



JAN 31

A Minnesotan on the Muslim ban

Cole White

We're only less than two weeks into Donald Trump's presidency. As it turns out, he's actually sincere about all the outrageous promises he made on the campaign.

So let's talk about the Muslim ban.

I realize Trump has said that this is "not the Muslim ban" he promised during the campaign and even after the campaign on his actual website. But rather saying that "You're looking at people that come in in many cases with evil intentions. I don't want that. They're ISIS. They're coming in under false pretense. I don't want that."

That's a fair point. We don't want ISIS here, but luckily ISIS came along so we can stop worrying about Al Qaeda. If you happened to forget as well, 15 of the 19 September 11 hijackers were Saudi Arabian.

Guess which country wasn't on the banned list? It's almost like Trump has reasons not to hate the Saudis.

So who are these dangerous terrorists we have to keep out? Luckily I've actually paid attention over the past year and I will tell you who they are.

It turns out, looking at them isn't terrifying—it's horrifying.

I remember this photo. That was three-year-old Aylan Kurdi, whose body washed ashore on a Turkish beach last fall. That photo became a lightningrod for international outrage until it devolved into a lightningrod for international forgetfulness.

Nothing changed after Kurdi's body was removed from that beach. If you want to read the words of a father who lost everything, you can do that here.

Then there was this photo, which became the new face of the Syrian plight until that too was forgotten. It turns out it's hard to keep up with bloodied, shell-shocked children and the Kardashians at the same time.

These are dangerous times, and it's easy to sit behind a computer screen and say that it isn't your problem. It's easy to say these people should've fought for their country. It's easy to call them cowards for fleeing.

But you would be wrong.

To load your family on a boat—knowing full-well that none of you may ever see the other side of that water—just for a chance at a better life isn't cowardice. Wanting a life for your family without bombs or bullets isn't cowardice—that's a chance at a life every person alive deserves.

That isn't cowardice. That's bravery.

What was allowed to happen in Aleppo and other Syrian cities will become the greatest disgrace of our time. There's no changing that now.

There's also no changing us—because we don't need to change.

I was eight-years-old in 1996 when a blizzard swept through my hometown in rural southwest Minnesota. In that blizzard, three men became stranded.

Those three strangers stayed three days in our home until that storm passed. We fed them, we sheltered them and we made sure they survived in that desolate part of country.

Would that have changed if they were dark skinned or Muslim?

No.

We did that because that's what we as Minnesotans are raised to do.

As Minnesotans, we do not see people alone in a blizzard outside our door and worry if they're dangerous.

We see people alone in a blizzard outside our door and we worry if they're going to survive.

These people who are fleeing war, they're not bloodthirsty militants and warlords. They are families. They are children. They are doctors and teachers and engineers. They will not make America great again—they will keep America great.

The conflicts they flee are their blizzards. They will pass in time. To shut your doors on them is to wish them death. That isn't what we do. That isn't how we're raised.

If you support this Muslim ban, you are free to do so. This country grants you that.

If you support this Muslim ban, you can call yourself an American. Your birthright gives you that.

But do not dare call yourself a Minnesotan. There is far more to that name than just being born here.

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