so they get more time.

Interviewer: 15:55

What kinds of norms and expectation were there for sexual behavior?

Mazz: 16:03

Well, sexual behavior is prohibited in the mosque. Sp basically none.

Interviewer: 16:12

Okay, what about like outside the mosque?

Mazz:

Well outside the mosque they can do whatever they want.

Interviewer: 16:28

Okay. Were there penalties for violation deserves. Okay, there's no rules.

Mazz:

No, no.

Interviewer: 16:35

Did you ever think about leaving. Did you actually leave?

Mazz:

No.

Interviewer:

Why?

Mazz:

Well because, the way I see it, is that the mosque is playing a big role in my life. Because I wake up early in the morning to go to the mosque to pray. And also, the community is pretty good, so I don't see a point leaving them.

Interviewer:

And you see like... I guess you're right. How did you see the future over the long haul?

Mazz: 17:20

Well I expect them to behave the way they are behaving right now. I expect them to live peacefully, and make good connections with our neighbors, be involved in the new students that are coming.

Interviewer: 17:37

Is the organization growing, do you think?

Mazz 17:43

It's kind of a yes and no answer, because usually new students come to the mosque, but also the students who graduate they leave. So it's kind of a yes and no answer.

Interviewer: 18:00

What were the best and worst things you remember about the experience?

Mazz: 18:11

I will say the best thing is, the best experience was when I moved here and I made new friends in the mosque. Some of those friends also went to the same school. So, I think that was nice. And the worst experience, well, so far I haven't had a really bad experience. So I'm not sure.

Interviewer: 18:38

So you kind of like the way the mosque was like, organized and...

Mazz:

Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: 18:50

What else can you tell us? Do you have any other thing that's in your mind, you want to share about the mosque?

Mazz: 19:06

I will say, I wish more people showed up to the mosque, because right now not that many people show up every single day. They mostly show up on Fridays. And usually on weekends. But otherwise, the mosque is pretty much empty most of the time.

Interviewer: 19:25

So you kind of like the interaction with people? That's why you want more people to come?

Mazz:

Yeah I want more people to come, so they can learn more about the mosque and how it helped me in my life. And I'm sure it would help them as well.

Interviewer: 19:43

Do you know any other person we should interview?

Mazz: 19:49

Yeah, I have a couple in my mind.

Interviewer:

Can you list them?

Mazz:

Well they're my friends.

Interviewer: 19:58

Okay. Thank you so much for this interview.

Mazz:

Yeah no problem

Interviewer:

And thank you for your time.