

MOHAMMED AMIN, 31 (Jordan) | **RAOUF MANKARYOUS**, 32, Massachusetts (Egypt) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 23 (Tunisia) | **REZAZAZAI**, 25 (Afghanistan) | **MUHAMMADQAYYUM**, 58, New York (Pakistan)

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From: Rajiv Dabhadkar

Subject: Breach of Privacy !

Date: March 5, 2005 3:32 AM EST

Just wondering how come my name is listed in the site.. when I am alive and featured in teh recent article on computerworld.com. Could u please explain

regards, Rajiv Dabhadkar

ALIVE and Rocking in India

MOHAMMED AMIN, 31 (Jordan) | **RAOUF MANKARYOUS**, 32, Massachusetts (Egypt) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 23 (Tunisia) | **REZAZAZAI**, 25 (Afghanistan) | **MUHAMMADQAYYUM**, 58, New York (Pakistan) | **FATI AWAD** | **HANI FATHI** | **SYED ASIF**, 50, Metuchen, New Jersey (Pakistan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 35, New Castle, Pennsylvania (Egypt) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s, Brooklyn, New York (Sudan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s, New Jersey (Jordan) | **MOHAMMED RAFIQ BUTT**, 55, Queens, New York (Pakistan) | **ALAA KESBEH**, Houston, Texas (Palestine) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, Kentucky (Mauritania) | **MUHAMMAD MADDY**, 45, Queens, New York (Egypt) | **YASSER FATHI**, 30 (Egypt) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s, Paterson, New Jersey (Egypt) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s, Seattle,

From: Rajiv Dabhadkar

Subject: Breach of Privacy !

Date: March 5, 2005 4:26:31 AM EST

I would like to check the credibility of the database of names that you have in your site. And your method of authenticating the same before putting information online. I have found reference to my name in the database. And would like to communicate my dislike towards the same. I am the founder of an organization of software technology workers in America and though in India presently to work build the organization basics, I'd very much like to arrive in the US. However, am also in communication with individuals in Washington DC, and hence finding my name amongst those disappeared IN America is most humiliating. As a reference, I have been featured in the LATEST issue of Computer World (print as well as online) <http://www.computerworld.com> and will further the stake to my credibility via documenting emails to those concerned within North America. Looking forward to having my name removed from the database and an early response Hurt deeply

Rajiv Dabhadkar

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From: Visible Collective
Subject: Re: Breach of Privacy !
Date: March 5, 2005 9:17:46 AM EST

Hi Rajiv

The list of names came from Migration Policy Institute's list of men detained since 9/11 Most likely it is another Rajiv. Have you ever been to the US? If not, it is obviously someone else as it lists there place of domicile in the US as well.

-Naeem on behalf of Visible Collective

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From: Visible Collective

Subject: Re: Breach of Privacy !

Date: March 5, 2005 10:25:05 AM EST

Mr. Rajiv

It is obviously someone else with the same name as this person is listed as being 32 years old, and living in New Jersey prior to detention. If you have never been to US, it is obviously not you. By the way, your name is not so uncommon so entirely feasible that there is someone else with same name. The source for all names in the database is a report by MPI:

America's Challenge: Domestic Security, Civil Liberties, and National Unity After September 11
Migration Policy Institute, 1400 16th Street NW, Suite 300, Washington DC 20036

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From: Rajiv Dabhadkar

Subject: Re: I am ALIVE

Date: March 5, 2005 11:38:48 AM EST

No..I havent been detained ever. I arrived back here with my own free will. Could i receive the contact person at the Migration Policy Institute. I'd like to recify this at source. Your effort will allow me to set a right course in life.

regards

Rajiv

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From: Visible Collective

Subject: Re: Breach of Privacy !

Date: March 5, 2005 11:45:19 AM EST

Hi Rajiv

The phone # was listed in the other e-mail I sent. If they take you off, let me know and we will take it off our website as well. But just to be clear, we are not for any closed borders. We are a group of artists and activists who have been doing public art interventions around post 9/11 detention and profiling. The list is part of a lightbox and wall print we created for a meditation on the enormity of the security panic led civil liberties breakdown. If anything, we are trying to start conversations that would make these sorts of profiling unacceptable. Our project would never be "used" to keep anyone out, the opposite in fact (if anything).

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From: Rajiv Dabhadkar

Subject: Re: Breach of Privacy !

Date: March 5, 2005 12:03:51 PM EST

Sir;

Would you mind doing a search under my name on google.com

"Rajiv Dabhadkar"

The 9/11 incident has not only affected me .. not this immigration related thing again

I wanted a resolve, I began <http://www.nostops.org>

I Need to find the email address of the final point of contact...

Could u please help..

Rajiv

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From: Visible Collective

Subject: Re: Breach of Privacy !

Date: March 5, 2005 6:03:48 PM EST

Hello Rajiv, We did some research and now understand how your name is on the list. USA TODAY ran a story "Tech Workers Feel The Heat" (10/17/01) where your case was mentioned: *Rajiv Dabhadkar was three blocks from his New Jersey home on Oct. 2 when police motioned his car to the side of the road. Dabhadkar, a computer programmer from India here on an H-1B visa, was handcuffed and held in jail for several hours. When released, he was fined \$250 for an unpaid parking ticket. Though authorities gave him no reason for the seemingly harsh treatment, Dabhadkar speculates he was hassled because of his ethnicity. "I'm completely shaken." ...Before his arrest, Dabhadkar worked for 2 years on short-term projects for several firms, including Merrill Lynch and AT&T. He says office relations became more strained as economic woes mounted. Co-workers started leaving him "out of the loop" on decisions. "They treated me as though I was non-existent because I wasn't American," he says....The heightened security and anxiety have taken an emotional toll on workers like Dabhadkar, who has lived in the USA for 10 years, has a family and is looking for work. "What should I do?" he asks. "I'm at my wits' end."*

There is also a photo of you, so it seems it was with your permission. When MPI was compiling list of people who were detained after 9/11, your name made it on the list based on this. But just to be clear, our project opposes these arbitrary detentions. So the purpose of including you in the project is a positive, not a negative.

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From: Rajiv Dabhadkar

Subject: Apologies from me !

Date: March 20, 2005 5:16:41 AM EST

Respected Sir;

I apologise for having written a few emails to you in bad taste. You were absolutely right in your approach of the web site, and with the events following in my personal life here.. a reference made on google.com was actually a reference made by me in my own personal life.. and it was traumatic... just that my mind chose to relive the bad memories ..!

And I got uncomfortable at wrote those emails to you.

Please accept my apologies .. I was being too self-centric in my feelings..!

Deep regards and with sincerity

Rajiv Dabhadkar

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From: Visible Collective

Subject: Re: Apologies from me !

Date: March 20, 2005 10:15 AM EST

Hi Rajiv

That is ok, no need for apology.

But I am thinking maybe we should discuss the whole experience in wider context in public.

You being tech-savvy were able to find the website, the other people who were caught in this unfair crackdown don't even know about any other recourses or representations of their names in media they may or may not want. Perhaps we can have an e-mail conversation, which could become an essay in the future.

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From: Rajiv Dabhadkar

Subject: Request for response

Date: November 17, 2005 12:57:20 AM EST

Sir;

We have had communicated earlier...

I wish to clear my name of those detained in America..

Who should i contact .i am in India presently... and with a choice..

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From: Rajiv Dabhadkar

Subject: Re: Request for response

Date: November 18, 2005 12:18:18 AM EST

I'd very much like to meet up with you. I am in Bombay. What are u involved with wrt the project??

MOHAMMED AMIN, 31 (Jordan) | **RAOUF MANKARYOUS**, 32, Massachusetts (Egypt) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 23(Tunisia)|**REZAZAZAI**,25(Afghanistan)|**MUHAMMADQAYYUM**,58,NewYork(Pakistan) | **FATI AWAD** | **HANI FATHI** | **SYED ASIF**, 50, Metuchen, New Jersey (Pakistan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 35, New Castle, Pennsylvania (Egypt) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s, Brooklyn, New York (Sudan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s, New Jersey (Jordan) | **MOHAMMED RAFIQ BUTT**, 55, Queens, New York (Pakistan) | **ALAA KESBEH**, Houston, Texas (Palestine) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, Kentucky (Mauritania) | **MUHAMMAD MADDY**, 45, Queens, New York (Egypt) | **YASSER FATHI**, 30 (Egypt) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s, Paterson, New Jersey (Egypt) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s, Seattle, Washington (Iraq) | **AHMED SALIM DESAI**, 40s, Florida (India) | **SIDI MOHAMED OULD BAH**, 32, Louisville, Kentucky (Mauritania) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 20s, Findlay, Ohio (Israel) | **UNSIR HAFEEZ**, 24 (Pakistan) | **MOHAMED ABDIRAHMAN KARIYE**, 41, Oregon (Somalia) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s, Bronx, New York (Pakistan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, Kentucky (Mauritania) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s (Egypt) | **MEDHAT SHEHTA** | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 20s, Findlay, Ohio (Israel) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s, Bronx, New York (Pakistan) | **GURDEEP SINGH WANDER**, 48, Washington, New Jersey (India) | **TARIQ HUSSAIN**, 27, Pennsylvania (Pakistan) | **MEKKI HAMED MEKKI**, 30, Greensboro, North Carolina (Sudan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 20s, Missouri (Israel) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 20s, Tri-state Area (Palestine) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, Kentucky (Mauritania) | **HATEF AL-ATABI**, 26 (Iraq) | **S.M. DURRANI**, San Bernadino, California (Pakistan) | **HAIDER AL-TAMIMI**, 28 (Iraq) | **ADHAM AMIN HASSOUN**, 40, Sunrise, Florida (Palestine) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 20s, Indiana (Egypt) | **MUKKARAM ALI**, 25, Oklahoma (India) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, Tri-state Area (Pakistan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 50, New York City, New York (Egypt) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 21, Brooklyn, New York (Pakistan) | **OSAMA SEWILAM**, Tri-state Area (Egypt) | **KHALID BAHAMMANI** | **MOHAMMAD IMRAN BUTT**, 37, Florida (Pakistan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Iraq) | **ABDELMUHSEN MAHMID HAMMAD**, 32, New York (Jordan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 29 (Pakistan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 20s, Missouri (Israel) | **CHOUDRY JAMIL KHAN** | **MOHAMED NIDHAL KHARBECH**, 19, Florida (Tunisia) | **SIVAN KURZBERG**, 20s, Weehawken, New Jersey (Israel) | **SOHAIL BASARIA**, Baton Rouge, Louisiana (Pakistan) | **OSSAMA ABDELALL**, 35, Minneapolis, Minnesota (Egypt) | **KHALED DARWICH**, 21, Tennessee (Egypt) | **SAJJAD NASSER**, 27 (Pakistan) | **SAKHER HAMMAD**, 24, Tri-state Area (Jordan) | **AFNAN KESBEH**, Houston, Texas (Palestine) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 22, Tri-state Area (Egypt) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s (Turkey) | **JAVED HASNAIN**, 19, Brooklyn, New York (Pakistan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 25 (Iraq) | **NAJMUL HASAN**, 33, Winsted, Connecticut (Pakistan) | **FAISAL AL-SALMI**, 34, Tempe, Arizona (Saudi Arabia) | **NABIL SARAMA**, 52, St. Petersburg, Florida (Palestine) | **THAR ABDELJABER**, 30 (Palestine) | **DIB ANEEF SHIHADAH**, 75, Illinois (Jordan) | **FAROUK ALI-HAIMOUD**, 22, Detroit, Michigan (Algeria) | **OMAR SHISHANI**, 47, Dearborn, Michigan (Chechnya) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, Kentucky (Mauritania) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 23, Brooklyn, New York (Pakistan) | **BASAM NAHSHAL**, Tri-state Area (Yemen) | **NAIM SHAHAB**, 27, Lindenhurst, New York (Afghanistan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s, Bronx, New York (Pakistan) | **MOHAMED ABDI**, 44, Alexandria, Virginia (Somalia) | **ARKAN ALANDON**, 29, Dearborn, Michigan (Iraq) | **SYED ALI**, New York (Pakistan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Iraq) | **ZINEDDINE TIROUDA**, 37, San Diego, California (Algeria) | **HANY IBRAHIM**, 26, Brooklyn, New York (Egypt) | **NABIL MOKHTAR FERCHICHI**, 21, Florida (Tunisia) | **SYED AMJAD ALI JAFFRI** | **IRFAN AHMED**, 39, Torrington, Connecticut (Pakistan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 35, St. Louis, Missouri (Saudi Arabia) | **AMYNAH LAKHANI**, Louisiana (Pakistan) | **ABDOUL SALAM ACHOU**, 37, New Jersey (Syria) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE** | **DENIZ BOZKURT**, 32, Tri-state Area (Turkey) | **MUSTAFA ABU JDAI**, 28, Tyler, Texas (Palestine) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, California (Pakistan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 46, Wisconsin (Iran) | **MOHAMED DESOUKY**, 28, Milford, Massachusetts (Egypt) | **SHARIF KESBEH**, Houston, Texas (Palestine) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 20s, Missouri (Israel) | **RAZA AHMAD**, New Jersey (Pakistan) | **MOHAMMED YOUSSEF**, Evansville, Indiana | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 20s (Saudi Arabia) | **ODED ELLNER**, 20s, Weehawken, New Jersey (Israel) | **AHMAD ALI** | **NASSER ABUALI** | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 20s, Missouri (Israel) | **MAZEN AL-NAJJAR**, 45, Tampa, Florida (Palestine) | **MORTADY ELMASRY**, 44, Florida | **ZAFER AL-ATASI**, 32, Nashville, Tennessee (Syria) | **JAMIL ALI JAGHMAN**, 26, Virginia Beach, Virginia (Yemen) | **MALEK MOHAMED SEIF**, 36 (Djibouti) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 41 (Egypt) | **BOB RAJCOOMAR**, 55, Lake Worth, Florida (India) | **SAMIR AL-MAZAAL**, 29 (Iraq) | **SAIMA SAIMA**, 32 (Pakistan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 30s (Pakistan) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 20s, Findlay, Ohio (Israel) | **GAMAL ALI** | **AHMED ATTIA HASSAN**, 26, Indiana (Egypt) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 40, Akron, Ohio (Syria) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 20s (Egypt) | **MALEK ZEIDAN**, 42, Paterson, New Jersey (Syria) | **RAJIV DABHADKAR**, 32, New Jersey (India) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 20s, Findlay, Ohio (Israel) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE**, 20s, New Jersey (Guyana) | **NAME UNAVAILABLE** | **ASHAR IQBAL BUTT**, 21, Pennsylvania (Pakistan) | **SABAH AL-HACHAMI**, 47, Detroit, Michigan (Iraq) | **SALEH HAMZE**, 31, Tri-state Area (Lebanon) | **YAZEED AL-SALMI**, 23, San Diego, California (Saudi Arabia) |

Take Me Off Your Database

Museum installation+email feedback loop

Visible Collective/Naeem Mohaiemen

Visible Collective is a project by Naeem Mohaiemen and collaborating artists, activists and lawyers. Since 2004, the project has traced hyphenated identities and ideas of loyalty in times of security panic. The majority of detained migrants in post-9/11 hysteria are from the invisible underclass - shadow citizens who drive our taxis, deliver our food, clean our tables, and sell fruit, coffee, and newspapers. The only time we “see” them is when we glance at the license in the taxi partition, or the ID card around their neck. When detained, they cease to exist in the consciousness. This impulse to create an insider-outsider dynamic with “loyalty” overtones has a long pedigree: WWI incarceration of German-Americans; 1919 detention of immigrants in the Anarchist bomb scare; WWII internment of Japanese-Americans; execution of the Rosenbergs; the HUAC “red scare”; harassment of Deacons For Defense; COINTEL-PRO infiltration of Black Panthers; and the rise of the Minutemen militia.
[disappearedinamerica.org]

A segment of the visuals on the preceding pages come from *Nahnu Wahaad, But Really Are We One?*, which was installed at the Queens Museum of Art. It was initially a lightbox with names of detainees (from a Migration Policy Institute database). The surface was covered with rice, which the audience had to clear to reveal the names.

Jesal Kapadia talks to Naeem Mohaiemen about the project, context and subtext.

Jesal: ‘...they cease to exist in the consciousness’ is a haunting thought. I remember my experience of moving my fingers through the trough of rice and first and foremost being moved by that experience. What made you want to work with rice as your material - was it a tactile choice, or more?

Naeem: Well, we conducted interviews with a few former detainees, and a prevailing concern was the absence of stabilizing forces in post-detention family hierarchy. In conversation, this was linked back to the act of “putting food on the table.” Additionally, I wanted to reference the Bengali slogan: *Bhat De Haramjada / Noile Manchithro Kheye Nebo* (Give Me Rice You Son Of A Bitch / Or I’ll Eat Your Whole Map). The intriguing back chatter is that the use of a putatively “asian staple” left us vulnerable to charges of ethnic absolutism by art critics. Consider this in the context of Tirdad Zolkhadr’s concept of “ethnic marketing” and the limits of art world internationalism. Interventions by a non-white artist can be mis-read through a prism of ethnicity.

Jesal: As you read the names, you see that some letters are in bright red (gray in the RM version). It doesn’t appear to be a random choice to me - is there a link between these letters and the title *Nahnu Wahaad*?

Naeem: It is a bit strange to verbalize the subtext - it risks becoming too clear. But anyway, the red shade under some of the names spell out, at a distance, the arabic phrase *nahnu wahaad* (we are one). We were being very tongue in cheek about this forced, temporary unity around a common experience of marginalization. Anyone familiar with the condition of South Asian migrants in the Middle East knows that the notion of a united *ummah*, sans racism or classism, is an illusion. In the museum space, once we installed the piece, we realized that in order to see the arabic outline you needed to get on a ladder, or hang off the roof to get the right perspective. Obviously no one was going to do that, so most people just thought it was a “design” fetish - law of unintended consequences.

Jesal: What do you think is the impact of political art in the public sphere? Where do political

interventions in art appear, and how do you think they are received?

Naeem: There is almost an impulse to go against, or “correct”, the impact of Okwui Enwezor’s *Documenta 11* (referred to as “the CNN Documenta” by the Village Voice). *The New York Sun*, which is a super right-wing rag, really hated the 2006 Whitney Biennial because they felt it was too political. I can imagine that crusty critic having a coronary when he walked up the ramp and saw the massive installation with peace signs. We also saw the Drawing Center get ejected from Ground Zero because of the controversy over Amy Burlingame’s drawing of a hooded Abu Ghraib figure. But more insidious than outright censorship are market forces, which can eventually strangle political art through neglect and marginalization.

Jesal: Do you think art critics overlook addressing the subject’s point of view directly, and instead privilege the insider art-world audience? Can you talk about the person in the e-mails that are another thread in this piece? I’m assuming the voice in the title *Take Me Off Your Database* is his?

Naeem: The interesting critique of our work was not from the art press, but from this protagonist. About a week after the show opened, we received an email from Rajiv Dabhadkar in India, who had discovered his name on our installation. The disconnect stemmed from his concern that we had created a list of people who should be kept out of the country. In these e-mail correspondences, we understood that for an audience outside the white cube walls, the work was already too ambiguous. He was initially quite upset, and insisted he should not be on the list (even though he had earlier given an interview to *USA Today* about being detained). I think his frustration was also because our work was not identifiably journalism or advocacy. So the visceral reaction was: who the hell are you, and why is my name on your project? Later, after he understood the project, he was fine with it. But that was later.

Jesal: For me, *Take Me Off Your Database* has really changed my reading of *Nahnu Wahaad*. It is clear here that the subjects in the art could not only be the audience for the same work, but their presence also shapes the work in a way that challenges the status of art. Rajiv Dabhadkar’s ‘right to say no’ echoes Gayatri Spivak’s emphasis on the ‘right to not be helped’, which she contextualized as a resistance to US and other foreign food aid ‘gifts’ to the third world, a response to the self-satisfying liberal benevolence towards the Global South. In “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Spivak highlights that artists and intellectuals are also sometimes complicit in this violence of speaking for the ‘other’, but instead of simply disavowing our responsibility completely, she reminds us to always be vigilant of this ever present possibility, and never take the power relations in any exchange for granted.

Naeem: There are also questions of “accuracy.” Because we have lawyers in the collective, we had an obsessive focus on getting the facts “right” and then building interventions on top. But is absolute truth emanating from Migration Policy Institute? Dabhadkar was essentially saying: Yes, I was detained. Yes I talked to the newspapers about it. But I’m no victim! He talks in e-mail exchanges about an organization he founded in India to advocate for high-tech workers coming to the US. I suppose he felt he had already left this issue in his past. Also significant is Rajiv’s profession as a technology worker, which made him more likely to find the online version of the project. How many people google their own names regularly (except artists)?

The easy, arrogant assumption is that every detainee wants representation in culture spaces. What of those who would prefer anonymity, to simply get on with their lives? Any work in this space is like the butterfly wing effect, conversations that lead to unpredictable future conversations. But not necessarily direct advocacy that will bring any of these detainees back into the country. So, should they be pressed into unwilling service as exhibits in a conversation about/against government policy?