



Two New York Comedians Fight Hate with Humor on New York City Subway Stations

New York City, NY: On April 28, 2015, Negin Farsad and Dean Obeidallah, comedians and directors of the documentary *The Muslims Are Coming!*, will launch The Fighting-Bigotry-with-Delightful-Posters Campaign in the subway stations of New York City. This campaign was born in response to a right-wing activist hate group who spent \$100,000 on a series of posters and ads on MTA buses and subways that demonized Muslims. The group, denounced by the Anti-Defamation League for "consistently vilifying the Islamic faith" and labeled by the Southern Poverty Law Center as one of the leaders of the "anti-Muslim movement," is also currently running anti-Muslim ads in Philadelphia.

"Like the majority of New Yorkers, we were shocked at the posters we saw in our city," said Obeidallah. The American comedian of Palestinian-Italian descent is also a columnist for The Daily Beast, and the host of SiriusXM's "The Dean Obeidallah Show," the first national radio show that looks at the issues of the week from the Muslim-American point of view. Obeidallah added, "And who spends \$100,000 to demonize any minority group?! You really, really have to hate a group of people to spend that much money – I would've spent the money on much more fun stuff."

"My thought was, why not post our own ads? Ads that are aren't hateful, but totally loving, and hopefully hilarious," Farsad remarked. A former policy advisor to the City of New York, Farsad, an Iranian-American, is now a social justice comedian and TEDFellow who has made four feature films and has written/directed shows for Comedy Central, MTV, BBC, and Nickelodeon.

With the help of crowdfunding, the team raised nearly \$20,000 in a matter of days to put up their posters. These posters will reach the over 5.5 million people that travel through the subway system every day.

"It's an opportunity to remind commuters that the Muslims *are* coming – to 'strike with hugs so fierce, you'll end up calling your grandmother and telling her you love her' – as our posters say. If there is a Muslim threat, the threat is over-delightfulness," said Negin Farsad.

The posters from the *Muslims are Coming!* filmmakers will feature cheeky messages including: "The Ugly Truth About Muslims: They have great frittata recipes," "Muslims Hate Terrorism! And people who tell you they went to an Ivy League within 10 seconds of meeting them," and "All Terrorists are Muslim Nutjobs (more accurate)."

The same group who launched last year's anti-Muslim bus and subway campaign has just won a lawsuit to advertise again in New York City, with an even more aggressive message of "Killing Jews is Worship that draws us close to Allah." Representatives from the MTA have expressed concern that these messages are a call to violence. Anti-Muslim crimes are still five times more common today than before 9/11.

"Our hope is that our posters will inspire people to remember why bigotry and hate towards any religion or race is harmful to everyone. There is just no room for this type of fear mongering – especially in a packed subway car during rush hour," said Obeidallah. "Besides, if you're gonna stare at posters wouldn't you rather be laughing? Hate just doesn't have the same entertainment value!" added Farsad.

With the money raised, a minimum of 144 posters will be hung in over 140 subway stations. To find a poster near you, visit themuslimsarecoming.com/posters.

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