

18:31:42 Welcome, salamu alaikum.

18:31:47 the co-director of the Center for the Study of... Co-Director.

18:31:52 center of Muslim experience in the United States.

18:31:56 I co-direct the center with Professor Chad Haynes.

18:31:59 That some of you probably know, and we'll be meeting him better during the panel discussion.

18:32:03 So, before we begin tonight's program.

18:32:06 I would like to request that all of you sign the sign-up sheet. I know there is no light outside.

18:32:12 But it's supposed to be turning on at 7 o'clock, and if you want us to bring up the sign-up sheet here.

18:32:17 We'll be happy to bring it, so that, um, in future, so that you can get, uh, emails and any kinds of announcement.

18:32:23 Particularly for students, since there are a lot of activities for the students.

18:32:29 I also request that you turn off your phones.

18:32:31 So that when we are watching the screening of the movie, there is no disturbance.

18:32:38 So it's a pleasure to welcome you this evening as we observe the Muslim.

18:32:43 American Heritage Month, so January has been.

18:32:46 kind of proposed as a Muslim American Heritage Month, and this is in honor and celebration of the month.

18:32:51 that we are organizing today's event.

18:32:55 Um,

18:32:56 it's actually is, um...

18:32:57 So, along with what are the two things that we'll be doing in today's program. One is the film screening with the panel discussion.

18:33:05 And also, we are pleased to recognize the work.

18:33:07 And the participation of a lot of students.

18:33:10 In the inaugural photo competition called Lenses of Belonging.

18:33:14 Some of the photos you can see here that we have put it in the.

18:33:18 for you to see some of the pictures, not all of them, some of the pictures are here.

18:33:22 So this competition was open nationwide to all college students.

18:33:28 And in order to actually, um...

18:33:31 document or provide us certain kinds of the way young people are seeing and capturing.

18:33:36 The beauty and diversity of everyday Muslim life in the United States.

18:33:41 We will announce the winners at the end of today's program after the panel discussion.

18:33:47 So, some of you may already be familiar with the Center of Muslim Experience.

18:33:52 While others may not be.

18:33:54 It was established in 2022.

18:33:57 the center, and it goes by the acronym CMEUS, so C-M-E-U-S is C-Me.

18:34:03 Me, as an American in the U.S.

18:34:07 So it grew out of a very simple realization, the center.

18:34:11 that Muslims in America are often talked about and studied and debated.

18:34:16 But rarely heard or seen as whole human beings.

18:34:21 Too often, public conversations reduce Muslim lives to questions of security and suspicion.

18:34:27 living out the rich, everyday.

18:34:30 realities of who Muslims are.

18:34:33 And how they contribute to the society here.

18:34:37 CME was created to change that.

18:34:39 Instead of treating Muslims as problems to be studied.

18:34:44 The center focuses on Muslim voices and experiences. We document both everyday life and extraordinary contributions.

18:34:53 Because together, the extraordinary and the ordinary humanizes Muslim communities.

18:34:59 and corrects the historical record of the United States.

18:35:03 Through oral history, digital archives, public programs, and educational resources.

18:35:09 CME works to bring Muslim stories into the public eye.

18:35:12 Stories that affirm belonging.

18:35:15 highlight contributions and help build a more honest and inclusive understanding of America.

18:35:21 Our vision is to build CME into a globally recognized center of scholarship and public engagement.

18:35:28 We invite you to join us as we create a global Muslim digital repository and virtual museum.

18:35:35 develop a scholarly hub to produce meaningful scholarships.

18:35:39 and the public comments to disseminate information and stories to the public, journalists, and policy makers.

18:35:46 This is just the beginning, but the goal is clear, to make Muslim experiences visible, valued, and understood.

18:35:53 as part of the American story.

18:35:56 Tonight's event is part of that mission.

18:36:00 Part of a broader observance of the Muslim American Heritage Month.

18:36:06 We'll be screening, fighting for freedom, the little-known story of Muslims and the civil war in America.

18:36:14 This is episode 3 of the Public Broadcasting Services series.

18:36:19 called Muslim... American Muslims, a history revealed. So this is part 3, we are only watching part 3.

18:36:25 of a six-part of a series that was created by PBS on Muslims in America.

18:36:32 The film, this particular film, Storos, uh, follows their remarkable journey.

18:36:37 of Muhammad Khan, an immigrant from Afghanistan who arrived in the United States in 1861.

18:36:45 and enlisted in the Union Army.

18:36:48 By centering the story of an Afghan Muslim who fought alongside black and white Christian and Jewish soldiers.

18:36:55 During the Civil War, the film invites you to consider.

18:37:00 Who has long belonged to the American community?

18:37:03 The

18:37:05 film raises important questions.

18:37:06 How do we understand the role of immigrants and non-U.S.-born individuals who have contributed the labor, talent.

18:37:14 And even the lies to this country.

18:37:17 There is evidence of Muslim soldiers in Revolutionary War.

18:37:22 Like Bampit Muhammad.

18:37:23 who was a corporal in Virginia in 1775.

18:37:27 Yet is little known or researched.

18:37:30 There are many other Muslim soldiers.

18:37:32 If people beyond the black and white Christian-Jewish binary.

18:37:36 have been part of the United States for over several centuries.

18:37:41 Why are Muslims being left behind and still framed.

18:37:46 as newcomers or immigrants whose loyalty to the U.S. is questioned.

18:37:51 And how might we are understanding of American history change if we recognize.

18:37:56 Muslim communities as part of the nation's fabric.

18:38:00 who have served and died for this country for over 250 years.

18:38:05 So, following the screening of this.

18:38:08 of the short, um...

18:38:10 film, which is around 22 to 23 minutes.

18:38:14 We'll be joined by a very distinguished panel.

18:38:17 who will help us unpack these themes.

18:38:20 and reflect what is this history.

18:38:23 That it can teach us today.

18:38:25 But first, we'll have to watch the documentary in order to have that discussion.

18:38:30 So before we get into the panel discussion, we'll watch the documentary.

18:38:35 We'll return to the panel discussion, and then open it up for questions from all of you who have assembled here, so kindly and so generously.

18:38:43 To be part of today's event.

18:38:45 Not simply this event, but to celebrate the Muslim American Heritage Month.

18:38:50 And after the panel discussion.

18:38:53 We will be announcing the prize winners of today's competition. There are many students I see here.

18:38:58 who probably did not know about this photo competition. We'll be doing it again next year.

18:39:04 So please keep your eyes and your thing open, your email whenever you see something that is for students.

18:39:12 please become part of it, and take.

18:39:14 You know, take... not just be part of it.

18:39:17 But take, um, become invested in the work that is going on, so that you can also help us build this center.

18:39:23 So that you become part of the history of telling about Muslim experiences, particularly, say, at ASU, that we would love to document.

18:39:31 So we welcome all of you who are here today, and so let's start the screening of the film.

18:39:37 And then we will continue the conversation. So once again, thank you for coming, and welcome.

18:48:22 Okay.

19:02:23 Okay, thank you for watching. It's a pretty powerful film, as you can see. Short, yet.

19:02:31 How do we think of the Muslims in America today? So, in order to discuss this.

19:02:39 brought us in a complicated.

19:02:41 nuanced, and perhaps difficult question.

19:02:45 Um, we have, uh...

19:02:47 very esteemed panel here that I'll introduce first.

19:02:50 And then they will start the discussion.

19:02:54 We

19:02:54 have at the center.

19:02:56 of the panelists are Colonel retired Wanda Wright.

19:02:59 She's a director of the Office for Veteran and Military Academic Engagement.

19:03:04 And assistant teaching professor.

19:03:07 in the College of Integrative Science and Arts at ASU.

19:03:12 A 1985 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, she served for 21 years in the Arizona National Guard.

19:03:19 and became the first African American woman to attain the rank of Colonel in its history.

19:03:25 She previously led the Arizona Department of Veterans Services and was recently inducted.

19:03:31 into the Arizona Hall of Fame.

19:03:32 Congratulations, and thank you for joining us.

19:03:37 To her left is Dr. John Mark Singhu.

19:03:41 Do I pronounce... I always make a mistake by pronouncing your name. She's also my colleague in another center.

19:03:47 But he is the Assistant Director.

19:03:50 and faculty affiliate of the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict at ASU CSRC.

19:03:56 He holds a PhD in religious ethics from the University of Chicago.

19:04:01 And is a public scholar who's.

19:04:04 as a public scholar whose work explores religion.

19:04:07 war and human rights. He also brings direct field experience, having served in Afghanistan.

19:04:13 as a human terrain analyst for the U.S. Department of the Army.

19:04:18 Our moderator for this evening.

19:04:20 is Dr. Chad Haynes, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Founding Co-Director of the Center of Muslim Experience in the US, CME US.

19:04:30 Dr. Haynes is a cultural anthropologist and scholar of Islam, peace studies, and urbanism.

19:04:35 He's the author of Nation, Territory, and Globalization in Pakistan, and has co-edited several volumes on peace and gender in the Islamic world.

19:04:44 Incidentally, he's also my husband. Please join me in welcoming our honored guest as we begin tonight's conversation and discussion.

19:04:54 Dr. Haynes,

19:04:56 thank you.

19:04:57 You guys will show that mic, yeah.

19:05:00 Um, just to reiterate, Yasmeen was saying, thank you all for coming this evening, particularly such a beautiful evening out, um, and sharing your night with us.

19:05:09 Also, just to mention, there's lots of food left, so if you're still hungry afterwards, we can put it out. Unfortunately, we can't have food inside, but afterwards, you're more than welcome to.

19:05:17 help yourselves again, and particularly the cookies, at least if nothing else.

19:05:23 Obviously, you all have your own questions, so we don't want to take so much time, because we want to engage you as well with this. But there's so many issues that sort of come out of this film, just about race, religion, and American history.

19:05:35 and the erasure of history. But one of the things I found sort of powerful in Muhammad Khan's story, I mean, and there's so many actually intriguing aspects of it.

19:05:44 But it's a way he kept returning to his unit.

19:05:48 And wanting to fight... he could have easily left.

19:05:50 at some point, knowing the horrors of the war.

19:05:53 Right? Um, but after he was basically arrested and put as a contraband prisoner, he.

19:06:01 left, went back to his troops, he was wounded, spent time in the hospital, went back to his troops, and continued to fight in the war. So one of the, sort of, the questions I have for both of you, actually, is just.

19:06:14 That sense of one commitment.

19:06:15 to the military and serving.

19:06:18 But how does that translate into, perhaps, a sense of belonging?

19:06:22 And obviously, we don't know Muhammad Khan's intentions at that time.

19:06:27 But do you think there was some aspect of his.

19:06:31 sort of service, and his commitment to serving.

19:06:34 that also strengthened or somehow expressed his sense of wanting to belong to the United States. And how do you think the military itself.

19:06:43 is an avenue of belonging, and particularly for immigrants.

19:06:50 Yes. Um, I... you know, in thinking about this, I thought, well.

19:06:54 You know, at the time, I don't know if during the Civil War they were required to take the oath, but

19:07:04 if they were,

19:07:04 that is the first sort of thing that everyone who served does.

19:07:05 And the oath talks about defending the nation against foreign, domestic, right?

19:07:10 And so I think, as an initial sort of entry into the military, that's an important aspect, because it's a very serious oath that you take.

19:07:20 that you are going to be part of this system that is going to defend the United States. And then I think the next thing is the training.

19:07:27 Right,

19:07:28 we're all trained the same.

19:07:30 And whether

19:07:35 there's little spots of racism or whatever going on, I still think that.

19:07:36 Um, that...

19:07:39 that experience is the same for everyone.

19:07:44 And so,

19:07:44 there is a sense of belonging, because now we're.

19:07:44 being trained together, and there's a sense of camaraderie with our, like.

19:07:50 A fellow servicemen.

19:07:52 At

19:07:54 the time, only men, mostly.

19:07:55 And,

19:07:59 and so this... sorry, the

19:07:59 next step is we go looking at them together.

19:08:00 And

19:08:01 we have each other's backs.

19:08:02 As we are fighting for what we raised at our right hand for in the first place.

19:08:09 So I think these are the

19:08:13 elements that brings us together and really creates a belonging.

19:08:15 And, you know, even currently, we talk about our brothers and

19:08:22 sisters in the military, because

19:08:22 we are and do

19:08:22 believe we're our family, and I think the same thing happened.

19:08:23 John,

19:08:28 you wanna... Um,

19:08:28 I concur with everything, um...

19:08:29 I think there's also an element of trauma bonding.

19:08:33 Um, that, uh, occurs, and when we talk about going into

19:08:38 battle together, having.

19:08:39 each other's backs,

19:08:40 um...

19:08:41 holding each other when you inevitably cry. I mean, you know.

19:08:46 Going into your first gunfight, going into your first firefight.

19:08:50 No one, no matter how much training you have, is prepared for that.

19:08:54 Um, you... you do your job, and you get through it, but there is something very human about.

19:08:59 the transgression of killing, and.

19:09:02 Oftentimes, um, the bond that.

19:09:06 folks have in helping each other through that.

19:09:10 Um, is, is something that...

19:09:12 you know, it crosses ideological lines, I will tell you that I am ideologically very different from many of the people.

19:09:19 that I served with politically, um, you know, in many ways, but that bond remains, and there's... I know for a fact that on a human level, if I needed anything.

19:09:29 they would be there for me, because we have that shared experience of caring for each other in the hardest of moments.

19:09:36 Because

19:09:40 certainly one of the things he experienced, obviously, is race. And so, Wanda, I'm just going to.

19:09:41 curious to sort of ask you about this, and particularly drawing upon your own experiences, particularly as a Black woman.

19:09:49 You know, both gender and your color... skin color.

19:09:53 affect how people read you and react to you and deal with you in the military. And so I'm just kind of curious, based on.

19:09:58 hearing his story, do you think race relations in the military, how have they changed and evolved?

19:10:06 And... have they really... I mean, are there aspects of it that are perhaps still problematic?

19:10:11 Yeah,

19:10:18 I mean, I think you're really starting with the Revolutionary War, when we had African Americans fighting.

19:10:19 That, you know, they wouldn't see their pension, they wouldn't see anything in often cases, and they were relegated to very menial kinds of jobs.

19:10:27 And that really didn't change over time, um, when we think about World War I, especially the Navy having.

19:10:34 only African Americans serving.

19:10:37 Right? Serving, cooking, and that kind of thing.

19:10:40 Um, and no sort of leadership positions were available to them.

19:10:45 Um, and, you know, we go through Vietnam, where now we have over-representation of race, right? Why? Because socioeconomic issues are...

19:10:55 And I always think about, back to Muhammad Khan.

19:10:58 Perhaps one of those issues, besides his sort of belief.

19:11:02 Um, because the Quran talks a lot about oppressed people and trying not to.

19:11:06 do that, um, is the economic issue, right? And perhaps he needed money, too.

19:11:11 in order to survive in that... those circumstances at the time.

19:11:16 Um, you know, we sort of get through Vietnam.

19:11:18 And we come to, um, sort of present-day 9-11.

19:11:24 And we see a lot more diversity.

19:11:27 But we don't still see, um, people of Asian descent, African descent.

19:11:34 Um, even Jewish descent rising up into those big positions. I mean, Colin Powell was one of the first.

19:11:40 Right?

19:11:44 And even today, and

19:11:44 now today, we see.

19:11:45 current, like today, that, um, our Secretary of Defense is really trying to manipulate.

19:11:52 Um, the history of us, and particularly women in the military.

19:11:57 And so, things come and go, right? Race, gender, misogyny.

19:12:03 Um, they kind of come back and forth depending on administration or depending on who's the commander of chief.

19:12:10 And what is the policy of the time, and then sort of what is the culture of the time?

19:12:14 City is sort of like a pendulum, maybe a swinging pack, yes. A pendulum. Yeah. I mean, it's really scary. I mean, I think all of us, what's happening, and talking about erasure, I mean, one, here are these stories of, in a sense, minorities.

19:12:27 that are so unknown and sort of forgotten, not really documented, not really spoken about.

19:12:33 Um, and here we are again today, in a sense, with a very covert attempt to actually erase.

19:12:40 Um, minorities out of.

19:12:43 American history, and particularly even the military, and we've seen it

19:12:52 so directly. So many stories, right? I think about Japanese intern, right, here in Arizona.

19:12:53 And yet we had Asian Americans fighting for them at the same time their families were interned.

19:13:00 That's

19:13:02 crazy. Yeah.

19:13:04 Um, John, I mean, since the beginning of this religion question, I mean, race is one aspect of it, but the other is religion.

19:13:11 Particularly over the last.

19:13:13 several decades, and I think it's been building up. There's sort of been increasing at least talk from those of us outside the military.

19:13:19 There's kind of Christianization.

19:13:21 of the American military, particularly evangelicalization, perhaps I should say more clearly, and that there's a politics that comes with that. And so I'm just kind of curious, from your own sort of.

19:13:31 perspective, both as a scholar of religion and religious studies, um, and your.

19:13:36 personal experiences, going through at least observations, etc.

19:13:40 How do you think religion itself plays, and particularly for minority communities, minority religious communities, how does that play out?

19:13:48 in the military today.

19:13:52 Today, it's very difficult. I mean, I think that you...

19:13:57 as Wanda said, um...

19:13:59 there is... the...

19:14:01 Secretary Hegseth has...

19:14:04 made overt statements.

19:14:05 Uh, referring to specifically a Christian.

19:14:09 to evangelical virtues, military virtue is conceived of in.

19:14:13 those terms. And you are getting...

19:14:17 Uh, now, in just recent months.

19:14:22 policy changes that directly affect the religious expression and freedom of religion.

19:14:28 of American service members. Something as simple, for instance, as.

19:14:33 Pete Hegseth's Crusade against the Beard.

19:14:36 what he calls beardos.

19:14:39 Um, it's... it's... it seems such a silly thing.

19:14:44 But for those who have.

19:14:47 religious duty to maintain facial hair.

19:14:50 Right? Sikhs, Jews, Muslims.

19:14:54 Right? This idea that this can just be erased.

19:15:00 that those rights don't matter in the face of.

19:15:04 whatever safety policy or grooming standards, that's really what he wants. Uniformity in grooming standards is what he's talking about.

19:15:11 Right? Everybody hit the same standard.

19:15:13 And yet, that standard that you say is the same.

19:15:16 is discriminatory in and of itself. The default is discriminatory.

19:15:20 Um, and it's... without being...

19:15:24 the target for religious.

19:15:26 persecution becomes something that is religious persecution.

19:15:30 And then the second thing really is the overhaul of the Chaplain core.

19:15:33 Um, I served in 2010-2011 overseas.

19:15:37 Um, and at the time, it was still a very much Protestant chaplain corps.

19:15:42 But the chaplain Corps was tasked with.

19:15:46 Uh, dealing with spirituality in a wider frame.

19:15:49 Right? There was no Muslim chaplain on my base, there was no Jewish chaplain on my base.

19:15:53 in Afghanistan. You'd think that there would be a Muslim country, right? Um, but the way that the...

19:15:59 the so-called War Department is acting now.

19:16:02 They've actually decided to overhaul this. It used to be the chaplains were supposed to.

19:16:07 serve any faith, and talk about feelings and emotions and help you spiritually.

19:16:13 There is now a...

19:16:15 A move to really.

19:16:19 consolidate this more into what they call traditional religious.

19:16:23 expression, um, which in many ways will.

19:16:27 be very difficult for those who don't have somebody like a chaplain.

19:16:32 of their faith. So that's really cutting into.

19:16:36 religious expression, religious freedom. Yeah, this grooming

19:16:45 stem, I mean, it's interesting, because so many parts of the world, you see accommodations for Sikhs, you know, who grow beards and have turbans.

19:16:46 And the ways in which they're allowed into the military or Muslim women who wear hijab.

19:16:51 So in police forces, in the military, etc.

19:16:54 So, many places, there's a sort of increasing sort of acceptance and ways in which this, as you said, this grooming standard actually becomes flexible.

19:17:03 for those who have different, sort of.

19:17:06 sartorial, um, standards themselves, right?

19:17:11 Um, just coming back to something you said earlier, we talked... I mentioned it earlier, Wanda, but it's also your positionality as a woman.

19:17:19 in the military, and that itself is no doubt a challenge.

19:17:23 As much as being a woman of color.

19:17:26 Um, and so I'm just kind of curious.

19:17:28 Do you see those changes, particularly in the 1980s, when this is still.

19:17:31 Emerging when you first run the academy, and you must have been really at the forefront.

19:17:36 many ways of setting those standards of the woman's place in the military.

19:17:40 And I'm just kind of curious if you're willing to sort of share, perhaps, some of your own stories, or at least your own sort of understanding of how this.

19:17:46 the place of women in the military has also evolved the last 30, 40 years.

19:17:51 Yeah,

19:17:58 so I came in, and I was the sixth class of women at the Air Force Academy, the first class class.

19:17:59 I graduated in 1980.

19:18:01 It's

19:18:04 interesting, because we're about to have our 50th anniversary at the Air Force Academy.

19:18:05 Uh,

19:18:07 this year. And, um...

19:18:08 you know, well, one, we weren't let into academies for a long time, and then when we were, I feel like.

19:18:14 They didn't really know what to do

19:18:19 with us. It

19:18:19 took several years for them to sort of get the policies and.

19:18:20 And the trappings of having women in a...

19:18:24 what was an all-male institution.

19:18:25 to get

19:18:32 that right, right? First, they segregated

19:18:32 us, and then they put us together.

19:18:32 And so I would tell you that.

19:18:33 I never really felt like there was, um...

19:18:37 you know, males there who are really trying to push us out, but they were there, right? And, um, I think at least currently.

19:18:44 Because of the administration and the voicing of these things, it's getting worse at the academies.

19:18:50 Um, that...

19:18:51 things

19:18:54 are being said that might

19:18:54 not have been said before to women.

19:18:56 Um, why are

19:19:00 you here?

19:19:00 And, you know, why would women join the military? But even when I graduated.

19:19:02 Um, you know, being in the military, I feel that I...

19:19:05 you know, I had a pretty good career, but at the time, we could not fly jets.

19:19:12 And then when you think about the hierarchy of the military, whether it's Army, Air Force.

19:19:18 Pilots are like the cream of the crop, right? And so, women were excluded from that.

19:19:22 They could never be in command.

19:19:26 And so for a very long time, women were not in command.

19:19:30 And that set us back as far as being able to have some of these great positions and.

19:19:35 And to be acknowledged for the work that they did when they were quite capable of doing so.

19:19:40 And so, I feel grateful that I didn't really experience a whole lot of, sort of, bigotry against me being a woman, but I do remember when I left that it was very hard for me to get a job.

19:19:51 And I do believe that was because.

19:19:54 The employers who, um, I interviewed with didn't understand what a woman veteran was.

19:20:01 There

19:20:03 were so few of us at the time.

19:20:04 And that... and I can... I can almost see it in their eyes when they're looking at me, like, why would you join the military? Why would a woman do that?

19:20:12 You know, and so it was very difficult

19:20:16 to get hired right after I left.

19:20:17 And, uh, it's not all about that, but I think partially it was... it

19:20:23 was the

19:20:23 questions about, you know, who are you?

19:20:24 Who are you, like, your

19:20:29 positionality. So

19:20:29 I had, you know, a couple things. We have, you know, Private Khan was a private, he was enlisted.

19:20:30 I was an African American woman who was an officer.

19:20:35 And there's, like, 2% of us in the Air Force at the time.

19:20:39 And so we were really like a unicorn out

19:20:44 there, and

19:20:44 trying to survive in that atmosphere.

19:20:44 you know, was... was not always easy, but I can tell you, at least from my experience, it wasn't terrible.

19:20:51 It was pretty... it

19:20:53 was pretty good. I had a great career.

19:20:54 Glad to hear that.

19:20:56 But, um, well, I mean...

19:21:00 This is actually an issue after coming out. I mean, these challenges that you face, and we also, I mean.

19:21:05 We all... I shouldn't say we all, some of us are older, um, but saw this following the Vietnam War, and this challenge of.

19:21:12 vets coming back who had fought there, and just because of the politics and situation at the time.

19:21:17 The way, in a sense, they got treated, right? And we've seen this over and over again, and not just in that time, it was just because of the nature of the war.

19:21:24 But now, people of color, minorities, religious minorities who served, and we see this again, there's a whole dreamer.

19:21:31 sort of move, right? It's a pathway to actual citizenship.

19:21:36 was passed if you served in the military. Now, that's being taken away, questioned and challenged by the current administration.

19:21:43 Right? And so, earlier we talked about belonging, but there's also legal standards.

19:21:47 And I'm just kind of curious how you see this, the place of citizenship.

19:21:52 as its role within the military.

19:21:55 And for, particularly for immigrant communities coming here, do they see this as.

19:21:59 Okay, now I've, in a sense, this marks me now as an American citizen.

19:22:06 Both of you for either winning, yeah.

19:22:09 We recently

19:22:10 screened a movie.

19:22:11 called In a Box, and it was about.

19:22:14 Hispanic veterans who had been.

19:22:17 in the military for some time who had been deported.

19:22:22 And, um, some of it was administrative.

19:22:25 Some of it was a little bit of criminality.

19:22:28 Um, but it really sort of stunned me in the fact that, you know, we had these people who, again, raised their right hand to serve the military.

19:22:37 Maybe went off to Afghanistan or Iraq and fought.

19:22:40 came home and maybe had some indiscretion,

19:22:45 something happened, and they were sent off.

19:22:46 Their whole family might still be in the U.S, but they

19:22:51 were sent back to Mexico, or Argentina or wherever they were from.

19:22:52 And, um, and the other side of

19:22:59 that being systematically, if their military branch didn't do the correct paperwork for them.

19:23:00 to get their citizenship, they might be deported. And it...

19:23:07 so there... there's no guarantee.

19:23:08 Obviously, based on that information.

19:23:11 And so, in my mind, even though you might raise your right

19:23:16 hand and think it's going to happen for you.

19:23:17 It's not a guarantee that it's going to happen for you. And so...

19:23:22 Any... anyone who

19:23:26 comes into the United States expecting to... the military to put you through.

19:23:28 The citizenship should be very wary.

19:23:30 Of that, John, and particularly,

19:23:35 I mean, you yourself as an immigrant to the United States, how...

19:23:37 This plays out in your own life. Well, I wanna... I

19:23:42 wanna talk a little bit about the fact that this is not, uh, this is not.

19:23:44 new to the current administration.

19:23:46 Right? We might think that, but this narrative of a pathway to citizenship.

19:23:50 Uh, is a very nice one, and it has worked out for.

19:23:55 some people, I will not deny that.

19:23:57 But I want to take you to the case of World War II, the case of Philippine scouts, right?

19:24:02 Philippines is a United States, uh, it was the only United States colony. Everything else is a territory.

19:24:08 Philippine scouts were inducted into MacArthur's army. They were fully members, not of a Philippine army, but of the United States Armed Forces.

19:24:17 In fact, my great-uncle Ben served in the Philippine Scouts.

19:24:20 my great-grandmother drew his pension until she died.

19:24:23 Uh, at 102, uh, 20 years ago.

19:24:26 Um, Philippine Scouts, those who served in MacArthur's army, were promised pathways.

19:24:31 to permanent residency, citizenship, and the ability to come to the United States and emigrate.

19:24:38 Um, that right was denied to many of them despite the promises that were made.

19:24:43 And historically, that has continued to be the case.

19:24:46 Uh, and in fact, you'd think that this would be a service to the United States, raising your right hand.

19:24:51 Swearing an oath to the Constitution, shedding blood, your own and others.

19:24:55 You know, should be an idea that you've bought your citizenship in that way.

19:25:00 Um, there was a young man, another Filipino man in my unit.

19:25:04 Um, who was an immigrant, he was enlisted in the Army.

19:25:08 Um, when we were deployed, he was killed in action.

19:25:13 Um, his mother was unable the entire time that he had served in the United States and.

19:25:19 Of course, in deployment to visit him.

19:25:21 She was only able to meet his casket at Dover Air Force Base.

19:25:26 Because of the red tape and the inability of the United States government.

19:25:31 To, uh, get her to the process to even visit her son in the United States.

19:25:36 So, these are things that continue to happen, and I want to say that it is worse now, I think, with the current administration and the.

19:25:45 The primary example of that.

19:25:48 is the case of our Afghan interpreters.

19:25:50 who served with us, I had one when I was in Afghanistan, they braved the same dangers that we did.

19:25:55 Right? Um, endured the same hardships.

19:25:58 And now they are being specifically targeted for deportation.

19:26:01 Uh, by this administration.

19:26:03 And I can't think of anything else, but.

19:26:07 That race, religion, all of these things have something to do with that.

19:26:11 You raised an interesting point, I mean, with these Philippine scouts, right?

19:26:17 a story, there are all these stories that.

19:26:19 Are so integral and foundational.

19:26:21 to American military...

19:26:25 adventures, um...

19:26:28 And to American history, ultimately, that minorities played such an important role. Yet their role is always.

19:26:35 so forgotten and so easily erased, right?

19:26:38 And so I'm just kind of curious now.

19:26:40 Going from Muhammad Khan's story, and stories of so many other minorities, both racial, religious, however gender, however one wants to sort of define them.

19:26:51 have been raised. Now that we hear stories like this, we hear the stories of, you know, the Latinos being.

19:26:58 Um, deported.

19:27:00 The Filipino scouts, etc.

19:27:02 What do we do with this? What's... what role do we have as educators?

19:27:07 Right? To really...

19:27:10 do something, make a difference. And not just as educators, but also as citizens.

19:27:15 of the United States now.

19:27:17 What can we do knowing these stories?

19:27:21 to change the current sort of situation, or help evolve the situation.

19:27:27 Well,

19:27:28 I think one is to tell the stories.

19:27:29 Right?

19:27:33 Like, we're

19:27:33 showing this, uh, I mentioned in the

19:27:33 box was about our deported.

19:27:34 Latin

19:27:40 veterans, um, it was just really very impactful to

19:27:40 me to see that movie.

19:27:41 Um, and

19:27:46 in my role as a

19:27:46 professor, I teach a.

19:27:48 program called Applied Military Veteran Studies.

19:27:51 And in

19:27:54 that program, throughout all of the courses that we have.

19:27:55 There are stories. We videotaped, for instance, one of the final remaining.

19:28:01 688 members.

19:28:03 How

19:28:06 many in this room know anybody about the 6888?

19:28:09 Not one. But it's a story

19:28:13 about African American women.

19:28:14 an entire battalion that did the mail.

19:28:17 in World War II.

19:28:19 And, um...

19:28:21 And she was the last surviving. I

19:28:24 got her story in my course.

19:28:25 So that people can know.

19:28:27 Right? And so I think

19:28:31 that's the most... that's...

19:28:33 The

19:28:34 history of our story, his story.

19:28:35 And I think that's one of the best things that we can do, is to

19:28:42 keep these stories, especially these unique and quirky ones that no one's ever told.

19:28:44 Um, in

19:28:50 our classes, bringing them up, having people read about them, discuss them, talk about them, so that they are not forgotten.

19:28:52 John,

19:29:00 you wanna... This is gonna be a weird one, uh, I think, coming from an academic, but go to the movies and support.

19:29:01 films like the AAA, the 688 film that Tyler Perry made.

19:29:05 Um, if you look at the narrative of heroism of what makes an American military person, if you think about the archetypical image.

19:29:13 that exists in the minds of many people in the United States. It is a white soldier.

19:29:19 Right? It is a white male soldier.

19:29:21 Looks like, you know, you know, a bodybuilder, Arnold Schwarzenegger or something like that. Um, Captain America, I will tell you, I know a lot of Special Forces guys, none of them look like that.

19:29:33 But supporting those stories, right, you know, and making those popular, making sure that people have an interest.

19:29:41 in telling those stories, not just in documentaries, but in things that will be.

19:29:45 widely received. I think it's really important, because I think there is a difference between the official policy and the training that you receive at a place.

19:29:53 like the Air Force Academy.

19:29:55 and the general enlisted soldier.

19:29:57 Right? Many of those people, I will say, get their education about Islam, get their education about.

19:30:03 the places and the people they're fighting, the reasons that they're fighting.

19:30:06 from popular film. I will tell you that Thomas Aquinas was not quoted once in my unit.

19:30:12 But 300 in Braveheart were quoted almost every day, right? And so those... we need to be... we need to popularize those stories. We need to make stories like.

19:30:22 Muhammad Khan, um, things that are.

19:30:26 easily called to mind. Reference points.

19:30:28 for the common soldier, and I think that's very important.

19:30:31 Thank you, and

19:30:38 thank you both for your comments and stuff. It just sort of reminded me, when we first began sort of this center, one of our explorations, our discoveries, if you will.

19:30:39 of the local Muslim community was actually some of the first Muslims into the Arizona-Phoenix area.

19:30:46 is a community of Bosnians that lived in Globe, Arizona, and actually in Miami.

19:30:51 And they were minors. But many of them enlisted in World War I.

19:30:55 Right? And fought in World War I for the US at that time.

19:30:58 Right? And there are many other such stories, and in fact, I would like to... actually, we just learned yesterday.

19:31:04 of another story, more personal.

19:31:07 Can I have the mic? Um, that our program coordinator, Fatina Halal, and you can introduce yourself.

19:31:12 But she has her own sort of personal.

19:31:15 story with this as well, related to this, so if you'd like

19:31:22 to... Hello, everyone. My name is Fatina. I do work as the program coordinator for the Center of Muslim Experience.

19:31:23 And yesterday, I was telling my family all about this event that we were going to have, um, and for reference, my family, some of them live in Iowa, in Cedar Rapids, very small town.

19:31:35 Um,

19:31:35 and...

19:31:36 My cousin said, oh, well, did you know that my grandfather.

19:31:41 Um, wrote a letter to President Eisenhower.

19:31:45 Back in 1952.

19:31:48 to ask if Muslims could have an M on their dog tags to show that they were Muslim, so that if they did dine service, they were at an Islamic burial.

19:31:59 Um,

19:32:00 at the time, this was...

19:32:03 not granted, um, however, he was allowed to have a... he was given, along with, um, everyone else that he served with, um, in World War II.

19:32:13 He was given the opportunity to have a secondary tag added on that did have religion, rather than.

19:32:20 Um, what everyone else was able to choose, which was.

19:32:24 C for Catholic, P for Protestant, or H, um, if you are Jewish for Hebrew.

19:32:31 And that same year, he founded, um, the American Muslim Society, which.

19:32:38 Um, at the time, if you see it in any old newspapers, it is spelled Moslem.

19:32:42 Because, again, contributes to the, like we saw in the movie, just that the spellings were not.

19:32:48 really

19:32:50 cared to be correct.

19:32:52 Um, and that was a...

19:32:55 organization that somewhat founded the organizations that we have now, um.

19:33:01 MSA, it later became Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada, which is where, um, different.

19:33:09 Insun, MSA, uh, kind of derived from.

19:33:13 Now, I have also grown up.

19:33:16 Um, mostly all over the world after leaving Iowa when I was 8, and I've had to answer many questions over my life of.

19:33:23 Oh, who are you? Where are you from? Where are you from? And I always wanted to choose the simplest answer. I often just say, oh, I'm American, because I'm usually speaking to people who are not American, so it doesn't seem... that seems the most important, uh, signifier distinguish...

19:33:38 thing to mention. But now, living back in the US, it's become.

19:33:44 really apparent to me, and especially working here and learning so much more, it's become apparent to me that, oh no, my identity, even if I'm explaining it in just a couple words, I need to label it with a little bit more depth.

19:33:53 And I think learning about this story just so haphazardly just yesterday, I think.

19:34:00 it's probably helped me even with my own patriotism, um, in feeling that, okay, actually.

19:34:07 My family is even... I have connection to, uh, progress in the United States.

19:34:13 progress for Muslim Americans in the United States, and I think.

19:34:15 it really put into perspective how valuable having education like this in.

19:34:21 spreading visibility on such stories like this is because it really can help you feel like your identity is.

19:34:28 more grounded and potentially feel more patriotic about the changes, um.

19:34:34 That you'd like to see.

19:34:35 So, thank you.

19:34:40 I'd like to open

19:34:46 it up at this point now for your own questions that you may have with the panel or just broadly even.

19:34:47 you know, comments that you have that jumped out of you about the documentary?

19:34:52 Or any other sort of related issue you might like to share or story as well.

19:34:58 So... and just speak loudly, there are actually mics hanging from the ceiling, so they'll pick up your...

19:35:04 Perhaps your voice, so...

19:35:08 Does anyone have any?

19:35:12 questions. Jimmy.

19:35:15 Uh, I know you guys were speaking about Afghan interpreters and, uh, people that help in Afghanistan, you

19:35:21 know, terror forces and such.

19:35:23 I just had a question, because.

19:35:25 Um, I was at a dinner one time, and I actually spoke to John McCain's son.

19:35:29 And he was doing a big push for...

19:35:33 Afghans who got left behind after the fall of COVID.

19:35:36 And one thing that I noticed was...

19:35:40 The primary sources that were coming.

19:35:43 about these narratives of Afghans who fought with American soldiers were coming from those.

19:35:48 White soldiers and stuff like that. So when we get those narratives here from those soldiers.

19:35:55 Or... how can I say this.

19:35:56 Yeah, so those narratives getting filtered through American soldiers.

19:36:02 What happens to that when it gets to us, if that makes sense.

19:36:07 how they're altered, how they conceived, instead of it being from the source.

19:36:13 Does that make sense?

19:36:18 Because when, for example, when John Clean's son was talking.

19:36:22 He was talking in a way that made him be perceived as.

19:36:27 Good, which is amazing for what he was doing, but it took...

19:36:33 kind of negated.

19:36:35 the agency or the importance of those app-end interpreters. So, someone who is then a bystander didn't truly understand.

19:36:43 I

19:36:47 understand, and I want to acknowledge and affirm the point about agency and the necessity of.

19:36:48 Um, you know, hearing a person's story from their perspective.

19:36:52 Right? Um, there's, one, a language barrier, right? Many of our...

19:36:58 Afghan interpreters, despite the fact that they.

19:37:02 can... they interpreted for us in English. The English isn't always the best, so...

19:37:06 the telling of the story.

19:37:08 Uh, in the same sort of deep way that you could narrativize it if you were, like, very eloquently.

19:37:14 Shakespearean in English doesn't come out quite as well, right? It was a very functional relationship.

19:37:20 Now, there are exceptions to this, where you do have exceptionally eloquent Afghan interpreters, and those people are great.

19:37:26 Um, but I also want to...

19:37:29 point out that in the society that we've got.

19:37:33 Sometimes, it's... I'm not saying it's the best, I'm not saying it's great.

19:37:37 But, uh, having a white soldier, um...

19:37:42 advocate for you, the son of John McCain.

19:37:45 Uh, the principal at my son's school is actually a fellow Afghanistan veteran, and he was the person who brought his interpreter over here as well.

19:37:53 Um, there is power in that, and what I want to say is that, like.

19:37:57 Use your agency, use that privilege for good.

19:38:00 And, you know, point, as you have.

19:38:03 to the fact that you still need to.

19:38:06 Then go to...

19:38:08 the original source, and give those people agency. Not give them a voice, I don't like that terminology, but incline people's ears to hear.

19:38:15 that story.

19:38:20 Any other questions? Yes, mudhubira.

19:38:23 Question about... you mentioned that.

19:38:26 And most of the times.

19:38:28 Such occasions come when

19:38:32 people have to fight against their own people. For example.

19:38:34 People of color might encounter a situation in which they have to fight.

19:38:37 Against people who belong.

19:38:41 to the same identity. For example.

19:38:44 immigrants from Afghanistan, for example, encounter a situation in which.

19:38:50 from the side of American military, they have to fight against the people of Afghanistan.

19:38:55 So, in such kind of situation, what keeps the soldier motivated to fight for the.

19:39:00 I mean, I just want the clarity that how things go on when such kind of identity crisis, I mean, unfolds.

19:39:17 I harken back to sort of the Civil War, right?

19:39:20 And it's ideological ideology, in that,

19:39:28 you know,

19:39:28 you have those who fought against slavery, and essentially those who fought for slavery.

19:39:30 And they were brothers sometimes.

19:39:32 And they

19:39:37 would fight each

19:39:37 other and

19:39:37 kill each other,

19:39:37 and sometimes moms at home would have no sons.

19:39:38 Because they died on both sides.

19:39:40 And so, I don't know in particular, because I did not go to Afghanistan, but I imagine it's sort of the same thing in that.

19:39:47 You know, you have an ideology about what's supposed to happen. Some Afghans believe that Americans were there to help.

19:39:54 And we're willing to interpret for them.

19:39:57 And others, no, you don't need to be in our country, you need to leave, and we're fighting against you.

19:40:03 And then we have this ideology issue, and, you know, maybe it was brother killing brother.

19:40:13 There's also cognitive dissonance. I mean, um...

19:40:17 I'll harken back not to the Civil War, but just after it, in what the Americans call the War of Philippine Insurrection.

19:40:24 Right? Um, the Philippine-American War.

19:40:26 Uh, in which the United States, uh, you know, fought, uh.

19:40:31 rebels, they were occupying the Philippines.

19:40:34 Um, but they sent primarily Black enlisted soldiers there.

19:40:38 And there... the National African American History Museum in Washington, D.C, actually, he really has a wonderful exhibit.

19:40:46 about, uh, black soldiers in the Philippines and the dissonances that they felt.

19:40:51 Continuing to follow orders, continuing to be part.

19:40:54 of this, at the time, American imperial machine, and yet knowing that the plight of the Filipino and what was going on in the Philippines.

19:41:02 mirrored the civil rights struggle that they were going through at home.

19:41:05 Right? And the fact is, cognitive dissonance existence, and.

19:41:09 That will exist for every soldier.

19:41:12 Um, and I think there's probably not a single conflict that's ever been fought.

19:41:17 Where that cognitive dissonance hasn't occurred. Because there is, I mean.

19:41:20 when you boil it down, there is something common to everybody, right? We can find commonalities.

19:41:26 with whoever we're fighting, and that will...

19:41:29 will be in our minds when you try and take a life.

19:41:36 Other questions or comments?

19:41:43 Interesting things, and I think one of the takeaways for me, and particularly working as... in the director.

19:41:48 Director, co-director at the Center of Muslim Experience in the U.S.

19:41:51 And just sort of one of our things... one of our driving principles was looking at what are the contributions of Muslims to the United States.

19:41:58 And how do we transform the narrative about Muslims, which is so defined by a particular very stereotypical.

19:42:06 a centralized or prospective, or one that's predicated on hate.

19:42:10 And also one driven by security concerns, etc.

19:42:14 the Muslim as terrorist, on and on. We get these tropes in popular media and politicians, etc.

19:42:21 Right? And so, by transforming that, or thinking about transforming the narrative, one thing we want to do is these positive contributions. So stories like Muhammad Khan come in. We've been here from the beginning.

19:42:30 Right? Muslims have been part of the American story as much as anybody else has, right? And other minorities as well.

19:42:38 Right? I've been part of the stories, but our story's always excluded.

19:42:41 But there's another part than just these type of contributions of being fighting in the military, etc, the economic contributions, or the scientific or engineering contributions. And that's the values.

19:42:51 And one of the interesting things I found in this documentary in particular, is that letter.

19:42:55 from the Tunisian, right? Who really, in many ways, turned upside down.

19:43:02 the foundational principles of the United States. All men are created equal.

19:43:08 By basically saying.

19:43:09 But

19:43:11 you're not treating them that way, right?

19:43:13 And

19:43:15 a call from humanity.

19:43:16 Right? Humanity calls upon you.

19:43:19 To change your ways, right? It's a very powerful.

19:43:24 kind of, um, expression.

19:43:25 And one I think we might think about, the ways in which other cultures, other values, other religious traditions.

19:43:32 perhaps shape or reinforce or reaffirm our principles.

19:43:37 that we often lose. I've lost sight of.

19:43:39 Right? So I want to thank you, I want to, again, thank our esteemed.

19:43:45 panelists for their contributions.

19:43:48 Any quick last words you want to add?

19:43:52 Just... Just

19:43:59 a quick

19:43:59 story.

19:43:59 I was just recently at a veteran Studies

19:43:59 Association, or I'm sorry, Student Veterans of America.

19:44:01 conference, and at it, I was tabling with

19:44:08 the Veteran Studies Association, which is an association of

19:44:08 scholars that do studies on.

19:44:09 veterans, specifically.

19:44:11 And I mentioned the story about Muhammad Khan.

19:44:14 And just

19:44:19 like no one raised their hand about the

19:44:19 6888, none of them had heard.

19:44:20 About, um, Muslims in the Civil War. And I just thought that was really interesting, of these people who really studied this stuff.

19:44:28 Had never heard of it, yeah.

19:44:30 John? I want to

19:44:35 make a note to follow on about what you said, Chad, to talk about.

19:44:36 the construction of our fundamental values and needing to know how that actually came about.

19:44:42 I think there has been, especially with the rise of Christian nationalism in recent years, a thought process that.

19:44:48 things like liberty, things like, uh, the American way, and all of these other things.

19:44:53 have been an Anglo-Protestant tradition, or have been a construction of.

19:44:58 quote-unquote, the West.

19:45:00 Um, and yet, so much of.

19:45:03 what we understand to be the principles of the West from Aristotle and Plato.

19:45:08 were preserved by Islamic civilization.

19:45:11 after the quote-unquote West burned everything at Alexandria.

19:45:14 Right, so even our understanding of our fundamental values.

19:45:19 is part of an encounter with the Muslim world.

19:45:23 Right? And that we need to make sure that we continue to keep that in mind as you do see more and more of these things demonizing and.

19:45:31 undercutting the contributions of Islamic persons in the United States.

19:45:36 Thank you

19:45:38 very much. And thank you both Wanda and John for your.

19:45:40 personal expressions and sharing your thoughts with us tonight.

19:45:46 You don't catch that.

19:45:47 You're going to transition.

19:45:49 to actually the...

19:45:52 final phase of tonight's sort of evening, and I hope for those of you just stay and join us. As was mentioned.

19:45:59 this last year, in the fall, we started the first annual.

19:46:04 Lenses of belonging photo competition for students from across the country to sort of document.

19:46:11 What it means to be an American Muslim.

19:46:14 And this year, we received a number of contributions, and it was very exciting to sort of see so many sort of powerful.

19:46:20 Um, images.

19:46:22 And out of those, we selected.

19:46:26 Um... the winners.

19:46:27 And so, I would like to announce those, and I know some of them are ASU students, so I don't know if they are here this evening.

19:46:34 But, um...

19:46:37 Do you want to go to the...

19:46:41 Just

19:46:48 While she's pulling it up, I'd like to share a personal story.

19:46:42 one sec, we'll get this.

19:46:52 that will assistant professor at UNC Chapel Hill, the Iraq War had started.

19:46:58 Right? And I have a lot of my students enlisting in the Army immigrant children of immigrant parents who had not yet.

19:47:05 um, got their citizenship, and they sign in the American Army to go fight in Iraq, and several of them were Muslims.

19:47:12 And this question came up with what you raised about how would they now feel going and fighting in Iraq as Muslim Americans?

19:47:21 not yet American citizens, but hoping to get their citizenship to invest in fighting in Iraq, and they said.

19:47:28 This is for survival, because they and the parents have come in to survive, and through survival, you have to do whatever it takes.

19:47:36 So it really gets to that battlefield question, you have to survive. And when I did my previous research, it was with the Army in Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh.

19:47:46 Uh, to study this particular war of 1971 that led to the creation of Bangladesh. And when I interviewed veterans of that war to ask, what was it like to go and kill your fellow citizens?

19:48:00 in another part of the same country called Pakistan, East and west.

19:48:03 It became that we did not know that we were killing.

19:48:08 Muslims, we're killing Muslims, and when some of them learned, they actually said, we are not going to continue fighting.

19:48:14 Okay? And they were court-martialed and all of that. Some said, we continued fighting because we were trained soldiers, and we had taken an oath.

19:48:23 To fight for our country, and we stood up for our country.

19:48:26 Religion is personal, country is what we were asked to defend, and that's what we fought.

19:48:31 So you have all these, as you said, this event, um, you know, cognitive dissonance. You have to make sense.

19:48:38 for your own survival at that moment, and upholding the oath that you have taken.

19:48:44 So, it's a very, very difficult thing to do.

19:48:48 But people do, uh, because of, again, as a Muslim, your oath comes before your personal feeling.

19:48:55 So you have taken it off, and now you're gonna stand by your oath.

19:49:01 These are lots of things we have learned from our students who have served, and I'm sure there are several of them here at ASU, too, who tell similar stories.

19:49:08 Right now, in the American Army, there are 5,896 Muslim soldiers.

19:49:15 And how many of them are serving in one Muslim country, we do not know. Yeah,

19:49:19 that's at a 1.3 million.

19:49:21 Yeah.

19:49:27 That's okay. Always good to... Yeah. Okay.

19:49:32 So, for the moment, some of you have been waiting for.

19:49:35 So, it was a tough, sort of, decision process, and we were very thankful to have, actually, some esteemed judges.

19:49:43 So I want to thank Dr. Han Shein Lu.

19:49:47 And Jimmy MacArthur, um, who served as our sort of screening panel, and ended up selecting, sort of, the finalists here.

19:49:55 So we want to start, there was actually an honorable mention that we just wanted to make.

19:50:02 And... there's...

19:50:04 was photographed by Osama Osman, sorry.

19:50:10 Um, who was from Notre Dame, and we just wanted to take note of this, and one of the things we really liked about this was just.

19:50:17 the smiles, um, and that sense of that during prayer time, and just the kind of joy that people had of being together, right?

19:50:25 So we offered him a sort of an honorable mention.

19:50:30 So, third place...

19:50:34 It goes to...

19:50:36 Um, Elias...

19:50:38 Um,

19:50:39 and her photograph...

19:50:41 called Pages of Remembrance.

19:50:43 And a really interesting way of sharing and community, we thought, a sort of powerful way of engaging.

19:50:50 sort of the Islamic.

19:50:53 piety, um, studying the Quran together, sharing a moment of quiet...

19:50:58 Reflection, right? Um, I don't know if she, by chance here.

19:51:04 Yes? Do you want to... okay, please come up. We have a little certificate for you, and we also will...

19:51:21 wonderful photograph, and thank you, and...

19:51:23 Again, next year, hopefully.

19:51:25 Yeah. Do you

19:51:29 want to...

19:51:30 Okay.

19:51:33 Um, takes photos.

19:51:35 There are maybe some... it'd be hard to do both, but, um...

19:51:39 Second place.

19:51:42 goes

19:51:42 to...

19:51:45 Dimas?

19:51:47 We found, again, another really sort of powerful.

19:51:50 photograph, simple.

19:51:52 Yet, coming together, one, just two friends, again, smiling, having a good time.

19:51:58 But that American-ness, right, was very present in the photograph holding a football there on the shores of.

19:52:07 Um, California.

19:52:09 Um, and so... and just simply titled Friendship, right?

19:52:13 So, I don't...

19:52:15 Mm-hmm, and all members of the fraternity, the Muslim fraternity. I don't suppose he is by chance here?

19:52:23 Yes, okay, very good, sorry.

19:52:25 Thank you, and congratulations.

19:52:33 Okay, and finally...

19:52:38 Um, to first place. We found a very sort of powerful photograph.

19:52:43 by Muhammad on, um, the stillness between prayers.

19:52:48 And again, we found this was a very sort of powerful photograph of two.

19:52:53 Um, young women saying that Amaz next to some water.

19:52:59 Um, and we just found, again, this expression of sort of marking a space of belonging.

19:53:04 So here's sort of a close-up of the photograph.

19:53:08 of claiming space, and for Muslims, wherever you are, you can just.

19:53:13 claim a space for your prayer time, and that becomes your mosque at that moment, in that temporary mormon.

19:53:19 So it's always a fleeting moment, but it's also a moment of togetherness, of sharing in that moment.

19:53:25 And so, is Muhammad by chance?

19:53:29 Here, tonight.

19:53:30 No. Okay. We will get to him. So, I want to thank... it was a very tough.

19:53:37 decision, actually, there were some amazing photographs there. Um, and we will have them all up.

19:53:43 actually on our website. We encourage all of you to sort of look at them and sort of reflect and contemplate on them.

19:53:49 Um, and we thank all of you who sort of submitted photographs or part of the competition, and we look forward to all of your, sort of.

19:53:57 contributions next year, when we have the second annual photo competition.

19:54:01 Okay? So, on that note, I want to thank you all for being here again tonight, for your patience, and I hope you take it away something.

19:54:12 um, sort of to reflect on about American history, about the place of Muslims and minorities, particularly in the United States.

19:54:20 And the ongoing struggle that we all have, and that we all have to face, regardless of our identity and where we come from, okay?

19:54:28 Now, as I mentioned, there's cookies and wraps, so please feel free to grab one or two on your way out, or share. Unfortunately, we can't eat here, but if you want to.

19:54:38 stand outside again and have a little more to eat.

19:54:40 please feel free to do so. And thank you again.

19:54:53 Yeah,

19:54:57 we can do it.

19:54:58 Thank you.

19:55:03 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for coming.