

“FIRST IMPRESSIONS”

FOR LESSON

*Listening as
a Creative Act*



When I first got to Brooklyn, obviously you had to drive from JFK through East New York — and back in the '80s, East New York was not what it looks like now. So in my head I'm — I'm imagining the beautiful city, New York, the Statue of Liberty — and it greets you as soon as you get to the airport. So we drove through East New York, and I see burned-down houses and — and I'm saying to my family, “What is — this is New York? Are you kidding me? This is not what I'm thinking.” They said, “Yup. Well, you get to see it.” So we drove through Atlantic Avenue, Eastern Parkway, and eventually got to Downtown Brooklyn, and I was able to see the Twin Towers. I was like, “Oh, wow. This is what I came for.” So that same day, believe it or not, I walked to the [Brooklyn Heights] Promenade, just down here, just to see that view. And it was an amazing sight. I took some pictures too, just to prove it.

RUN TIME **2:29**

To be honest with you, I think Brooklyn is home for me, in a lot of ways. And when I think back — I think when I first came here, even though it was strange and starting new, I felt as if it was home. And I used to think, “You know, I'm going to be working here for a couple of years. I'll get my education, make my money, then leave.” But then it didn't take too long to realize this is home. This is where I changed my life, for the better.

Wow. I guess I love Brooklyn! Yeah. I mean, this is — I mean, I — I look at it, like, really more — more than home. Um — this is where I met my wife. This is where I have my kids. This is where I lived most of my life. I think Brooklyn is home for me. And I think it's going to continue to be home, even when I retire. Brooklyn is part of us, as we are part of it. And I wish the best for Brooklyn. That's how I see it.

NARRATOR **Ahmed Nasser**

BIO Ahmed Nasser was born in 1966 in the village of Almayanah in Yemen. He immigrated to the United States in 1986 and settled in Brooklyn Heights. He worked in family-owned restaurants and earned undergraduate degrees from New York City College of Technology in Brooklyn and Baruch College in Manhattan before joining the New York City Police Department in 2000. As a detective and member of the Community Affairs Bureau, Nasser worked to improve communication between Muslim immigrant communities and the NYPD in the years following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. He co-founded the American Muslim Law Enforcement Officers Association in 2001 and the NYPD Muslim Officers Society in 2004.

CITATION Nasser, Ahmed, Excerpt from oral history interview conducted by Liz H. Strong, September 18, 2018, Muslims in Brooklyn oral histories, 2018.006.40; Brooklyn Historical Society.