

## Amis rejects 'anti-Islam' claims

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**In his first television interview since he was accused of racism, author Martin Amis has defended his views.**

The accusations followed comments in 2006 in which he said the Muslim community generally should suffer as a result of Islamist terrorist activity.

He has now responded to charges of racism by saying the urge to retaliate after alleged terrorist plots is not a question of race.

He made the comments in August 2006, during an interview with The Times newspaper.

### **'Humiliation of Muslims'**

In conversation with the journalist, he suggested in response to the alleged plot to blow up planes at Heathrow: "there is a definite urge... to see Muslims suffer until they get their house in order."

The suffering he said they should face included curtailing freedoms; "strip searching people who look like they are from the Middle East, Pakistan, until it hurts the whole community and they start getting tough with their children."

These comments were virtually ignored until his colleague at Manchester University, Professor Terry Eagleton, highlighted them in a collection of essays.

He said the comments were nothing short of the "hounding and humiliation of Muslims".

Subsequently, this row between two leading intellectuals made it into the newspapers, with Martin Amis being vilified by commentators as racist and his comments, noxious and vile.

### **Respectful**

Possibly provoked by the rows, a new collection of essays, a gathering of Amis's responses to 9/11, is published this month.

Speaking to the BBC he reiterated, as he does in the book, that he respects Islam and the Prophet Mohammad.

But what he remains implacably opposed to is the ideology of Islamism and Jihadism, which he says has created a bi-polar world, and an enemy which the West can do nothing to appease.

Amis is strident in his response to the charges of racism, saying he had made those comments in conversation.

He added that what you say is never the last word, but what you write should be.

The author defended the sentiment of his comments by saying that having a retaliatory urge was not racist.

"Everyone is very respectful of other people's anger. There was a plot to blow up 3,000 people, many women and children. Should not that excite anger?"

"Then you get into the territory of racism because the people who are doing this are from the Middle East and Pakistan, so of course you would target them. It is not a racial question."

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