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British Asian man 'victim of racial profiling' by US border officials

Amreet Surana says he was treated 'like dirt' and held for 13 hours 'with little food or water' before being deported

Paul Gallagher | @PMGallagher1 | Tuesday 26 January 2016 | [12 comments](#)



News Voices Culture



Amreet Surana

Another British Asian man has claimed he has been a victim of

racial profiling by US border officials and deported from the United States because of his skin colour.

Security consultant Amreet Surana said he was treated “like dirt” and held for 13 hours “with little food or water” before being forced to leave the country.

The 24-year-old, from Thurmaston in Leicestershire, said he was stopped when he landed at Detroit Airport from London Heathrow on 17 January, while trying to catch a connecting flight to Arizona, and then sent to be interviewed by immigration officials. Mr Surana said officials concluded he was “an illegal immigrant denying a US citizen a job”.



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The alleged incident happened just weeks after a family of 11 British Asians were taken from the queue at Gatwick while boarding and prevented from flying to the US for a holiday to Disneyland. London-based imam Ajmal Masroor also spoke out last month saying he had experienced the same treatment along with around 20 British Muslim families.

Mr Surana, who is understood not to be Muslim, said he told US Customs and Border Protection (CPB) he worked as an international business manager for Nottingham-based Octavian and was visiting its US branch in Phoenix. He also pointed out he had the correct Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) form, which allows citizens of 38 countries, including most of Europe, to travel to the US without a visa.

“In the space of 20 minutes they concluded that I was an illegal immigrant working in America, denying a US citizen a job,” Mr Surana said. “I was threatened with fraud, I was threatened with banishment from the USA and imprisonment. You feel dehumanised to the extent that you feel like a piece of dirt on the floor.”

“The whole experience was traumatic, frightening, embarrassing, stressing and haunting for me and my family. I wish this on nobody. I believe I was profiled because of my appearance.”

The CPB denied racially profiling Mr Surana. It said in a statement: “CBP firmly denies any claims that a traveller can be subject to an admissibility interview because of racial profiling. CBP is charged with inspecting all travellers regardless of nationality, race, sex, religion, faith, or spiritual beliefs. Accusations of lengthy detentions by CBP are also incorrect.”

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99 days ago

Well yes, its time the term " Racial Profiling" gets its name changed, to fit in with the times ! How about Muzzbusters ?

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99 days ago

This is a poorly researched story and an inflammatory headline.

Most media outlets seem to have avoided it but BBC, Independent, Daily Mail, Russia Today and Press TV (Iranian) have covered it.

The visa waiver program allows entry for up to 90 days for tourism and very very limited business purposes mostly limited to attending a conference, a meeting, negotiate a contract or settle an estate. Anything more and a work visa is required. (Visa waiver offers the same purpose of visit as the B visas shown here <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/visit/visitor.html>)

The BBC had a similarly poor story however it was updated after first being published to include:

"Mr Surana estimates he spends "about three months a year" in the country while staying at his boss's house in Arizona."

It is no surprise that the subject of this story was deported as the immigration officer would have seen his past extended visits which are not compatible with any of the above permitted business reasons for visiting on visa waiver or a B visa.

To complain of being held for 13 hours in airport holding facilities (an interview room, not a cell!) before being put on a flight back to the UK is really rather rich too. Detroit has one flight a day to Heathrow so I don't imagine a regular passenger could have done the turnaround any quicker.

It is not a surprise that the subject would be angry being deported back to the UK and seek negative press coverage for US Citizenship and Immigration Service regardless of where blame might really lie.

One might have expected to have the sense to keep quiet about his trouble and not run to the press because I can't imagine any of this coverage will help him should he try and apply for a US visa.

What is surprising is that The Independent would print this story with the subjects unproven allegations in the headline.

I am certain that staff of The Independent know not travel to the US to 'visit' their US office on the visa waiver program!

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williamhicks2

100 days ago

.....and it sounds like a BS story for the gullible

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+1 likes  



williamhicks2

100 days ago

is he British?

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0 likes  



Thonat

100 days ago

Is this man British or Asian? Is the UK now identifying British people as the Americans do, say African American? I would think if he had two nationalities that may be a reason to deny him, flip-flopping like that...lol. Maybe he is a British man of Asian descent?

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John B Ellis

100 days ago

Given that he was visiting the USA in connection with his job I

suppose he had no choice, but it's certainly not a country I'd want to visit these days. Way too many crazies and paranoids, all too evident when you watch the Trump rallies, and a fair number of them - to judge from what I hear of people's own personal experience, not just this story - working in immigration.

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deadsparrow

100 days ago

US Immigration treats everyone like dirt. Its in their mission statement.

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Wally

100 days ago

has every muslim terrorist looked the stereotype of this man or is this column based on indiscriminate theory ?

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mapleleaf4

100 days ago

Advice to all British or Europeans with a muslim appearance.....Don't visit the US if you are not prepared to be interrogated...It happens to ALL US visitors...It is an unpleasant and sometimes nasty experience but this is the normal practice to prevent terrorist attacks in America.

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John B Ellis

100 days ago

From what I hear, the treatment's by no means confined to those who might be thought to look like Muslims.

Which is fine - I'll cheerfully stay away.

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sweet

100 days ago

Was Lee Rigby profiled by muslim attackers?

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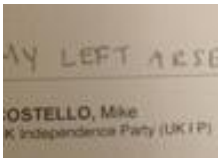
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