

The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford

Transcript by Sue Hammond (Higgins Volunteer)

RW17_10

Name: Ali Aljazar

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: N/A

Place of Birth: Iraq

Occupation: Student

Date of Interview: 12th April 2017

Interviewed by: Rosie Newbigging Length of interview: 42 seconds
+ 13 mins 30 seconds

00 min

This is Rosie Newbiggin on Wednesday 12 April at the Higgins, Bedford, at 12 pm interviewing Ali Aljazar.

Say your name

Ali Aljazar

How are you today Ali

I am fine thank you

Good

I would like to tell you about my story and my experience when I am coming here to this country. It was very..

OK. I am just going to test to make sure that's recorded...

42 seconds

00 min

OK. This is Rosie Newbiggin interviewing Ali Aljazar on Wednesday 12 April at 12pm at the Higgins, Bedford. Good morning, Ali.

Good morning, Rosie.

How are you today?

I'm fine thank you. What about you?

I'm very well and you've had some wonderful news which is that you passed your exams to get into university.

Thank you very much.

And where are you going?

I was going to the xxx¹ studying my degree, to complete my studying, which is pharmacy. I would like to be pharmacy in the future and I would like talking about my story and my experience when first coming to this country.

OK. So the first thing to say is congratulations - that's great news.

Thank you very much.

So do you want to say a little bit about how you feel about living in England and what your feelings are towards your new home?

1 min

The first time when I coming to England I was feeling.. sad because it was the first time all my life change. It is very difficult starting new life, new friends, leaving and finding friends, just very difficult to make a new life. So when the first time I miss my country a lot but then I was continue, so I find it very good to coming here looking for my job and looking for good future.

OK. And how have you been received? Have you been made to feel welcome?

Yes, many people here are very friendly and there was very welcome with me and they are happy with me. Not any problems in the first time. So I was very happy in this case that made me more satisfied.

2 mins

And tell me Ali. What are your hopes for the future?

I want to be pharmacy and to get to complete my studying and to get good life, good jobs, and that's it to me.

And how long have you been living in this country?

Actually, just two years.

And you come from which country?

I come from Iraq, south of Iraq - small ²xx nice area.

¹ Name of the institution isn't clear.

² Not clear. May be a colour?

And can I ask you a little bit more about why you have come from Iraq to Bedford?

I coming from Iraq because actually in my country the Government do not provide good chance or opportunities to studying and to give their citizens good jobs or opportunity to good life. They know I need xx ³and I need good educated so I coming here

3 mins

looking for new life, and to complete my studying and to get better jobs, and that's it.

OK. How did you live your country?

I was leave it by plane. I coming by plane then I was going to Turkey from the south to Turkey, and then transit to the United Kingdom.

And did you come on your own? Did you leave alone?

No. I coming with all of my family

So who is your family?

My father which is Diah ⁴he's a doctor. He's the first time he's the planning to coming here. He wants to studying and take out from the country, to find a good future for us. My mother which is English teacher, she was in my country but now she's just at house, working house

4 mins

And try deal with the children. And I have three brothers and two sisters.

OK. Did you all plan to leave?

Yeah. We all. The first time we are planning to leave as student to coming here.

So it was your choice, you didn't have to leave.

But actually as we are talking about this, the country has not many opportunities to live longer. So we choose to live here, to coming here to finding a new life.

So did you leave any body behind? Any other family? Grandparents, aunts?

Yes. We have many relatives...many friends. Still in my country also. We miss them a lot but we hope we can see them soon in the future.

What did you feel?

³ Also not clear. Might be safety?

⁴ Best guess spelling

5 mins

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What did you feel as you were leaving: what were your emotions?

I was feel very sad in the beginning because I was don't know anything about my new home. I was very upset and I don't know what I want to do and how everything will be going with my life, my new life. So I was very sad and I don't know what I want to do.

Can you describe your last day at home in Iraq?

It was a very busy day because we was collecting all my clothes and

6 mins

to put it in the bags, and to be ready to go and we empty all the house and we give the keys for my relatives to make any person to live them. So it was very busy day and we was very hard to complete all of these to leave.

And you said you came on a plane you went to Turkey first..

and then to United Kingdom.

OK. What was your journey like?

It was too long journey because that was the first time I was in this time I not travel that long. It was 5 hours or 6 hours, so it was very long journey, and I was very tired or my family was tired.

Did you feel safe as you left?

Yes - we was very safe as left. Actually my country was everything is safe. Just the problem, the war is just in the north but we don't feel..

7 mins

I was safe in both countries. When I coming to England I was safe when I leaving also I was safe..

So are you able to keep in touch with your family in Iraq?

Yes. In the first three months, there was no contact with them because we don't have Internet, we don't have any other things to contact them, but after that we know how to contact them. It was easier to contact them.

And now do you speak to them often?

Always. By social media, by Facebook and Twitter.

So how did you feel when you got to..England? Where did you come to? Which airport?

It was Heathrow. It was first time to see England, and then underground

8 mins

Because in my country we don't have Underground. So it was very unusual experience. Something new for me.

What were your first impressions?

I like England because it was different from my country. Actually my country is desert but here is very nice. Greens, green lands and landscape is beautiful. So I was very the first to see this, absolutely the first. Because it is something new to see something different than my own country.

And since you came here, what have you been doing?

The first time when I coming here I was just at home because I don't know anyone and I don't have any friends ,so this is the first time. I was very x⁵x no-one to do, no-one to go so just at home.

9 mins

I spent all my time at home for first 3 month but then when I started college then I know many friends and I know how to go, how to planning. So it was starting something from new, so that was a new experience.

Had you spoken English before you came to this country?

No. I was don't know how to speak English really. Just I know some words like "How are you?" "Hello" and just this I was learning from my own country. I know so when I coming here first time don't know how to speak English.

So tell me a little bit about how you came to volunteer at the Higgins Bedford

10 mins

It was something very interested because when all my tutors told me the college need you to do some hours - some extra hours - to help to pass your levels and when we see she give me a list of some shops and told me which one you want to do. But I see museum I see this very good if I do it and also I will be very happy to learn something for culture of this country and history.

⁵ Not clear

What do you think of the Museum?

It's very good. Quite good places – and very good for learning for someone who want to learn and to collect information about the history of the country and to know persons in the past, history and places, history and persons, policy, many things. So I was learning many about museums.

What's your favourite part of the Museum?

It is about printing, about for Picasso. Picasso art gallery which is provide very good printing. It is for Picasso and I like it so much because I like drawing.

And there is one particular drawing, one particular print that you like

It is for Picasso. I like it so much - it is about poverty. I like the details – when he use the details – xxx⁶ so it was very, very wonderful painting and beautiful for me and I was happy to do it again and I tried to draw it.

OK and what's the title of the work?

It's poverty and Picasso he say different title but for me I see the poverty for it. I give it a new name.

Yeah. That's your title. So that's "The Frugal Meal"...And so you've done those drawings and I've seen them they are very good. You feel proud of them?

Yes. I was proud. I bring it for the museum - to see the museum.

We would like that very much. So can I ask you as well, Ali, were you able to bring any objects with you? Anything you brought from home that is important to you?

Actually I have many drawings at home – and actually some of them still in my country. Actually many of them 24 – 25 of them I have some of them also with me but it is quite a few - not a lot...and I continue to drawing.

So these are drawings that you did when you lived in Iraq? Yeah

OK. So what have you drawn?

Actually some of my drawings is for persons, history and persons and some of them is for landscapes. And some of them is in my brain, my mind, I drawing.

Would you be prepared to share – those drawings with the museum?

I will be happy to do this.

OK, that would be great. Is there anything else that you would want to share with me about your life in Iraq, your life here, the Museum, your hopes for the future?

⁶ Not clear

Mm. Actually there is many things but I don't have ⁷ xx can I share the painting of Picasso with you because I like this and I like to share it with the museum.

OK . Thank you very much, Ali

Thank you very much

End at 13.30 mins

⁷ Not clear