

Interview With the Family of a Terrorist

Duffy: Hello, my name is Jim Duffy. I'm President of the Communications Division of the American Broadcasting Company. Welcome to another segment of *American Television and You*. These programs are brought to you as a public service because we believe that viewers have a right to know the facts about how this medium works.

Tonight we're going to explore the Fairness Doctrine, a rule established by the Federal Communications Commission to insure that a variety of viewpoints are heard on issues of importance to the public. This rule requires TV stations and networks to provide everyone, even those holding extremely unpopular views, an opportunity to express those views on the air.

To help us better understand this complex concept and how it affects you, we have ABC correspondent Jeff Greenfield standing by live in Lebanon.

Jeff, are you there?

Greenfield: Yes, Jim I'm here. And by the way, I'm not in Lebanon. I'm in Syria.

Duffy: I'm sorry, Jeff. All those Mid-East countries look the same to me.

Greenfield: No problem, Jim. As you can see, I'm here in the home of an Arab family, but as you and our viewers have probably guessed, they're no ordinary Arab family. This is the family of the well-known Palestinian terrorist, Abdul Ali Ahmad. Here with me are Mr. and Mrs. Ahmad and their four sons, all of whom, coincidentally, are also named Abdul. Now, Mrs. Ahmad, when did you first realize your son was a terrorist?

Mrs. Ahmad: When he was still a baby, I remember I tried to take him outside, but before we even made it to the courtyard, he said, "Reach for the sky! I'm taking this crib to Damascus!"

Greenfield: Mr. Ahmad, were there any other early indications that he might turn out this way?

Mr. Ahmad: Yes. Looking back on it now I suppose I should have seen it all along. His favorite saying as a child was "Kalishnikov rifle." And he was always stealing his mother's veil and putting it on. He had a thing about masks. I remember I used to carry him on my shoulders, but whenever a plane flew over he'd get so excited I'd have to put him down. He'd point up at it and jump up and down and yell, "Pan Am! Pan Am! Mine! Mine!"

Greenfield: Well, as you know, the reason we've asked you to be on American television is because our government's Fairness Doctrine requires that we provide you with a forum to express your views, even though most Americans find them thoroughly despicable. But we've heard over and over again from the families of the hostages, and now we want to hear your side of the story. What was it that drove your son to become a terrorist?

Mrs. Ahmad: He's a bad boy. That's all. A very bad boy.

Greenfield: I don't think you understood my question, Mrs. Ahmad. Your son is obviously attempting to make some political statement through these grotesque acts. Most Americans are woefully ignorant about the pol-

itics and history of the Middle East, and they just don't understand your son's motives for the horrible things he does.

Mrs. Ahmad: Motives? What motives? he enjoys pain and suffering. That's all. He used to slaughter goats just to watch them in agony, even though all he ever ate was tabouli and baba ghanoush.

Greenfield: I guess I'm referring to what we in the United States call the "Palestinian question."

Mrs. Ahmad: The what?

Mr. Ahmad: You know, dear. The Palestinian question. He wants to know why we chose somebody as silly and uncharismatic as Yasser Arafat to be our spokesman. That's what you meant, wasn't it?

Greenfield: Uh, not exactly. I was talking about the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Didn't you tell me before we went on the air that you were born in what's presently the country of Israel and that your family used to live there for quite a number of years?

Mr. Ahmad: Yes, that is correct.

Greenfield: Doesn't that cause you to have any ill feelings toward the Israelis and, by asso-

Abdul: A car bomb.

Greenfield: And you?

Abdul: An airline captain.

Greenfield: And you?

Abdul: I'm not sure. I either want to open my own carpet shop or murder Americans. I haven't decided which yet.

Greenfield: Well, Jim, there you have it. An extraordinary opposing view which, whatever you think of it, you have to agree increases our understanding of one of the most perplexing issues of our time. And that's what the Fairness Doctrine's all about. This is Jeff —

Abdul: Put your hands up!

Greenfield: What?

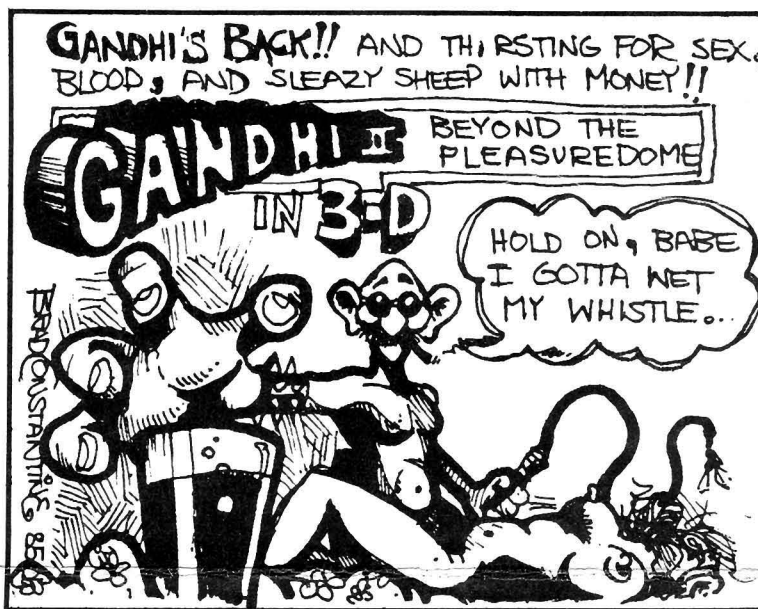
Abdul: You heard him! Don't ask questions! Just put your hands up and keep them up!

Abdul: We demand the immediate release of our two brothers Abdul and Abdul who are in jail in Bahrain!

Greenfield: Hello, Jim Duffy? Can you hear me in New York?

Duffy: Yes, Jeff. We can hear you. We've lost visual contact, but we can still hear you.

Greenfield: Good. I think these guys mean



ciation, with Americans?

Mr. Ahmad: No. Not really. If you've seen one desert you've seen 'em all. Besides, it's just land. Since when has anybody been concerned over a little land?

Greenfield: I'm confused. You mean the reason your son hates the United States has nothing to do with the fact that it's such a staunch ally of Israel?

Mr. Ahmad: No. Not at all. He just can't stand Bruce Springsteen.

Greenfield: Well, maybe your sons can shed some light on this. Do you mind if I ask them some questions?

Mr. Ahmad: No. Please. Go right ahead.

Greenfield: Thank you. Abdul... no, not you. I'll get to you in a minute. I'd like to ask your brother a question first. Do you want to be a terrorist like your brother when you grow up?

Abdul: No, sir.

Greenfield: What do you want to be, then?

business.

Abdul: We're serious, Mr. ABC television! We've got your correspondent and if you want to see him again, you better see that our brothers are released!

Greenfield: You better do as they say, Jim. If you don't give them what they want, who knows what they'll do?

Duffy: Okay, Jeff. We'll see what we can do. That was ABC correspondent Jeff Greenfield in Lebanon... I'm sorry, Syria. We hope you found this evening's segment on the Fairness Doctrine both entertaining and enlightening. Please join us for upcoming segments when we will explore the relationship between the government and the press, with guests Secretary of State George Shultz and the family of ABC correspondent Jeff Greenfield. I'm Jim Duffy, and this has been *American Television and You*. Thank you for watching.

— Robert Myers