

**Interview with Elyas Sarwary on April 10, 2023**

0:00:02.760,0:00:06.240

Good afternoon Elyas, so nice to see you today. How are you?

0:00:07.260,0:00:11.753

Good afternoon, Professor. I'm good, I'm good, thank you! It's just another good day.

0:00:11.753,0:00:15.683

I'm happy to see you and talk to you, here.

0:00:15.683,0:00:18.375

I'm happy to see you again, too.

0:00:18.375,0:00:20.600

I'm going to begin with a little introduction

0:00:21.600,0:00:24.080

about you, about me, and about the project,

0:00:24.080,0:00:25.627

and then I'll ask you some questions.

0:00:26.600,0:00:29.239

So let me begin by reading your bio.

0:00:29.239,0:00:33.371

First of all let me state that today is Monday, April 10th.

0:00:33.371,0:00:36.225

It's about 3:15 p.m.

0:00:37.200,0:00:39.147

and I will begin with your bio.

0:00:39.147,0:00:43.319

Elyas Sarwary, is originally from Kabul, Afghanistan,

0:00:43.319,0:00:46.035

and now lives in Stafford, Virginia.

0:00:46.035,0:00:49.263

He speaks Dari, Pashto, English, and Hindi.

0:00:49.263,0:00:49.786

Wow!

0:00:49.786,0:01:01.219

He moved to the United States on August 26, 2021. He was a student at Montgomery College from August of 2022 to December of 2022

0:01:01.219,0:01:04.876

and you were my student, I was very glad to have you in my class.

0:01:04.876,0:01:08.307

Today, he lives with four brothers, one sister, and his parents,

0:01:08.307,0:01:12.937

and works as an Application Development Associate at Accenture.

0:01:12.937,0:01:20.043

He plans to study Computer Science at George Mason University beginning in the fall of 2023.

0:01:20.043,0:01:26.598

In his spare time, he enjoys playing soccer, as it was his dream to be a professional soccer player.

0:01:26.598,0:01:29.760

So, a little bit more background.

0:01:30.480,0:01:36.680

My name is Heather Bruce Satrom. I teach in ELAP, English Language for Academic Purposes at Montgomery College.

0:01:36.680,0:01:45.720

This project is called History in the Making: Documenting Stories of Immigrant and Refugee Students at Montgomery College.

0:01:45.720,0:01:48.720

The goal is to help others better understand

0:01:48.720,0:01:52.388

the experiences of immigrants and refugees

0:01:52.388,0:01:56.427

in the United States, particularly in Montgomery County and at Montgomery College

0:01:56.427,0:01:59.030

and in the DMV area.

0:01:59.030,0:02:06.071

Telling your story will enable others to better understand the challenges that immigrants and refugees face,

0:02:06.071,0:02:12.780

and better appreciate the resilience and perseverance of people in your community. I am grateful for your participation.

0:02:14.880,0:02:17.502

You had a chance to read some of the questions in advance,

0:02:17.502,0:02:21.202

but note that all these questions are optional.

0:02:21.202,0:02:23.506

If you want to skip a question, just let me know.

0:02:23.506,0:02:27.486

If you want to take a break at any point, that's fine too, just let me know.

0:02:27.486,0:02:30.511

We'll talk for about 45 minutes to an hour.

0:02:30.511,0:02:33.023

I know you need to get off around four.

0:02:34.000,0:02:38.160

First of all, could you please state your full name for me?

0:02:38.940,0:02:42.480

My full name is Elyas Sarwary.

0:02:42.480,0:02:46.200

And do I have permission to record this interview?

0:02:46.200,0:02:47.578

Yes, of course.

0:02:48.560,0:02:51.768

So I'd like to begin actually with a question about your name,

0:02:51.768,0:02:55.046

because when you were in my class, the whole semester

0:02:55.046,0:02:56.520

I called you Ahmad,

0:02:56.520,0:02:59.949

and that was the name on my class roster

0:02:59.949,0:03:02.740  
and it wasn't.. you were so polite, you didn't stop me,

0:03:02.740,0:03:07.324  
but later on, you told me that actually you prefer to be called Elyas,

0:03:07.324,0:03:12.720  
and I think many Americans pronounce it  
'Elias.' So you've had some challenges with your name.

0:03:13.260,0:03:16.620  
Can you tell me a little bit about that. The story of your name and why Americans

0:03:16.620,0:03:20.199  
have difficulty with it, and some of the problems you've had?

0:03:20.199,0:03:25.742  
Actually, Ahmad and Muhammad, I think you know this, but it's

0:03:25.742,0:03:27.338  
the names of our

0:03:27.338,0:03:29.606  
Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him,

0:03:29.606,0:03:33.139  
and in Afghanistan, it's a specific rule that everyone,

0:03:33.139,0:03:34.590  
every

0:03:34.590,0:03:35.901  
male..

0:03:35.901,0:03:38.949  
guys should have

0:03:38.949,0:03:42.517  
Ahmad and Muhammad at the beginning of their names.

0:03:42.517,0:03:47.496  
So I had that name. It's like, Ahmad Elyas Sarwary,

0:03:47.496,0:03:48.962  
and it's written in my

0:03:48.962,0:03:50.855  
documents and everything.

0:03:50.855,0:03:52.440  
So the first day that I

0:03:52.440,0:03:54.685  
was in the class,

0:03:54.685,0:03:57.575  
you called me Ahmad, and then I tried to

0:03:57.575,0:03:59.898  
correct it,

0:03:59.898,0:04:03.235  
"it's not Ahmad it's Elyas," but

0:04:03.235,0:04:07.851  
I said to myself "that's okay, if they call me Ahmad,

0:04:07.851,0:04:10.493  
I don't have a problem, then let it be Ahmad."

0:04:10.493,0:04:17.305

and yeah, my first name is Elyas that many Americans call me Elias.

0:04:17.305,0:04:24.161

I don't know why, maybe there are some pronunciation problems that they have,

0:04:25.160,0:04:31.389

but actually when I hear Elias, then I immediately correct them that it's

0:04:31.389,0:04:34.202

Elyas not Elias.

0:04:34.202,0:04:43.755

Well, I think it's important for teachers and for everyone to pay close attention to the names that we want to be called, so

0:04:43.755,0:04:50.040

thank you for telling me that, and I'm sorry that all semester I called you Ahmad, but now you are Elyas

0:04:51.000,0:04:52.108

to me and I will..

0:04:53.080,0:05:00.120

I will make even more of an effort in the future about asking students to tell me exactly what they want to be called because I think it's really important.

0:05:01.260,0:05:02.862

So tell me..

0:05:04.840,0:05:09.813

Tell me about where and when you were born and a little bit about the place where you grew up.

0:05:09.813,0:05:11.349

Sure.

0:05:11.349,0:05:14.459

I was born in a family

0:05:14.459,0:05:14.959

that was..

0:05:14.959,0:05:18.850

it was a huge family. My grandparents has

0:05:18.850,0:05:21.380

so many brothers.

0:05:21.380,0:05:24.551

Brothers, cousins, and

0:05:24.551,0:05:27.688

we all were living in a small village,

0:05:27.688,0:05:29.767

in one house,

0:05:29.767,0:05:34.087

in one yard. All five brothers with their kids, with their

0:05:34.087,0:05:37.715

grandchildren. They are all living in..

0:05:37.715,0:05:41.160

in the same area, in the same house. Like there was

0:05:41.700,0:05:44.693

a huge house that they were living together.

0:05:44.693,0:05:50.640

I was born there in 30, March of 2001.

0:05:51.660,0:05:52.715

0:05:52.715,0:05:55.150  
My grandparent..

0:05:55.150,0:05:57.136  
my grandfather

0:05:57.136,0:05:58.757  
was a labor,

0:05:58.757,0:06:02.747  
was working and building houses there in my village.

0:06:02.747,0:06:04.539  
When I grew up,

0:06:04.539,0:06:06.782  
I was asking my

0:06:06.782,0:06:09.163  
grandfather that "which..

0:06:09.163,0:06:14.205  
which houses you built in this area?"

0:06:14.205,0:06:17.908  
and he was pointing, "this house, this house, this house, oh that.."

0:06:17.908,0:06:22.332  
I said, "there's a lot of houses in this area that you already built."

0:06:23.320,0:06:26.825  
My father was working with the

0:06:26.825,0:06:30.315  
U.S. Embassy in Kabul, and

0:06:30.315,0:06:36.245  
my mother was only working in the house and just being a mom that..

0:06:36.245,0:06:39.840  
that is for me.. that is

0:06:39.840,0:06:42.672  
the most difficult job that

0:06:42.672,0:06:45.340  
a woman can do, being a mom.

0:06:47.320,0:06:49.682  
And I was..

0:06:49.682,0:06:52.562  
The life, at that time, was

0:06:52.562,0:06:53.400  
so much easier.

0:06:53.400,0:06:59.172  
I was just a kid. The only problem that we had is

0:06:59.172,0:07:04.725  
doing the homework for the school that the teachers won't hit us,

0:07:04.725,0:07:08.833  
or cut our points. That was the only problem that we had.

0:07:08.833,0:07:11.019  
And as much as we grew up,

0:07:11.019,0:07:19.860  
the problems and life difficulties just grew up with that. And..

0:07:22.140,0:07:25.925  
Can you tell me a little bit about your  
education when you were growing up?

0:07:25.925,0:07:28.443  
About your school experience?

0:07:28.443,0:07:29.345

0:07:29.345,0:07:31.016  
I finished my  
school

0:07:31.016,0:07:34.200  
in Habibia High School. There was a

0:07:35.760,0:07:41.880  
a public school that there were in Kabul,  
Afghanistan. I finished my school there, and I just

0:07:41.880,0:07:46.458  
started to study German literature

0:07:46.458,0:07:49.577  
in Kabul University. Actually, there was a..

0:07:51.560,0:07:52.910  
there is an exam after

0:07:52.910,0:07:58.484  
every student finished their schools. They  
take an exam and as much as points they score,

0:07:58.484,0:08:02.892  
they will give them

0:08:02.892,0:08:08.338  
the field that they require according to their scores. So I take the exam..

0:08:08.338,0:08:09.144  
I took the exam,

0:08:10.120,0:08:13.878  
and I scored as much as  
German

0:08:13.878,0:08:17.309  
literature required for that exam. So I..

0:08:17.309,0:08:17.809  
I didn't like that.

0:08:19.800,0:08:21.351  
I didn't want to study that

0:08:21.351,0:08:22.844  
field.

0:08:22.844,0:08:25.738  
I wanted to study computers.

0:08:25.738,0:08:30.167  
Therefore, I applied for a scholarship in India.

0:08:30.167,0:08:36.159  
I went through all the process. I finished everything, and I..

0:08:36.159,0:08:38.715  
I was just waiting for my Visa and the ticket that..

0:08:38.715,0:08:41.789  
that I needed to go to India.

0:08:41.789,0:08:46.582  
Everything was finished and then after that

0:08:46.582,0:08:52.823  
everything happened. The tragedy of Kabul, the tragedy of Afghanistan, and the Taliban took over the country,

0:08:52.823,0:08:55.860  
and I just missed the opportunity there.

0:08:56.580,0:09:00.360  
I want to go back to something very interesting that you just said.

0:09:00.480,0:09:04.183  
I had no idea that you studied German literature.

0:09:04.183,0:09:04.683

0:09:04.683,0:09:06.000  
- Yeah.  
- Can you tell me

0:09:06.000,0:09:13.260  
about that interest, and how you specialized in that, and why you decided you preferred to study computer science?

0:09:14.920,0:09:20.087  
As I said, the exam that I took,

0:09:20.087,0:09:23.845  
they had different fields for different scores

0:09:23.845,0:09:26.211  
that you score at that exam.

0:09:26.211,0:09:29.548  
So I scored at the level

0:09:29.548,0:09:33.420  
that I could go and study German literature only.

0:09:34.080,0:09:34.580  
So..

0:09:34.580,0:09:39.663  
But you did not want to be a scholar of German literature.

0:09:39.663,0:09:41.654  
I didn't want that, but I..

0:09:42.640,0:09:49.272  
I went through the process of a scholarship to finish that and go to India while finishing that..

0:09:49.272,0:09:58.339  
I just told myself that I should go and see how German literature is. So I attended the class for one semester there,

0:09:58.339,0:10:01.568  
and after one semester the,

0:10:01.568,0:10:05.760

the tragedy happened and we couldn't continue that.

0:10:06.660,0:10:11.161  
So you had this hope of going to

0:10:11.161,0:10:13.323  
a university in India,

0:10:13.323,0:10:14.793  
In India, yes.

0:10:14.793,0:10:19.518  
.. and your whole life completely changed.

0:10:19.518,0:10:22.035  
Yes, that's correct.

0:10:22.035,0:10:24.840  
Can you tell me a little bit about..

0:10:26.640,0:10:29.398  
I mean, this is a huge question, right, but

0:10:29.398,0:10:33.120  
you shared a video with me of

0:10:33.960,0:10:38.738  
the flights and getting on the plane and coming to the United States.

0:10:38.738,0:10:45.220  
Can you.. and I'm not even sure where exactly to begin this discussion, perhaps

0:10:45.220,0:10:51.491  
begin with when you realized that you were going to leave your country and come to the United States.

0:10:51.491,0:10:53.580  
When did you know that that was going to happen?

0:10:55.320,0:10:56.544  
I think it was

0:10:56.544,0:10:59.882  
a day that I wanted to talk

0:10:59.882,0:11:06.267  
with my father about the scholarship that I wanted to take to India.

0:11:06.267,0:11:09.972  
I wanted to talk to him and he just told me,

0:11:09.972,0:11:13.271  
"my son it's not going to happen." I said

0:11:13.271,0:11:15.760  
"why?" and

0:11:15.760,0:11:16.669  
he replied,

0:11:16.669,0:11:19.500  
"the Taliban is coming."

0:11:20.100,0:11:23.273  
The country is going to fall.

0:11:23.273,0:11:30.084  
And at that moment, I just realized that the life is going to be hard,

0:11:30.084,0:11:36.259



because I didn't want to leave my country. My father, as I said, was working with the American Embassy

0:11:36.259,0:11:40.581  
from 2011 and he had the chance to leave

0:11:40.581,0:11:44.361  
Afghanistan at that time, in 2011.

0:11:44.361,0:11:47.072  
But every time he was

0:11:47.072,0:11:49.560  
asking us

0:11:49.560,0:11:52.574  
and my mom, everyone said, "no we..

0:11:52.574,0:11:58.440  
we don't want to leave our country. We don't leave.. we don't want to leave our grandparents, our family here."

0:11:59.760,0:12:02.721  
And so we had a chance at that time. And

0:12:02.721,0:12:17.460  
after that, I just stopped everything. I didn't want to go to university. I didn't want to continue the process of that scholarship. So, on August..

0:12:18.360,0:12:24.001  
between.. there was a conflict between the U.S and the Taliban government, that

0:12:24.001,0:12:28.098  
before September, you have to evacuate everything that you have

0:12:28.098,0:12:32.046  
in Afghanistan. And we were awaiting

0:12:32.046,0:12:34.790  
for their call to..

0:12:34.790,0:12:45.633  
to give us an opportunity to leave. Because we couldn't, at the time that Taliban came behind the gates of the Kabul, everything was

0:12:45.633,0:12:49.760  
horrible.

0:12:49.760,0:12:53.467  
There were no people on the streets, no people on their

0:12:53.467,0:12:54.904  
works, even..

0:12:54.904,0:12:57.724  
even the airport was empty,

0:12:57.724,0:13:05.616  
empty of employee. There were no one and even the security guards, they left

0:13:05.616,0:13:09.540  
and the airport was totally empty. So,

0:13:11.040,0:13:21.540  
on August, I think it was August 20, 2021, that we received an email from them to come.

0:13:21.540,0:13:27.720  
There's many different gates that were covered by the people. They don't have..

0:13:27.720,0:13:30.830

They didn't have any documents, any

0:13:30.830,0:13:35.851  
anything, any evidence to tell them that we are able

0:13:35.851,0:13:40.722  
to move or leave Afghanistan.

0:13:40.722,0:13:47.007  
Everyone was trying to leave through the airport, but they

0:13:47.007,0:13:49.398  
didn't have any evidence any..

0:13:49.398,0:13:54.720  
any documents that they are available for this process.

0:13:56.520,0:13:58.874  
The gates were closed and we went there.

0:13:58.874,0:14:06.575  
There were like thousands of people that covered the gate, and we were trying to go and

0:14:06.575,0:14:18.000  
we were covered with people, shoulder by shoulder. And at that day, we had so many bags that we had to carry them and we have to protect the children, my brothers,

0:14:18.000,0:14:18.997  
my siblings.

0:14:18.997,0:14:23.666  
We have to carry bags, protect the children and we have to go

0:14:23.666,0:14:27.039  
forward to get to the gates, but we couldn't..

0:14:27.039,0:14:30.930  
we couldn't, and we just left there to..

0:14:30.930,0:14:31.430

0:14:31.430,0:14:40.440  
to whom.. and my father said, "I'm not going to leave like this, I'm not going to go again and face this problem again, so we should wait."

0:14:40.440,0:14:45.905  
And then we have been there for over

0:14:45.905,0:14:49.320  
one week under the Taliban government.

0:14:50.040,0:14:52.261  
And I was..

0:14:52.261,0:14:56.774  
How old were you at that point?

0:14:56.774,0:14:58.895  
I was, I think I was 20

0:14:58.895,0:15:00.305  
20 or 19?

0:15:00.305,0:15:02.160  
19.

0:15:03.720,0:15:06.076  
And my..

0:15:06.076,0:15:14.409

It was a big risk being under the Taliban government for my father, because he was working with the U.S. Embassy and they were..

0:15:14.409,0:15:19.268  
the U.S. was a big enemy

0:15:19.268,0:15:23.132  
for the Taliban, and the work.. and the people that worked for

0:15:23.132,0:15:28.620  
them, they are supposed an enemy from that people, so..

0:15:29.340,0:15:30.355  
so we were

0:15:30.355,0:15:34.136  
terrified and we just..

0:15:34.136,0:15:37.793  
we were just waiting for their call to go.

0:15:37.793,0:15:40.974  
On August 26th,

0:15:40.974,0:15:46.021  
we received another call from them, that "we provided some

0:15:46.021,0:15:49.185  
cars, that they can

0:15:49.185,0:15:53.496  
get you through.. that they can get you inside

0:15:53.496,0:15:57.540  
the airport." So we went there and we faced

0:15:58.080,0:16:03.087  
problems, even with those buses.

0:16:03.087,0:16:10.922  
We walked out the bus in front of the airport gate and the people that were

0:16:10.922,0:16:16.172  
surrounding that airport gates, knew that

0:16:16.172,0:16:23.692  
we are planning to leave and we are good to go inside and they just kind of attacked us.

0:16:23.692,0:16:25.820  
They grabbed..

0:16:25.820,0:16:33.454  
They grabbed my shoulders, my mom's shoulders and everyone. They just pretending that they are with us,

0:16:33.454,0:16:42.881  
and the military and the security guard that were there just pointing the gun at me and telling me that "go away."

0:16:42.881,0:16:43.381  
They

0:16:43.381,0:16:50.310  
didn't know that we are part of that bus. They didn't know who was part of that bus that

0:16:50.310,0:16:54.765  
should go inside, and they just firing the guns in front of

0:16:54.765,0:16:58.200  
my legs and pointing the gun that "go away."

0:16:58.920,0:17:01.743  
That must have been a terrifying experience for you.

0:17:01.743,0:17:05.971  
Well, for everyone, that is terrifying, but

0:17:05.971,0:17:10.010  
especially for that we didn't even

0:17:10.010,0:17:16.512  
watch or see a gun in front of us. We didn't have..

0:17:16.512,0:17:26.151  
we didn't touch anything, but there's.. attacks come that they fire and pointing those guns at us

0:17:26.151,0:17:32.411  
to go away. That was really horrible, and by the time that we get in..

0:17:32.411,0:17:41.713  
get inside the airport, everyone was crying, including my mom, my sister, my brothers. And I was fully in dust,

0:17:41.713,0:17:44.093  
in dust and everything.

0:17:44.093,0:17:47.204  
I said to my mom..

0:17:47.204,0:17:53.376  
I should say that you're the the oldest in your family, so you have a sense of responsibility, I imagine, for protecting your siblings.

0:17:53.376,0:17:54.840  
Yes, of course!

0:17:54.840,0:17:57.355  
I was the last..

0:17:57.355,0:17:59.964  
the last one that went inside

0:17:59.964,0:18:05.974  
the airport. I had to make sure my brothers, my mom, everyone was inside and then I went inside.

0:18:05.974,0:18:14.700  
Can I back up a little bit? Before you got to the airport, you had to decide what to bring with you.

0:18:15.540,0:18:20.040  
How did you do that? What did you bring with you? How much were you allowed to bring?

0:18:21.180,0:18:29.340  
Actually, we knew that the process of leaving is very hard. We knew that it's not the actual

0:18:29.340,0:18:29.840  
travels that

0:18:29.840,0:18:33.360  
we did or everyone did.

0:18:33.360,0:18:38.280  
It's completely different. But at that time, we had..

0:18:39.540,0:18:44.940  
The first time that we left, we had so many things. We had the bags of our carpets

0:18:44.940,0:18:47.405  
that we we needed to

0:18:47.405,0:18:47.905  
carry

0:18:47.905,0:18:51.283  
we needed them

0:18:51.283,0:18:56.852  
with us. We had them and while we saw the challenges that

0:18:56.852,0:19:04.011  
we cannot.. we realized that we cannot carry these bags with us while having those problems.

0:19:04.011,0:19:15.247  
We just went home and just cut everything. We just get ourselves a bag of clothes and some foods to eat during the process,

0:19:15.247,0:19:16.381  
nothing else.

0:19:16.381,0:19:18.265  
You had to leave behind..

0:19:18.265,0:19:19.560  
Everything.

0:19:20.880,0:19:22.680  
Yeah, so..

0:19:22.680,0:19:31.680  
We have a house that is three three stories

0:19:32.400,0:19:36.034  
and we left everything inside, only one room,

0:19:36.034,0:19:42.401  
one big room. We left everything including my bicycles, my

0:19:42.401,0:19:45.526  
my motorbike, everything we left..

0:19:45.526,0:19:51.140  
we left there. And we moved with only a bag of clothes

0:19:51.140,0:19:56.700  
and food that we needed on the way of leaving.

0:19:58.560,0:20:00.556  
I can only imagine what that was like.

0:20:00.556,0:20:05.400  
Yeah, that was.. that was..

0:20:06.720,0:20:07.736  
I suppose that

0:20:07.736,0:20:10.344  
that is the dark side of

0:20:10.344,0:20:14.891  
my life. That is horrible.

0:20:14.891,0:20:17.100  
So you get to the airport,

0:20:18.420,0:20:23.400  
it's difficult to make it through, it's very crowded, it sounds very chaotic,

0:20:24.900,0:20:28.639  
but you finally made it into the airport?

0:20:28.639,0:20:29.139

Yes.

0:20:29.139,0:20:36.711

Yes, we finally made it, after those gunfire and everything, we made it.

0:20:36.711,0:20:43.001

We went inside the airport and we waited for four or eight hours

0:20:43.001,0:20:46.920

in the line to get to the airport and move to Qatar.

0:20:46.920,0:20:49.240

So first

0:20:49.240,0:20:50.760

you went to Qatar?

-Yeah!

0:20:50.760,0:20:52.015

How long were you there?

0:20:52.015,0:20:55.079

After Kabul,

0:20:55.079,0:20:57.754

we went to the airport,

0:20:57.754,0:21:10.308

we moved inside the airplanes that we had to move to Qatar, and the moment that the plane get into the air, everyone inside that plane was crying.

0:21:10.308,0:21:12.484

They all knew that maybe this is

0:21:12.484,0:21:18.124

the last time that they're here. They're never going to be back at their country.

0:21:18.124,0:21:23.720

And it was, if understand correctly from the video I saw,

0:21:24.000,0:21:25.728

like a military cargo plane,

0:21:25.728,0:21:26.918

right? It wasn't

0:21:26.918,0:21:35.395

in a passenger plane.

-Yeah, it was a military cargo plane that we had to sit on the floor.

0:21:35.395,0:21:39.630

We didn't have any seats and

0:21:39.630,0:21:49.152

sitting over the metal of that airplane was hard, and we spent like five hours inside that plane.

0:21:49.152,0:21:58.392

Five or six hours that was really hard. And the moment that it landed in Qatar, it was..

0:21:58.392,0:22:00.909

it was really hot there.

0:22:00.909,0:22:04.184

Qatar is really hot. You can't even stand

0:22:04.184,0:22:07.845

for a minute under that weather.

0:22:07.845,0:22:15.310

I remember in the video that you sent, which I will include in this project,

0:22:15.310,0:22:20.903  
I noticed your father sleeping in exhaustion, and I was thinking,

0:22:20.903,0:22:28.158  
as a parent, how tiring it must have been and how terrifying to be in that experience,

0:22:28.158,0:22:31.187  
to be in that plane, leaving behind everything.

0:22:31.187,0:22:37.938  
After we arrived here, I had to check my phone for..

0:22:37.938,0:22:40.988  
for every memories that I had through this phone.

0:22:40.988,0:22:51.360  
One day I was checking everything, I was scrolling up the photos, the videos, everything, and suddenly I saw that picture, and..

0:22:54.180,0:22:56.567  
my..

0:22:56.567,0:23:00.901  
I cried a lot for that picture. I remembered

0:23:00.901,0:23:04.811  
how hard was the journey, how hard was..

0:23:04.811,0:23:10.515  
It was hard for everyone, but for my father, it was..

0:23:10.515,0:23:11.983  
it was totally hard.

0:23:11.983,0:23:17.280  
I know the struggle that he had to make to get us out of the country.

0:23:17.280,0:23:21.854  
I really cried for the first time that I saw that picture.

0:23:21.854,0:23:29.220  
It is a powerful picture. So you arrive in Qatar. It's very hot.

0:23:29.940,0:23:33.204  
Were you.. Did you land at a U.S military base there? Where did you land?

0:23:33.204,0:23:39.383  
Yeah, there was a U.S military base that..

0:23:39.383,0:23:41.513  
there were so many camps that

0:23:41.513,0:23:48.589  
they had to process the documents and seeing that everyone

0:23:48.589,0:23:50.755  
that they are good to fly

0:23:50.755,0:23:57.539  
from here towards the U.S. And we, at the first night that we

0:23:57.539,0:23:59.911  
in there, we actually..

0:23:59.911,0:24:08.255  
We were so tired when we landed there. We were so tired of being on a plane like that, and we wanted a place to sleep.

0:24:08.255,0:24:11.493

And we were imagining

0:24:11.493,0:24:14.010  
"okay we arrived here and we..

0:24:14.010,0:24:17.169  
we are going to get a hotel and we have..

0:24:17.169,0:24:21.547  
we are going to sleep in here and then tomorrow we have to process the

0:24:21.547,0:24:25.230  
documents and everything."

0:24:25.230,0:24:32.978  
When we got out of that plane, we went to a base camp that when I saw that camp, everything..

0:24:32.978,0:24:43.556  
every imagination that I made was disappearing. I know that there's no hotel, no place to sleep,  
actually I slept that night over the floor,

0:24:43.556,0:24:51.780  
over the rocks of that floor, and we didn't  
even eat at that night, I just wanted to sleep.

0:24:52.320,0:25:00.540  
We slept the first night and tomorrow when I woke up there were thousands of people in the

0:25:00.540,0:25:05.105  
line wanted to go and process their documents.

0:25:05.105,0:25:09.728  
And we waited like two nights, or two

0:25:09.728,0:25:10.228  
days.

0:25:10.228,0:25:16.379  
We just spent two days on a single line. We waited there just to get

0:25:16.379,0:25:19.620  
to the other step. And after..

0:25:21.360,0:25:30.900  
after I think six days that we we've been there, we finally made it, and we fly towards the  
United

0:25:30.900,0:25:36.298  
States, and we arrived here on August 31st.

0:25:36.298,0:25:39.258  
Did you.. Which airport did you land in?

0:25:39.258,0:25:41.240  
In Philadelphia.

0:25:42.240,0:25:43.720  
Say again?

0:25:43.720,0:25:46.876  
In Philadelphia, in New Jersey?

0:25:46.876,0:25:51.567  
Oh, I think we landed in Philadelphia, yes.

0:25:51.567,0:25:54.600  
Was it also at a military base?

0:25:54.600,0:25:59.017  
At first we landed there and then we went to a camp



0:25:59.017,0:26:03.840  
for two months, and for I think the name of that camp was Fort Dix.

0:26:04.980,0:26:09.159  
An army fort?

0:26:09.159,0:26:09.659  
Yeah!

0:26:09.659,0:26:11.601  
How long did you stay there?

0:26:11.601,0:26:16.365  
We have been there for two months.

0:26:16.365,0:26:18.000  
What was that experience like?

0:26:18.780,0:26:21.000  
Well that was actually

0:26:21.000,0:26:22.358  
great.

0:26:22.358,0:26:25.839  
We were there with..

0:26:25.839,0:26:32.582  
Everyone there was Afghans that we have never seen

0:26:32.582,0:26:34.763  
by the time that we were living there.

0:26:34.763,0:26:40.540  
There were people from every side of the country, every other

0:26:40.540,0:26:43.557  
provinces that

0:26:43.557,0:26:51.565  
they had a chance to leave and now they're here. We were with them, and we actually, we made a lot of friends there.

0:26:51.565,0:26:56.760  
We were playing soccer, having concerts,

0:26:56.760,0:27:04.337  
sometimes sitting with each other and discussing things and remembering the days that

0:27:04.337,0:27:13.773  
that they have experienced through this journey. Everyone was hearing their story and we just kind of listening to them.

0:27:13.773,0:27:20.790  
Being at that camp for two months, actually, at the last days it was kind of frustrating

0:27:20.790,0:27:27.899  
because it was a restricted area. We had a limited area that we cannot cross.

0:27:27.899,0:27:36.044  
There were fences, like borders, that we cannot move or pass those fences to..

0:27:36.044,0:27:41.354  
on the other side. It was restricted but it was a good experience for me. I made a lot of friends.

0:27:41.354,0:27:50.764  
During those two months, were they processing documents for you? Were they trying to find housing for you? What was happening?

0:27:50.764,0:28:00.318

Yes, actually, they were doing both. They wanted to process the documents, and they wanted to make it legal.

0:28:00.318,0:28:07.887

Because it was illegal for us to be in the United States, because we didn't have any documents, any visas, or anything.

0:28:07.887,0:28:11.752

And they were trying to..

0:28:11.752,0:28:23.017

They were giving us three choices of the states. That which state you're going to.. you're willing to be in, and we just selected

0:28:23.017,0:28:30.074

California on the first choice and Virginia on the second and Maryland on the third.

0:28:30.074,0:28:32.836

Maryland was your third choice?

0:28:32.836,0:28:36.244

Yes, because we have some friends

0:28:36.244,0:28:42.596

in California. That's why we choose them, in Virginia, as well. And..

0:28:42.596,0:28:44.427

every single person in that..

0:28:44.427,0:28:44.927

0:28:44.927,0:28:58.194

in that camp was the same. The first choice was California and the second was Virginia. And these two states are so much crowded, right?

0:28:58.194,0:29:06.111

They were telling us that you cannot find houses in these two states. It's not happening.

0:29:06.111,0:29:08.832

So we said "we're good with Maryland,

0:29:08.832,0:29:14.413

it's not a problem for us." So we choose that and we..

0:29:16.400,0:29:25.652

We find a house, an apartment near our friends, and they just moved us from that camp

0:29:25.652,0:29:30.480

to Maryland in Silver Spring.

0:29:30.480,0:29:32.480

So.. this is so fascinating to me.

0:29:33.900,0:29:38.077

I'm imagining that before this whole experience,

0:29:38.077,0:29:45.334

you probably heard of California before, right? Like Hollywood, it's very famous, you probably..

0:29:45.334,0:29:52.880

because of your friends maybe had heard of Virginia and Washington DC. Did you know anything about Maryland before you came here?

0:29:52.880,0:29:53.380

Oh no.

0:29:53.380,0:30:00.400

To be honest, I just knew California, New York and Virginia,

0:30:00.400,0:30:06.835  
and maybe Texas, because I have some friends in these states.

0:30:06.835,0:30:12.886  
I don't have any friends in Maryland or any other states, but

0:30:12.886,0:30:27.054  
I have some friends in California that I was talking with them, and they they were telling me that this state is so much beautiful than other states, and the life expenses is too high.

0:30:27.054,0:30:33.724  
The cost of living is very high in California, but it's high around here too, I think.

0:30:35.720,0:30:36.982  
In Maryland?

0:30:36.982,0:30:42.537  
In the DC.. in the Washington DC area the cost of living is not low.

0:30:42.537,0:30:50.018  
Yeah, so my father chose Maryland, because we had some friends that

0:30:50.018,0:30:51.502  
my father..

0:30:51.502,0:30:54.484  
father's co-workers and in the United..

0:30:54.484,0:31:03.060  
in the U.S. Embassy, and they already moved before that evacuation process. They had a visa and they were able to

0:31:04.140,0:31:08.270  
make those departures before the evacuation.

0:31:09.240,0:31:10.500  
I'm sorry, go ahead.

0:31:11.340,0:31:18.886  
Yeah, so they already find an apartment in the Silver Spring,

0:31:18.886,0:31:19.919  
and they..

0:31:19.919,0:31:24.538  
they suggested us to come in here. And the day that we moved there,

0:31:24.538,0:31:25.967  
there were like

0:31:25.967,0:31:31.562  
15 or 14 families there, in the same building,

0:31:31.562,0:31:40.652  
which that was good for us, it's very amazing, they were good people and we kind of didn't feel away from..

0:31:40.652,0:31:43.952  
from our people, from our country, and those.

0:31:43.952,0:31:48.969  
So there were 15 families from Afghanistan all living in the same apartment?

0:31:48.969,0:31:50.113  
Yes, yes.

0:31:50.113,0:31:54.231  
Interesting! What was the apartment like? Where in Silver Spring were you?

0:31:54.231,0:32:00.120  
The name of the apartment is 8600, and it was actually,

0:32:01.320,0:32:04.135  
it was an old apartment, but it was good.

0:32:04.135,0:32:11.316  
It was being with other Afghans and being with friends,

0:32:11.316,0:32:14.753  
we didn't feel very far away from our country.

0:32:14.753,0:32:17.520  
Did anyone help you

0:32:18.660,0:32:25.440  
with the process of settling in? With explaining to you about where to go grocery shopping? or how to

0:32:25.440,0:32:29.127  
use public transportation? Did anyone help explain?

0:32:29.127,0:32:32.176  
Actually, they helped us a lot.

0:32:32.176,0:32:32.855  
Sorry?

0:32:32.855,0:32:35.047  
Actually, they helped us a lot.

0:32:35.047,0:32:44.068  
The day that we moved to that apartment, we had to carry our stuff inside, and buy

0:32:44.068,0:32:45.560  
new things

0:32:45.560,0:32:49.433  
for that apartment to live. So,

0:32:49.433,0:32:57.983  
they helped us a lot, with the settlement, the directions that, "where should I buy those?" and, yeah..

0:32:57.983,0:33:02.945  
When you say 'they' helped us, who is 'they'? Who was helping you with this process?

0:33:02.945,0:33:07.025  
My father's co-workers at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.

0:33:08.000,0:33:10.400  
I see, okay.

0:33:10.400,0:33:13.464  
So it's like a family friends

0:33:13.464,0:33:15.960  
for us.

0:33:15.960,0:33:23.520  
Interesting! So what were your first impressions of Silver Spring, Maryland, when you first started to walk around and

0:33:24.660,0:33:29.820  
discover this new place that you're living in? What was going through your mind? What thoughts did you have?

0:33:29.820,0:33:36.337  
At the very first days, I was.. I had tons of pressures on my shoulder.

0:33:36.337,0:33:39.099

It was challenging

0:33:39.099,0:33:44.366  
for me. Talk.. I mean, interacting with people..

0:33:44.366,0:33:47.514  
I didn't know the language very,

0:33:47.514,0:33:53.745  
very well, and it's not that.. it's not so good  
now, as well, I'm just trying.

0:33:53.745,0:33:55.440  
You're doing very well.

0:33:56.160,0:34:00.847  
Thank you! At those days,

0:34:00.847,0:34:03.666  
it was very hard to interact with people.

0:34:03.666,0:34:05.901  
I didn't want to go out, I didn't want to go..

0:34:05.901,0:34:09.181  
I just wanted to be inside..

0:34:09.181,0:34:11.520  
inside the house. Inside that apartment.

0:34:12.240,0:34:14.364  
But after..

0:34:14.364,0:34:23.175  
after days and months, I just realized that it's not a good strategy to live in the United  
States.  
I have..

0:34:23.175,0:34:26.596  
I have to go out and know some people.

0:34:26.596,0:34:28.120  
And then I just started

0:34:28.120,0:34:36.460  
walking around, because I didn't have any bike, any cars, anything. I just walk around

0:34:36.460,0:34:39.797  
Silver Spring downtown, and it was..

0:34:39.797,0:34:47.584  
it was beautiful. Silver Spring downtown is very beautiful. There are so many people,

0:34:47.584,0:34:55.427  
it has diversity, with people from different ethnicities, from different countries, or..

0:34:55.427,0:34:59.304  
I kind of feel like it's okay,

0:34:59.304,0:35:02.937  
it's fine

0:35:02.937,0:35:07.353  
to live here among these people and talk to them.

0:35:07.353,0:35:11.520  
How did you first find out about Montgomery College?

0:35:12.720,0:35:13.350

0:35:13.350,0:35:24.157  
Actually, the first thing that I focused on while arriving in the United States was educating myself, studying the

0:35:24.157,0:35:31.203  
the fields that I wanted to study in India. So I asked people out there. There was..

0:35:31.203,0:35:36.306  
There was an Afghan family that had children at the same age as my

0:35:36.306,0:35:42.705  
my brothers and siblings, and they were..

0:35:42.705,0:35:47.395  
they were.. almost finished their high schools, and they were trying to apply

0:35:47.395,0:35:55.505  
for a university or college for their studies.

0:35:55.505,0:36:00.456  
And I asked them, "what is the best choice for me

0:36:00.456,0:36:10.192  
to go to college? Which one is the best college that I should attend?" And one of those persons suggested me Montgomery College,

0:36:10.192,0:36:21.631  
because this is a community college, the expenses are low, and it's near our house, our apartment. I don't have to take a ride to go

0:36:21.631,0:36:31.380  
to the university. It was a good choice for me, and then I just applied and got some classes there.

0:36:33.000,0:36:35.937  
Was the first class that you took my class?

0:36:35.937,0:36:39.003  
Yes, the one and only.

0:36:39.003,0:36:41.877  
That's the only class you took at Montgomery College?

0:36:41.877,0:36:44.864  
Yes, because I had work to do

0:36:44.864,0:36:52.731  
during the day. It was a nine to five job, and I had to take classes during the night.

0:36:52.731,0:36:53.471  
I just wanted..

0:36:53.471,0:36:56.811  
what kind of job did you have during the day?

0:36:56.811,0:37:03.120  
I was working at Accenture. The work that I do now, I had that job, at that time.

0:37:04.140,0:37:06.797  
Who helped you find that job?

0:37:06.797,0:37:14.515  
Accenture CEO Julie Sweet helped us

0:37:14.515,0:37:19.860  
to get this job. She helped us a lot during the settlement process,

0:37:19.860,0:37:30.784  
and she kind of gave us that job. We started there as an intern, and then after one year we..

0:37:30.784,0:37:35.040  
we had an offer from them for a full-time employment.

0:37:36.960,0:37:41.400  
That's really interesting, and so you're  
working at Accenture now, too, and you're

0:37:41.400,0:37:42.795  
going into computer science.

0:37:42.795,0:37:43.883

0:37:43.883,0:37:49.713  
When you.. so you were at Montgomery College for only one class,

0:37:49.713,0:37:52.976  
for a short amount of time and it was in the  
evening,

0:37:52.976,0:37:55.834  
if I remember that correctly, it was a night class, right?

0:37:55.834,0:37:57.108  
yes, yes!

0:37:57.108,0:38:07.291  
And we went to the National Museum of African American History and Culture that semester, we  
went down to the mall, we went to the museum.

0:38:07.291,0:38:16.260  
You created a digital story about your experience there. So this is.. this experience of being  
in DC

0:38:17.340,0:38:22.560  
and going to the museum was maybe one  
of the first experiences that you had

0:38:23.880,0:38:29.236  
in that area, in downtown DC after you arrived, is that right?

0:38:29.236,0:38:31.274  
Actually, I've been there before.

0:38:31.274,0:38:33.789  
Okay. So tell me..

0:38:33.789,0:38:38.890  
Go ahead. Tell me a little bit about your experiences in Washington DC, then.

0:38:38.890,0:38:42.643  
Actually, I had a friend that were here

0:38:42.643,0:38:57.799  
three years ago, before I arrived here. So one day he just called me, "I want to see you I want  
to hang out with you." And he just called me and we went there in downtown DC,

0:38:57.799,0:39:05.451  
in the mall side. We went there and saw everything and we just walked around everything,

0:39:05.451,0:39:13.176  
and asked about every single piece of art there, and it was very

0:39:13.176,0:39:16.125  
interesting for me. And knowing..

0:39:16.125,0:39:21.762  
understanding things about those arts that..

0:39:21.762,0:39:34.729

that's located in Washington, and taking pictures with a friend and having discussions with all the things that happened during the journey that I

0:39:34.729,0:39:38.931  
came here, and yeah, that was really interesting. And the..

0:39:38.931,0:39:45.638  
the museum event was my second time that I went to DC area.

0:39:45.638,0:39:49.080  
What I remember the most about

0:39:50.040,0:39:57.840  
that semester and about you, was being in that Museum and looking at the African-American

0:39:57.840,0:40:04.980  
flag, the work of art in the African-American..  
Museum of African-American history and culture,

0:40:04.980,0:40:12.120  
and I remember watching you looking at that flag which is different from the red white and blue

0:40:12.120,0:40:17.359  
that we usually see and I was wondering what you were thinking, and later you wrote

0:40:17.359,0:40:25.860  
the script for your digital story, and you put together this digital story, and you talked about

0:40:27.060,0:40:33.660  
your friendship for another student in the class who's also from Afghanistan and I found your

0:40:33.660,0:40:38.760  
story very moving. I was wondering if you  
could talk a little bit about that, about

0:40:39.480,0:40:44.055  
what your message was in that digital story and

0:40:44.055,0:40:46.860  
your thoughts about that experience in the museum?

0:40:47.820,0:40:53.643  
So basically the the flag of African-Americans has the same colors..

0:40:53.643,0:40:57.891  
same colors with my

0:40:57.891,0:41:01.510  
country flag it's green, blue and red..

0:41:01.510,0:41:04.504  
green, black and red.

0:41:04.504,0:41:05.004

0:41:05.004,0:41:12.953  
So I kind of looked at that flag and I remembered the

0:41:12.953,0:41:18.691  
flag of my country, that is not there today.

0:41:18.691,0:41:28.200  
The Taliban don't accept that flag, and they have a new flag for them that is not acceptable  
for us, and our flag is not acceptable for them.

0:41:28.740,0:41:30.776  
So, this was

0:41:30.776,0:41:37.440  
my thoughts at that day that I was looking at that flag, and about the digital story,



0:41:38.100,0:41:45.060  
I just wanted to express that every ethnicity inside a country belongs to that country.

0:41:45.060,0:41:48.756  
The reason that there is..

0:41:48.756,0:41:52.074  
there was a civil war from very

0:41:52.074,0:41:57.817  
past inside Afghanistan is this reason, and that they don't accept

0:41:57.817,0:42:03.257  
some specific ethnicities inside that country. And they..

0:42:03.257,0:42:04.677  
they just want..

0:42:04.677,0:42:08.659  
they just wanted to remove those ethnicities from..

0:42:08.659,0:42:11.400  
from the country.

0:42:11.400,0:42:12.300

0:42:12.300,0:42:14.957  
And my friend Taqi was

0:42:14.957,0:42:26.820  
one member of that community that they wanted to remove that ethnicity and community from the country, and I kind of felt very

0:42:27.840,0:42:35.160  
upset for for him, as well, and I just created the digital story focusing on their ethnicity

0:42:35.160,0:42:40.938  
and just why they have been killed and why

0:42:40.938,0:42:44.340  
they started a genocide on that community.

0:42:44.340,0:42:46.340  
I found the..

0:42:46.440,0:42:49.160  
your digital story was very emotionally moving

0:42:49.440,0:42:52.800  
because it was such a powerful message of friendship.

0:42:53.880,0:42:55.030  
I remember it was very beautiful.

0:42:56.000,0:43:03.667  
-Thank you.  
-So you had one class at MC and then you moved to Stafford Virginia? Is that..

0:43:03.667,0:43:04.911  
When did you move there?

0:43:04.911,0:43:10.860  
Actually we moved here, January 1st of 2023.

0:43:11.460,0:43:15.465  
So after the class there finished,

0:43:15.465,0:43:17.261  
we planned to move.

0:43:17.261,0:43:20.382  
We were searching for houses

0:43:20.382,0:43:24.287  
during the class that we had and

0:43:24.287,0:43:35.489  
we bought it and we could have come so early and I told my father that I have class in here, I have to finish it, I have to take the exam and then we can move.

0:43:35.489,0:43:41.700  
So we moved here after the class that I had in Montgomery College.

0:43:42.660,0:43:48.040  
Did you.. or do you have friends in Stafford?  
Is that why you chose Stafford Virginia?

0:43:48.040,0:43:49.009  
We,

0:43:49.009,0:43:52.581  
actually my father's..

0:43:52.581,0:44:00.263  
My father and my father's co-workers they all planned to buy houses in the same area. That they..

0:44:00.263,0:44:07.800  
they wanted to be near each other, and they all chose Stafford, Virginia.

0:44:10.440,0:44:12.955  
I had.. the friend that I mentioned before

0:44:12.955,0:44:23.371  
that I went to in DC before, he is living in Fredericksburg, Virginia. They're some miles away from me, but

0:44:23.371,0:44:32.190  
the only purpose of choosing Stafford is to be with each other, near each other..

0:44:32.190,0:44:37.697  
So there's a community of Afghans in this area?

0:44:37.697,0:44:39.267  
Yeah there's a lot of

0:44:39.267,0:44:51.475  
Afghans in this area. When I go to the Masjid, the Mosque, there I see many Afghan people praying there, and just we.. when we..

0:44:51.475,0:44:56.148  
when we see them, we just feel like we are in Afghanistan.

0:44:56.148,0:45:01.200  
It must help to have a community when you're adjusting to

0:45:01.800,0:45:04.040  
a new culture and a new place.

0:45:04.040,0:45:09.483  
Yes, a lot, it helps a lot.

0:45:09.483,0:45:17.640  
Can you tell me a little bit about your goals. I know you're applying to, or have applied to George Mason. Tell me a little bit about

0:45:19.140,0:45:23.490  
your goals for your career and for your

education.

0:45:23.490,0:45:25.854  
My current goal is to

0:45:25.854,0:45:30.160  
being stable at my work that I'm doing in  
my current job,

0:45:30.160,0:45:39.290  
and finishing my education, as I mentioned, I want to study computer science at George Mason  
University.

0:45:39.290,0:45:49.601  
I'm trying to attend there for the fall semester, so I want to start my career and finish it

0:45:49.601,0:45:56.143  
in computer science area. So that is my goal for the next few years.

0:45:56.143,0:45:59.280  
Where do you see yourself in five years?

0:46:01.380,0:46:03.475  
Actually,

0:46:03.475,0:46:15.966  
My goals are to finish these jobs.. these computer science education and I want to start my

0:46:15.966,0:46:20.509  
my own business. In five years, I don't want to work

0:46:20.509,0:46:26.156  
for anybody else. I want to work for myself. I want to start my business, I want to start..

0:46:26.156,0:46:29.845  
I want to have my own company that

0:46:29.845,0:46:34.610  
some day I want to have employees that work for me.

0:46:34.610,0:46:39.757  
I don't want to work for anybody else in the next five years.

0:46:39.757,0:46:46.380  
Can you tell me a little bit, if you thought about it, what kind of company you want to have?  
Would it be like a computer consulting company?

0:46:48.060,0:46:49.206  
I think it should be.

0:46:49.206,0:46:56.622  
I want to study cyber security, or..

0:46:56.622,0:47:02.923  
I want to study computer science, but I'm focusing on cyber security.

0:47:02.923,0:47:07.088  
So I want to make a company that provides security

0:47:07.088,0:47:12.221  
for other companies that want to start their  
business.

0:47:12.221,0:47:13.233  
I want to have that.

0:47:13.233,0:47:22.860  
Now that you're living in Virginia, does it feel like home now? Or does home still feel like  
Afghanistan?

0:47:25.200,0:47:29.000

I think it's home for me now.

0:47:29.800,0:47:31.000  
In Virginia?

0:47:31.200,0:47:32.767  
It's a home for me because

0:47:32.767,0:47:41.315  
we bought a house and we are living in here, so it's a home, but the original home is somewhere else.

0:47:41.315,0:47:47.369  
It's not Virginia, it's not Paris, it's not anywhere else on this side.

0:47:47.369,0:47:50.640  
It's only one place, that is Afghanistan.

0:47:52.320,0:47:55.110  
Do you feel hopeful about the future of Afghanistan?

0:47:55.110,0:47:59.220  
Yes, I am very..

0:48:00.240,0:48:05.790  
I think some day Afghanistan will be free of these..

0:48:05.790,0:48:11.614  
chaos and these bad moments that it's suffering from now.

0:48:11.614,0:48:15.888  
And I hope one day

0:48:15.888,0:48:25.200  
it's a free country, that everyone can go there and live inside Afghanistan. So I am kind of hope and waiting for that day.

0:48:26.820,0:48:33.180  
We've talked about some pretty challenging memories, some difficult memories about your

0:48:33.180,0:48:37.440  
experiences coming here. How are you feeling about telling your story today?

0:48:37.440,0:48:40.872  
How does it feel like? What emotions are you experiencing?

0:48:40.872,0:48:44.340  
I think remembering the past days and

0:48:45.300,0:48:50.420  
sharing with someone is.. for me it's kind of interesting.

0:48:50.420,0:48:57.463  
I really like when I see people sitting there and listening to my story, listening to

0:48:57.463,0:49:04.463  
to what I have experienced through my life. I think it's very interesting. I want to say a big thank you for you

0:49:04.463,0:49:14.440  
for giving me this chance to share my story and listening to it. So it feels very amazing for me.

0:49:14.440,0:49:22.440  
I think it's very important for Americans to understand the experiences of Afghans who came here and are

0:49:22.440,0:49:28.440

rebuilding their lives here, so I'm really grateful to you for taking the time to tell me about it.

0:49:28.440,0:49:32.880

I know we don't have a lot of time today. Is there anything else you would like to add? Something

0:49:32.880,0:49:36.962

important that you want to say or add to our conversation before we finish?

0:49:39.960,0:49:49.380

I don't know if anyone, any Afghans that is watching this video, or I don't know where they can watch these, but if

0:49:49.380,0:49:58.140

any Afghans watching this video, not only Afghans but other refugees that suffered those hard days

0:49:58.140,0:50:05.452

of leaving their country, I just want them to hear that life is going.

0:50:05.452,0:50:15.660

Life is just going day by day. You have to be strong, you have to be patient, and you have to carry yourself

0:50:15.660,0:50:23.400

and make your future. The past is just something that is gone, you have to focus on your future.

0:50:25.400,0:50:26.294

That's a great way to end

0:50:26.294,0:50:31.880

our conversation today. Thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it. I'm going to stop recording now.

-Thank you!