

## University student attacks Muslim woman: Is an apology enough?

by [Story Hinckley](#)

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([The Christian Science Monitor](#)) Triceten Bickford, a 19-year-old Indiana University student, attacked a Muslim woman in Bloomington, Indiana, on Saturday night, according to police.

Bickford said the attack was alcohol-induced, and he doesn't have any memory of the incident.

But the woman, who was not publicly identified, a 47-year-old Turkish immigrant sitting at an outside cafe table with her nine-year-old daughter, remembers the event clearly.

"He started to yell 'white power,'" she told WTHR-TV News. "I found him at my neck, like pushing me down, squeezing my neck and putting my head to the table."

After living in the U.S. for 18 years, the woman said she has "never experienced any kind of discrimination or racism, let alone an all-out attack," WTHR News reported. "He pulled my scarf off, and, if I didn't grab his hands, he could have killed me."

Bickford has apologized to the woman, saying he "is not a monster."

"I'm so sorry," he said in an interview with WTHR News. "I have no idea who she is . . . I've never hurt someone like that before."

But the incident comes at [a time of heightened racism against Muslims in the U.S.](#)—perhaps the worst in more than a decade.

"Unfortunately, we're seeing a growing anti-Muslim sentiment in our society," said Ibrahim Hooper, National Communications Director with the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

Bickford faces a judge Friday, with charges of intimidation, public intoxication, two counts of misdemeanor battery, one count of felony-level battery, strangulation, and

illegal consumption of alcohol by a minor. Bickford also reportedly bit a policeman on the calf and tried to kick out a window in the police car after he was arrested. He was later released on \$500 cash bond.

Hooper said those charges aren't enough.

"We've asked 'bias crime' charges to be brought, which are outlined in Indiana's Criminal Code," he said. "We expressed deep concerns that bail of \$2,000 does not express the seriousness of the crime."

And moving forward, Hooper said that fighting ignorance is the best way to address discriminatory attacks.

"We found through our research and experience that education and outreach is the best way to challenge Islamophobia," he said. Most assumptions can be addressed "if people interact with Muslims on an every day basis."