Ever been part of a group that is hated and misunderstood? You yourself, or maybe just you as a person. Wait, do you know what alienation means? The state of being isolated by an activity or group to which one should belong to. Think of that definition not as a sentence that you read and understood the meaning of, but as real life consequence to certain types of people. To myself as well.

Take the Jews during the years of the horrific Holocaust for example and look how they were singled out as a people and viewed as the opposite, or wrong. The Germans didn’t even see the Jews as equal people to themselves. They did not think the Jews should be able to walk on the same sidewalks as themselves. Germans saw themselves as better. Action was taken on the Jews, put them in Concentration camps to suffer and be mistreated for the rest of their lives. Their bodies malnourished, skinnier than skeletons themselves. Young children, parents killed right in front of them. People’s lives changed forever. They were alienated in real life.
But how the Jews felt physically and literally during the horrific times of the Holocaust, is how myself and majority of other Muslims in America have felt for years. Ever since the tragedy of September 11, 2001 there has been a dynamic shift in the way Islam and Muslims are looked at in the United States. Women who cover themselves and wear the hijab are easily noticed and singled out as Muslim. Men who look as if they’re of Arab descent are purposely avoided by many people. Ben Carson himself, in an interview on CNN stated that he would absolutely not be okay with putting a Muslim in charge of this nation. He also believes that the religion of Islam is against the values of America and the US Constitution itself. Donald Trump has had his share of instances where he was believed to have wanted to ban Muslims in America in general. How would you feel now if you were a Muslim living in America? This religion is the most misinterpreted and misunderstood religion in America today.

One might say that the severity of Islamophobia isn’t that of the antisemitism the Germans had towards Jews, but you wouldn’t understand the
misunderstandings you feel for being disliked for various foolish reasons. Islamophobia is defined by researchers and policy groups as an exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from social, political, and civic life. 9/11 attacks heightening the severity of the hate of Muslims year by year in America since the year 2001. People calling us evil monsters trying to destroy American culture. Woman who cover themselves and wear the hijab are targeted easier for harm and disrespect. Arabs are paid very close attention to in public places, especially airports. Younger kids told by their parents not to make friends with Muslim classmates in school. There is a belief within many native born American non-Muslims that we as Muslims are violent people. If you take the time to look into what Islam really is, you may find that the actual word Islam is derived from the Arabic root "Salema," meaning peace, purity, submission and obedience. We are obedient to the one and only god, the almighty Allah. There isn’t a Surah in

the Quran that Allah tells us to harm or hate others. A Trump supporter Charlie Marzka was quoted saying, "I think that we should definitely disallow any Muslims from coming in. Any of them." "The reason is simple, we can’t identify what their attitude is." As a Muslim, I believe I can speak on behalf of the Muslim community who feels mistreated and misunderstood in America when I say, we just want to erase the negative stigmas about Muslims by a lot of Americans; black and white Americans.

There was a time where I felt as uncomfortable as possible, being a Muslim man in this country. It was the day I went to apply for food stamps. The lady helping me was nice and we related, because there was a time where she lived in New Jersey, and I happen to be from New Jersey. We had a few nice conversations, until we got into the talks of September 11th, 2001. I don’t remember specifically how we got into the actual conversation, but it happened. She tells me how she recalls Muslims in New Jersey and New York, celebrating. She said that she truly
believed that the Muslims were happy for the attacks. She remembers seeing Arab Muslims jumping up and down in joy, after the terrible September 11th attacks. She recalls them showing no sympathy for the American people, and she tells her daughter not to be friends with any Muslims in school. She said she doesn’t trust them, at all. I tried to explain to her that all Muslims are not like that. I told her that I know so many good Muslims in my life. She had her mind made up. The entire time, I’m just sitting and thinking. I already had zoned out of the food stamps process. I was just waiting to get it over with and get out of there. My dignity, my heart would not let me speak up. I was afraid. She never found out that day that I was Muslim myself. I didn’t want to startle her or make her feel uncomfortable, even though she just did it to me. I was afraid to be a Muslim that day.