

Time Froze

Rosa Kourani

I was eight months pregnant when 9/11 happened. My husband is Arabic and was working on 26th Street in Manhattan where he owns a business.

I saw the attacks on TV. At first, I thought it was a movie, but slowly I realized it was real. I waited for my husband's call. Time froze and the silence was very loud. After many hours, my husband was able to contact me. I was so relieved to hear that he was okay.

Twelve days after the attack, I had my child, but I lived in fear. People treated my husband with disrespect because of his Arab ethnicity. I worried every day when he left the house in the morning to go to work. I worried that he might not come home to us. Everything about my world changed.

Yet, I knew I had to make extra efforts to be well for my family. At that time, I was in the process of becoming a citizen. This involved a tremendous amount of focus on my part. My husband was trying to become a citizen as well, and I was able to help him. So, out of this terrible act came a great sense of urgency to achieve our goals. My child was a real blessing too. I feel more confident these days, as a citizen, mother, wife, and ESL student. I'm grateful for my life and my beautiful family.



Rosa Kourani is a student at We Make the Road New York.

What About You?

Have you ever felt that “time froze”? What was it like?

Have you experienced or witnessed anti-Arab discrimination? If so, describe it.

Rosa claims four identities. List them below in the left column. In the right column, list some of your identities.

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