

Zeitoun: how americans treats muslims

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Despite warnings of evacuation, Abdulrahman Zeitoun, a Syrian-American owner of a painting and contracting company in New Orleans, chose to stay when hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. During his canoe trip journey after Katrina, Zeitoun encountered many people who were trapped in their homes and in need of his help. Risking his life to save others, Zeitoun was falsely accused of stealing and dealing drugs because of his race. In Zeitoun, Dave Eggers portrays the view that America has towards Muslim people and how people are treated unjustly simply because of how they look.

A few days after Katrina hit, the levees broke, leaving the trapped civilians in shock and poverty. People who remained in the city had little resources, causing many people to break into other homes and stores to find whatever they can to survive. Zeitoun sailed on his canoe around the city and helped people who were trapped in their homes, including two dogs that were left behind by their owners. He felt that he was unable to leave his business because he felt responsible for the damaged houses throughout the duration of the storm.

Also, Zeitoun felt that his home was "worth fighting for" (70) Zeitoun believed that by staying in New Orleans, he felt as if this opportunity was given to him by God to help the people who were still trapped in the city. The National Guards showed up at Zeitoun's house with guns, assuming that Zeitoun and his friends were part of the Al Qaeda. The guards forcefully tackled them to the ground and arrested them. The National Guards did not inform them why they were being arrested and taken into custody.

Zeitoun was taken to an interrogation room where he was stripped naked and his rectum searched for imported goods. They were forced to sleep on

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the ground and could not touch the jail bars or there would be consequences. Zeitoun was accused of terrorist activity, thus he and his friends were treated inhumanly. During the brutal treatment in jail, Zeitoun had splinters on his foot and asked for medical attention, but his request was denied without consideration due to his status. Eventually, his splinter got worse and he had to perform a medical procedure by cutting the splinter out himself.

The soldiers and police in charge of the city after the hurricane arrested anyone who looked remotely suspicious and even those who did not. Instead of serving the public by helping them in the days following the hurricane, they took the civilians to the Greyhound bus station where they dispensed people into cages. Zeitoun and his companions were denied their rights, including the right to make a phone call. Knowing his constitutional rights, Zeitoun makes desperate pleas to the guards to have the opportunity to call his wife, Kathy, in Arizona. However, Zeitoun is repeatedly met with answers such as, " Phone's don't work.

You guys are terrorists. You're Taliban. " (222) Based on how they looked, they were treated as terrorists and the law seemingly did not apply to them. When Zeitoun's wife, Kathy, finds out that he was arrested, she did not give up fighting until he was out of jail. Kathy did everything she could to get her husband out of jail. Kathy found a lawyer and found out exactly where Zeitoun was. When Kathy came to see Zeitoun, Raleigh, Zeitoun's lawyer told her that it would cost \$75, 000 to bail her husband out. The price would have been lower if Zeitoun was not charged of being a terrorist.

Zeitoun was wrongly treated because he seemed to be different from everyone else, due to his ethnicity, heritage, and beliefs. The National Security were afraid that Zeitoun was a terrorists that would put the country into turmoil. The soldiers and police abused their powers and treated people that are different with brutality. Dave Eggers was trying to show the reader how people can be wrongly punished based on their background, race, culture, and religions even if they mean no harm. Dave Egger's book illustrates how people tend to jump into conclusions and make fast assumptions of others without getting to know them.