

# “THE BRIDGE GENERATION”

**FOR LESSON***Growing Up  
and Fitting In***NARRATOR** **Asad Dandia**

**DANDIA** Well, my, my father and my mother immigrated to the United States in the early '80s. I was born in the early '90s. Growing up in Brighton Beach, I grew up in I guess what I would call a Muslim enclave in, surrounded by Little Russia. We had our local mosque, our doctor, our dentist, our grocery store, our school. So it was a very tight-knit community. Everyone knew everybody else and it's still more or less the same up until today.

RUN TIME **1:55**

Building community — I like to think of community as a multifaceted entity. So I would say it was a nebulous between the school, the mosque, and other social networks that we had. Because we were an immigrant community and we largely still are an immigrant community, we tend to gravitate toward one another much more strongly. And so building community was something that, that, thankfully for us, came naturally, Pakistani Muslim Americans. Although I — I — I do have to say that there have been challenges and obstacles, given the fact that I grew up in a different cultural milieu than my parents. You know, I'm sort of like the American child. My generation is I guess what you'd call the bridge generation between the culture of back home and the culture here. So there were some barriers connecting with the adults, but they appreciated the fact that we were sort of, I guess, puncturing our own unique identity, you know, while not completely giving up, or completely abandoning the past in this new sort of landscape that we find ourselves in. So community, it's, it's — it was something that was easy, but all — but it also had its challenges.

**BIO** Asad Dandia was born in 1992 in Brooklyn and raised in Brighton Beach. While attending Brooklyn College as an undergraduate, he co-founded the nonprofit charity Muslims Giving Back. Over the course of the next several years, he became involved with a number of other activist and religious organizations, including Make the Road New York and the Center for Spiritual Life at New York University. In 2013, Dandia joined the *Raza v. City of New York* class-action lawsuit that successfully sued the New York City Police Department for its prejudicial surveillance of Muslim communities, including Muslims Giving Back.

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