

AF: The following interview was conducted with Nypiat Ayouk

NA: Uh...

AF: for the Star City Treasures AmeriCorps History Project. It took place on January 24, 2007 at F St. Community Center and the interviewer is Alison Fees. Okay, um, Nypiat, we're just gonna start by um, talking about your childhood a little bit. Where was it that you were born?

NA: Yeah, my name is uh, Nypiat uh, Ayuok. I was born uh, uh, on April 3, 1973, in the area called \_\_\_\_\_ which is a city in western Sudan. The state is called \_\_\_\_\_.

AF: Okay um, tell me about where you grew up. What was it-what did it look like?

NA: Yeah. After I was born, we stay in \_\_\_\_\_ for three years 'till uh-

AF: Stayed at what?

NA: 'Till, until uh-19-for three years-until 19 uh, 75 when y-when we move to our area which is called \_\_\_\_\_. Uh, it is uh, area in southern \_\_\_\_\_ and we stay there for two years 'till 1977, we moved to the south-southern Sudan uh, in a city called Wau-W-A-U, where I started the school. Uh, I started the school in 1978 when I was five years old. I started first grade. In Sudan they used to start the school uh, at seven years but uh, my father was a principal of that school and I like school so much so I'm [laughs] I'm started out year of five um, uh...

AF: So, all the other kids were two years older than you?

NA: Yeah.

AF: [laughs]

NA: We stayed there in Wau 'til 1982 when we moved to another Sudan again to area-to the same area when I was born which is called \_\_\_\_\_. My mother had uh, course or school to have-to study medical assistant in that area so we stayed there from 1982 'till 1984. Uh, when I entered middle school, we moved to Khartoum. When my mother done with that school, we move-we move-we move to Khartoum which is um, capital of Sudan and then after my-my parents left back to the south and they leave me with my uncle in Khartoum. That because um, in southern Sudan they use uh, English is the major language in school and, because I spent all of my time, which is a part of elementary school and middle school in the northern Sudan, so I I-I know Arabic more than English so they left me in Khartoum to stay to continue my study in Khartoum and

then they go back southern Sudan to the same area which is c-is called Wau. In Khartoum I study my-I finish, uh, middle school and enter high school...

AF: So-

NA: The first year of high school I studied in the middle of Sudan, I move with my uncle there. I studied there in you call uh, \_\_\_\_\_ which is um, \_\_\_\_\_. We stayed in Sudan-middle of Sudan and then I-I came back Khartoum to start um, high school I st-I start high school in the school called \_\_\_\_\_ -area called \_\_\_\_\_ which is uh, western part of the river Nile. I'm studied there and uh, for three years and, after that, I'm done with my high school.

AF: How old were you then when your parents left you with your uncle?

NA: I was thirteen.

AF: Fifteen?

NA: Thirteen.

AF: Thirteen.

NA: Yeah.

AF: And they left you there so that your English would-you would be working on your English?

NA: Yeah, English in northern Sudan is a subject.

AF: Right.

NA: But, in southern Sudan it's the language. Yeah so, all material being taught there in English but, in northern Sudan all material or all subjects are English-er-English it's only a class just for one hour a day.

AF: Ah...What-what did your parents do? You said your mom did-she was studying um, medical...

NA: Assistant.

AF: Assistant.

NA: Yeah.

AF: And, and what did your father do?

NA: My father, he is uh, um, he's graduate from a college of education major English. So, he's a English teacher-high school English teacher.

AF: Okay. Um, I'm gonna jump back just a little. What's your earliest memory-your earliest childhood memory? Do you know?

NA: Yeah. I have strong moments that I can remember something when I was two years old. When we moved from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. I remember that. I-I start remember those things. They comes to me like a dream when I was uh, seven years old. So, I asked my mother. I-I feel I-I dream-it's not exactly dream. I-it comes like imagination when you wa-yeah. So, I ask my mother how uh, we enter the car and how we travel and mother says that it's okay, that it's true, that it happened, we move. So, I remember many things from my childhood. Uh, when I was a child I am so quiet, I can't talk and even I talk, I talk to specific people, like my mom and my dad and my auntie and my grandma, yeah.

AF: So, you didn't like talking to anybody else?

NA: No, I don't like anybody [laughs]

AF: [laughs] That's funny. Um, what are some family traditions that your family had when you were little?

NA: Family tradition? What do you mean by that?

AF: Um, something you did every year as a family um, that was more specific to your family, like-like my family would celebrate Christmas every year and we put presents under the tree.

NA: Y-yeah in Sudan, um, my family are Christians so we celebrate all Christians uh, so many-they all Christian traditions we do like Christmas, Easter, all these.

AF: Um, customs-what are some family customs?

NA: In Sudan?

AF: Yeah. That you had when you were little.

NA: I cannot think so...because their custom is their life. We have the live every day yeah, like in Sudan we have like, for example, we eat breakfast at ten or nine and we have uh, the lunch like three to four and then we have um, dinner at eight, yeah, eight or-between seven and eight. Till now I can't eat ear-early morning. I can't do that.

AF: Can't eat breakfast?

NA: No.

AF: They-you-instead, you have a cup of tea or-

NA: Yeah, I just drink tea in the morning and then-

AF: And then you wait until-'till?

NA: Yeah, until I get back and then sometimes maybe I have a lunch like twelve but that is not-doesn't happen usually yeah, because I used to do this so, when I get back to my home I have like, a dinner, yeah.

AF: Uh, what is your favorite food-your favorite Sudanese food? Can you tell us about it?

NA: Yeah, yeah, yeah. We have the same food-the same Sudanese food most of us-the food that here like the-like okra or green vegetables are the bad for me. I like the starch and carbohydrates foods since I was-

AF: Starch and carbohydrates?

NA: Yeah, starch yeah, and carbohydrates like sugar, yeah. I tried to-to decrease that but, it's still my favorite food.

AF: [laughs] um...traditions...um...So, let's get back to your education. So, you graduated from high school then in, um, when you were like, seventeen you said?

NA: Yeah, seventeen-seventeen years-yeah, seventeen.

AF: And that was in Khartoum?

NA: Khartoum.

AF: Okay. And then you continued your education, right?

NA: Yeah, I entered uh, Khartoum University of Khartoum uh, in Khartoum.

AF: And what did you study?

NA: Yeah. When I entered the university, I-I was going to study pharmacy. Yeah, dentistry's not-it never been my-my choice. Even I didn't not wro-write that down in my admission form but, what-wha-what happened when I started there is uh, entering lab-I have lab allergies-chemistry lab allergies. I have allergies.

AF: You have allergies?

NA: Yeah, I have allergies from chemicals. So, I started first year ha-very hard and then when I start second year, it become more difficult.

AF: The pharmacy?

NA: Yeah, when I started pharmacy school yeah, it got more difficult because, in pharmacy most of classes are labs yeah, every day you have-someday you have all day lab. So, it become difficult for me to attend uh, organic chemistry labs. So, from that point-

AF: You were just-you were allergic to everything?

NA: Yeah. I allergic to chemicals no so-who knows what kind of chemicals-

AF: So, you started sneezing or...?

NA: Yeah, sneezing

AF: ...or just...?

NA: Uh, water eyes

AF: Uh huh.

NA: Sometimes I not able to see. I have like, asthma. Yeah, so at that time I-I wrote an application to the admission office of the university and after the a-the admission office refused my application because I still want to study science so-

AF: They refused it?

NA: Yeah, they-yeah they refuse it-they rejected my-they-they denied my application because they-they are saying that if I have a allergy to the chemicals, that mean all science schools they have-have lab. So, at last thing, I decide to visit the president of the university. He was a doctor, he was a physician in his clinic, yeah...

AF: You just went straight to the top?

NA: Yeah, yeah, because I can't reach him in his office. I am still a student and he is the president of university. And, what's the reason? No so-nobody can allow me to do that. So, I just went to his clinic at evening time and I talk to receptionist that I'm a student and I'm need to see, his name is called \_\_\_\_\_. I need to see \_\_\_\_\_.

AF: You talked to the-

NA: The receptionist, yeah the receptionist in his clinic.

AF: It was like-you said it was like, cleaning time?

NA: Yeah, clinic time.

AF: It was like

NA: Yeah.

AF: Like, it was time for him to go home, he's like on his way out the door?

NA: There is no way, there is no-I need to see him anyway. So, I gave the receptionist my ID-student ID and-and after that, she came-she come-she came back to the office and she told me he said you will be the last patient-they thought that I was sick. I'm start waiting 'till 10 PM-ten-ten o'clock PM.

AF: You'd be the last patient?

NA: Yeah.

AF: So, you went-

NA: They thought that I am patient.

AF: Oh, oh.

NA: Yeah.

AF: Cause he's a doctor.

NA: So, and I-yeah, and I-I don't have to pay money because I'm a student, he's a student. So, when he comes around ten, I just-I feel scared and how-what I going to tell him? So, I left.

AF: [laughs]

NA: I lef-and I left my ID. I stay for one week and then I c-come back again.

AF: Did you leave your ID on purpose?

NA: Yeah, in his office-his office.

AF: On purpose?

NA: Yeah-no, I just-

AF: You just forgot it, you're like?

NA: No, I didn't forget it but, there is no way-yeah, I feel scared and I feel fear and from him-what I am going to tell him? He is the president of the university and I am not sick

AF: [laughs]

NA: and he thought that I'm sick. So I left and stay for one week and then I decided to needed to go back again and bring back my ID. So, at that time, I talked to the receptionist again, I want to see \_\_\_\_\_. The receptionist says that, last time you left your ID and he's still keeping that

AF: [laughs]

NA: he's still waiting for you. So, she-she talked to him that in phone, that she's here, that student she's here today and sh-she wants to see you. So, he said, let her come in. At time, I don't know how I feeling. Yeah, I just get in his office and I sit down and he told me, can you tell me exactly what do you want? Yeah, I get confusing.

AF: [laughs]

NA: Yeah, but, I told him, yeah, I'm a student in the college pharmacy and I have allergies with-in especially with organic chemistry lab and the-I have to be transferred to another college and the admission office says that uh, they said y-they have to transfer me to a college-of \_\_\_\_\_or business administration or \_\_\_\_\_ and I don't want to study those. He told me, okay, what do you want to study? Can you tell me? I just keep silent. He told me, know you have to do the one because now you take attempt to come to me and, since I become the president of this university, I-I-I-I didn't used to see students in my office because this is a clinic and I you-and-and you decide to do that so, tell me, what kind of study do you want? Do you want to study medicine or uh, dentistry or agriculture? What do you want to study? I told him that I want to study medicine but, if you transfer me to dentistry, I don't have a problem. Yeah, at that time, just wanting to come to my done-I didn't mind from where I have that because I don't like it at that time-I-I just-

AF: You don't know why you said dentistry?

NA: Yeah, I don-I don't know-know why I say dentistry.

AF: [laughs]

NA: I just did, yeah. So he told me, okay, just go to the dean of the college of dentistry and tell him that you want to transfer to college of dentistry. I tell him-and I am agree-tell him that the president of the university agree to transfer me without paper, without anything. I tell him, okay, how he going to believes me? You have to write something for me, he tell me, no. Go talk to him. I know you can do that because what you did now is not something easy for a student to do. So go to that dean and talk to him and after that, he will call me and I will discuss to him everything. So, the dean also of-uh, the

dean of the dentistry's not-yeah...it seem to me that he's bad person for me, yeah. So I just came uh, after I done with that I feel there is nothing, there is no solution for my-my problem.

AF: Cause you didn't like the dean of dentistry.

NA: Yeah, I didn't li-how the dean going to rely that-how I am going to tell him, the president of the po-give me paper or not for that? So, I talked to one of my friends. She was-at that time she was graduate student and we stay in the dorm together and I talk to her-I need to see the college of dentistry and Professor \_\_\_\_\_ told me to talk to him. She told me, go-go that dean. I repeat the same thing-I just go to the receptionist and told her, I want to see the dean and she told me, what's the reason? I told her, I don't know, just I want to see him. Yeah, he-she told me come-come after two hours. When I-when it's two hours, I came back but, I feel also, there is no reason to talk to him. So, I escape away [laughs] that appointment. I stay for one week again-

AF: You just left?

NA: Yeah, I left. I stayed just for one week and then it-come-the dean back and I tell her, I want to see the dean. When I-while I talking to the re-receptionist, the dean comes out from his office and he looks at me and he said, are you Niapat? I told him, yes. Okay, last time you have an appointment with me and you miss that appointment. Can you come in to me and tell me what do you need? So we get to the office and then I tell him that like, I visit \_\_\_\_\_ the president of the university before two weeks and I tell him that I want transfer-to transfer from college of pharmacy to college of dentistry. The problem that dentistry superior than-than uh, pharmacy. So he told me, what was the reason? What the reason? And, where you meet with \_\_\_\_\_. I told him I meet him in his clinic and I have allergy so I can't continue study pharmacy. He told me, okay, all this I need to talk to him on the phone so come to me this afternoon and I need to talk to admission office-university admission office first. So when I came in afternoon, he told me that no, I'm sorry, because the admission office refused that they say you gone, transfer from pharmacy to dentistry you can't do to get down to agriculture but, to get up, you can't do that. So, at that time I decide to go to the office of the president of the university and I talked to receptionist there, I told her that like, before two weeks \_\_\_\_\_ told me-he agree for me to transfer from-to college of dentistry but now the admission office refused. She said, can you write that down for me because I cannot-I can-I can't believe what are you telling about? So I-I write the application again and-and second day he decide and he talked to the dean of the college of dentistry, he said, I am president of this university and this is my decision. I want Niapat to transfer from college of pharmacy [laughs] to college of dentistry.

AF: [laughs]

NA: Everyone was-everyone was surprised how that had happened because they say that \_\_\_\_\_ is a bad guy and he's not good person so, how he do that to you? I told him-them, I don't know and, without the permission from admission office. He said, I don't

care. I am president of this uh, university. So, the admission office-the director of the admission office, he become too upset from that and-and he's still keeping my papers. He's supposed to write the agreement that this student has been transferred from college of dentistry to college of pharmacy to dentistry but he doesn't want to do that. I started to study dentistry as a resident said and the dean of college agreed but he didn't want to write them to transfer my paper work so at last he did. And I studied dentistry and I feel that I was happy and that was my best place. And now this prof. he has a program. A TV Program yeah, medical. The President of University on Sudan TV now. So sometimes when I look on TV when I look at him on TV I don't know I have to tell him, whatever I do I don't know how I can tell him what he did to me, and he is still young, and I hope when I go back to Sudan someday I can visit him, laughs, because he works hard with me.

AF: So you studied dentistry at the University of Kartum and you didn't finish your studies there, right?

NA: Yeah.

AF: How many years did that take?

NA: It is suppose to be five years, but because of the tent of the war in Southern Sudan they use to close the Universities for sometimes 6 months, so I studied from 1992 until 1998 so,

AF: And then you graduated from the School of Dentistry from the University of Kartum, in '98' and you started practicing dentistry in Kartum then?

NA: Yeah I started doing that and after that I really practiced dentistry in Kyro, Egypt at University of Kyro.

AF: Why did you moved from Kartum to Egypt.

NA: Yeah, I feel insecurities in Sudan and not political. But the problem, I have relatives use to in what is called Espian, a movement in Southern Sudan so after I graduate from the college of dentistry I face many problems., yeah, just because I have relatives in Southern Sudan.

AF: Something I don't think we covered, what, is that you are Dinka,

NA: I am Dinka, but my relatives-

AF: And is it your Dinka relatives that-?

NA: No, my family part of my family in that war so they mean to me, to hurt me a lot.

AF: And they could tell you were related to them because of your last name or?

NA: They know because they know, for many reasons they can know because of their security in Sudan, like FBI here if they want to know about you they can do.

AF: So they have their eye on you be-

NA: Yeah even when I study the University I face many problems, yeah like discrimination or many problems, yeah

AF: Like how did they discriminate against you at the University? What would be an example?

NA: Yeah, like when I graduate from University, yeah nearest example would be I can did in my exam well, but sometimes I can get negative results. I don't know why.

AF: Like you can do well on an essay-

NA: Yeah, essay everything would be one, but I can't do well, and there is no way to review your exam in Sudan.

AF: So you felt insecure in Kartum because of your family members who were more involved politically. You felt the Government did not-

NA: Even my processing, it was difficult to get a job everything was difficult for me, yeah so that time I decided to leave Sudan.

AF: Even to get a job in Sudan?

NA: I get a job but in the western war line areas but that is too dangerous for me.

AF: When was it you met your husband?

NA: Yeah I met my husband when we were in high school, when I was 16 years old and I think he was 20 something, twenty-four or three of twenty five years old. But at that time you cannot date at that time, in Sudan when you are sixteen that is something strange.

AF: You can't date? Until you are how old?

NA: That depends on families, there is no like 18 or 20 but for me I think the main reason I was busy with my school

AF: So it was your parents-?

NA: Yeah, my parents encouraging me a lot to do school work so I feel I do not have the time to date somebody or waste my time doing that if I cannot give a time for him to talk to me he just write me letters. I just didn't have time to do so. And after that I he came to the University, 1994 I think, and I still refuse him, I told him that I still study I do not

have the time and for financial reasons he leave the University and came to Egypt looking for best place to study so after I graduate from the University in 1998 I came to Egypt, the purpose of that journey, I just follow my brother. Because, after he done with high school the government recruit them to military services, to go to the army and my parents don't want my brother don't want my brother to do that.

AF: The country-

NA: Yeah it is the law in Sudan after boys, enforce all graduate high school graduate students to work in military services for two years and after that they start University

AF: but your parents sent him to Egypt instead.

NA: yeah sent my brother to Egypt, but he was 16 years old. So need somebody to bring him to Egypt so after I graduate I bring him to Egypt with him and I meet my husband again and from that time we decide to marry then I go back to Sudan, I stay in Egypt for two months then I went back to Sudan after I start my job and I get many problems.

AF: More problems because of discrimination?

NA: Yeah more discriminations.

AF: And it's mainly because of your last name and your association with-

NA: In general maybe that, that can be a reason, but in general Northern Sudan and Sudanese they don't like Southern Sudanese they don't like, so when you work with them you can get problems as when you work with a supervisor who doesn't like you, so I decide to leave that job and come to Egypt. So my goal was to come to King Nairobi where's my uncle is there and I can practice my dentistry there in Nairobi or I can work with, I can get a job with international organization that surface in Southern Sudan

AF: that was your goal at that time.

NA: yeah at the time. But when I came to Egypt my uncle who was in Nairobi, he visited Egypt once upon a time and he advised me to apply to the refugee asylum

AF: The refugee what?

NA: Assylum

AF: Assylum?

NA: Yea, all of the east states of the United Nation because he thinks that area is too insecure for us.

AF: Nairobi was too insecure?

NA: Yea, yea because he saw that when I, if I get a job with organizations that work in southern Sudan that would be too hard, too hard for me to lose that job, so he decide that it is better for me to apply to the United Nation and if they accepted me-my case-you could go to western countries and there you can get jobs to continue your education. And if there better until there will be peace in Sudan, so I get filling out my application with my case with what I face in Sudan and I had interviews and I case at that time and after they give you, after they look at your application, they send your name to an organization called IOM which actually is International Organization for Migrants or something like that. It's called IOM. IOM prepares you to do interview with the INS. After INS has said to you "You can come here to the United States."

AF: What was wrong with Egypt because you were there-you went there to get away from what was going on in Sudan and it was okay for awhile, but then?

NA: No, yea I went to Egypt because it was easier to travel to, it's easier to get a visa to go to Egypt but I can travel from Sudan to Nairobi, Kenya, but that is difficult. And I don't have the time because they want me any time and they were looking for me so I decided to go to take the easier way.

AF: Why not stay in Egypt though?

NA: In Egypt there is no job.

AF: There's just too many people there.

NA: Yea.

AF: Because everyone

NA: Yea even Egyptians and Muslims they were not working, yea so for people it would be more difficult so I practiced dentistry in Egypt because it was free I guess I want to have experience.

AF: You worked for free during dentistry?

NA: Yea, yea.

AF: Okay. So then you applied to the United Nations refugee-you put in your application for that and how long was it?

NA: Six months.

AF: Six months?

NA: Yea.

AF: And then how did..they got a hold of you and said “Nypiat, your-

NA: Yea,

AF: Come in on the seventh?

NA: Yea, because they have a wall like here they put the name and application and have intercepted or accepted or denied application. If you find your name on the acceptance group that means they accept you.

AF: And they just how do they do they just give you a date and a plane ticket or

NA: Yea, after you turn in your application, they give you a date for interview and after interview usually the result appears in after two weeks or three weeks.

AF: Okay.

NA: And then you can, they give you another appointment to do I.D.

AF: To do what?

NA: I.D. Yea, and then after that they transfer you to countries some people they transfer themselves to their names to Canada Embassy or to Australian Embassy or to the United States Embassy.

AF: Do you have any choice in what country?

NA: Yea, you can. Yea, sometimes you have a choice. They prefer for single people or who have big families to go to Australia or Canada because they support families more than the United States but if you are single or just married yea, you can send your name to the United States.

AF: So you requested the United States?

NA: I didn't request it, but they sent my name.

AF: You did not request it?

NA: Yea.

AF: What did you request?

NA: No, I think sometime I did not have a choice. I just went to areas that I can feel free and get education and get a good life. Yes.

AF: And you..that's what you requested, so they sent you to

NA: Yea, I was afraid to come to the United States because my husband also, he has been accepted in Canada, yea, to go to Canada, because he has his brother there, his younger brother, but I don't see us to go to Canada. It is too cold there. It is better for us to go to the United States. (laughs)

AF: So, you had him switch to go to the United States?

NA: Yea.

AF: And how did you what was your knowledge of the United States up to that point?

NA: I think in Sudan the education in Sudan is a give the students more information about many things. Yea. In Sudan you can ask everybody in the school about the United States and they can tell you about the United States because they have good geography about the United States so I studied geography, United States geography when I was admitted to school, the second year of my school and I still remember the teacher. Her name was Gool Fatima. She was a good teacher and we studied the geography of the United States. And I was as good of student of that also. Yea, I got perfect grades on that class, so I feel I know everything about the United States, even the history. I know part of the history of the United States. So, for me, nothing new. But when I for example when we came to the United States we went to the Salt Lake City, Utah

AF: That's where you first went.

NA: Yea, and I told my husband, you know, this is where we are going to cross mountains. He say "what kind of mountains?" I told him we are going to cross the Rocky Mountains.

AF: You knew

NA: Yea, I know everything, yea.

AF: Wow.

NA: Yea. So when I came to my sister's house I thought I just look into those mountains I feel it difficult to describe what was my feelings were like at that time but I can believe because in my life until that time I didn't admit to want to come to the United States.

AF: You didn't what?

NA: I didn't have a.. I didn't think that I'm going to visit the United States. I didn't have that goal in my life. Yea, when I was younger I feel that after I graduate from the University, I can go to the United Kingdom to study master university and then go back to Sudan. But the United States, I never wanted to be here.

AF: And why is that?

NA: The United States we have geography everything, but when we saw the movies from the United States, yea, we feel that it is insecure there is a lot of crimes here in the United States and we feel that there is discrimination about black and white all this movies. Yea. Give me the impression that there is no need to go to that country. Yea, I still know everything about it, but I still am not going there.

AF: What were some of the movies?

NA: I can't remember, but I saw a lot of movies.

AF: A lot of them?

NA: Yea, a lot of them. And Sudan TV there were a lot of movies, yea, so the movies even when I came to Salt Lake City, my sister believe in the best men apartment I can't sleep at night because I feel somebody is going to come into the windows

AF: Because of the movies?

NA: Yea and I was surprised because Salt Lake City is so quiet. Yea, there is no relationship between the movie, something in my mind and what's going on.

AF: There's no relation.

NA: Yea, I told my sister I told her "Are you sure this is part of the United States?" She told me yes. I thought there is not a lot of cars, there is not a lot of people, there is still everyone is staying in his home, yea, so-

AF: When you left Egypt, your plane wasn't a direct flight to Salt Lake City.

NA: No, no.

AF: Where did you go?

NA: We are supposed to take off from Egypt to the United States on December 17<sup>th</sup>, but what happened, September 17<sup>th</sup>, but due to September events attack of the world claimed to be-

AF: It was September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001?

NA: Yea.

AF: Wow.

NA: So what was supposed to be September 26<sup>th</sup>, and instead of New York, we came through Chicago. Yea.

AF: So you flew on what? the 26<sup>th</sup>?

NA: The 26<sup>th</sup>, yea, September 26<sup>th</sup>. to Chicago.

AF: And then Chicago to Utah?

NA: Yea. Chicago to Utah. We spend night at Chicago and in the morning we travel to Utah, Salt Lake City, and we stay there for nine days.

AF: Nine days?

NA: Yea, as in-

AF: With your sister?

NA: Yea, with my sister and then after we drove to Denver Colorado.

AF: After nine days with your sister, you had already, or you rented a car?

NA: No we took a bus.

AF: Oh, a bus. Okay, you went to Denver.

NA: Denver, Colorado

AF: And why Denver?

NA: That would be because my husband. There is no reason. My husband he has friends and relatives there in Denver, Colorado. And they told him that Utah is no good place to be so come to Colorado.

AF: They told him to leave Utah because it's a bad place?

NA: Yea, yea, you have to leave Utah. And it's not safe. All wrong.

AF: Even though your sister is there?

NA: Yea, yea and I feel I don't I there is something in my heart to do because my husband he just wants to travel to Colorado, so I tell him okay, let us go there and when we got to Denver, all that was false information, because Denver is insecure, big city, there is no job, we didn't find a job, we stay with his friend apartment for six months. He gets looking for a job for six months, but he didn't find, so he decided to come to Nebraska after that.

AF: And why Nebraska?

NA: Because he visit Nebraska before with some of his friends and when he came to Omaha, he thought that this would be good place to live not Denver some people told him that in Nebraska, you can get a job, more than in Colorado, so we moved from Colorado and we came to Lincoln, Nebraska on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2002, and I was pregnant with my 1st daughter, eight months pregnant.

AF: Wow. When was she born?

NA: She was born June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2002.

AF: Okay, so then how was getting to both Chicago and then Utah? How did people welcome you? How did people react? How did you feel when you were there?

NA: In Chicago there is nothing to say because we just got to the airport and we stayed in a small room of some type or something like that and we stopped doing processing of to have INS took our pictures and I got my identification number so after that we entered Chicago at 3 pm and then we stayed at the airport until 9:00 and then after they took us to the hotel. I remember it was raining at that time and we spend night and then in the morning we took us to the airport again and then after that we fly to Utah.

AF: How did you feel in Utah then? Were people good?

NA: They welcome me because I have many relatives there in Utah, like my sister and my cousin, they welcome me and I was very happy in Utah, but my husband, he just think whole time about Denver, Colorado, and his friends there and his relatives there, so-

AF: So you didn't have any bad experiences. It was mostly good as far as arriving in Utah and in Denver and in Lincoln?

NA: Yea, in Denver we took a bus. That was a long drive it was like fifteen hours.

AF: A fifteen hour bus trip?

NA: Fifteen hours. Yea, we cross the mountains, the Rocky Mountains.

AF: Did you like the mountains?

NA: Yea, I like it, but I don't like Denver, for reasons I don't know, I don't like Denver.

AF: Okay, I'm going to go back to your marriage to your husband. What's his name?

NA: His name is called Kuleng.

AF: Kuleng?

NA: Yea, Kuleng K-U-L-E-N-G. Kuleng Steven.

AF: And the Dinka tradition is that the males bring something to give to the bride's family. Could you tell us about that a little bit?

NA: Yea, yea The Dinka traditions the man has to bring cows.

AF: Always cows?

NA: Cows as a dowery.

AF: If they don't have cows can they bring money?

NA: Yea, so my husband they say that he has to marry me like 170 cows and he has to pay 70 as money. One cow is almost \$200. So he pays that money enough to get to the church and now he has to pay the rest which is 100 cow-real cows. So my uncle now he is in his area to bring those cows back to my area, so-

AF: That's very interesting. And sometimes you said that they'll have to fill a pasture instead of a number of cows, it'll be-

NA: yea, yea, yea, sometimes yea

AF: What would be the most cows that you ever?

NA: Sometimes it's uncomfortable you can't count them because you can fill from here to downtown, so you can't count them sometimes.

AF: How did you feel getting on the plane to come to America? What were some things that were going through your mind?

NA: To come here?

AF: Yea, from Egypt.

NA: Yea, The most thing that I was thinking about I thought that when I come here I need to study. I need to get my same bachelors degree in dentistry. But when I get here in Colorado, Denver, I made a very, very good friend, American friend. Her name is called Bridget. She was a graduate student at the University of Colorado, Boulder. And at that time I don't have my transcript of details sent from the university.

AF: Was Bridget from the Sudan?

NA: No, she's American. And she helped me to find this scholarship to study the English language at the University of Denver, Colorado, so the yea, and that is the beginning of my study of the English here. I study English in Sudan even my college degree in the university I study at the University of Dentistry in Sudan is English. But it still is like terminology medical terminology. Terminology is the language of science. Because sometimes you can study hard in English but in a medical language you would say cardiac.

AF: Cardiac?

NA: Yea, you can say lung in English but in terminology you would say pulmonary. Yea, so terminology is medical language. Most of the words come from Latin. Yea, so when we study English in Sudan still I need English because I don't know what I'm doing. I used to write essays and doing oral exams in English and all that we have external examiner from the United Kingdom but when I came here I find myself I don't know English.

AF: You thought you knew English-

NA: Yea, I don't know English. I need to study English. Yea and that I started to study that at the University of Denver. I study there two quarters in Denver. And after that I decide to move to Lincoln, Nebraska, because life wasn't good in Colorado. I didn't have an apartment to stay in. So I cancel everything there I just came to Lincoln, Nebraska.

AF: And then you continued your education here in Lincoln as well?

NA: Yea, because I get pregnant with my second daughter during my second year at the University of Nebraska.

AF: Your second year?

NA: The first year I studied English program and the second year I started taking university classes. But still it is my goal to repeat some subjects I have studied in Sudan so that can help me study the materials to take the board exam in dentistry. So in Nebraska my problem there is that didn't decide to study something there I just wanted to prepare myself for that exam. So I took like a Physiology, Anatomy, Bio-chemistry, entomology and I'm supposed to go back and continue but now I have to take the board exam first. If I pass that exam-

AF: The what exam?

NA: The Board Exam or License exam of dentistry. If I pass that exam by 80% then I can apply to college of dentistry at UNL. If not, if I didn't pass that, I want to change my major and be more serious and find something to study. So now I am thinking about radiology. I like Radiology. I like to study Radiology. I have to take an exam first.

Because I think it's easier for me to study dentistry it be more easier than study something else so I have to go back to university next fall.

AF: How did you pay for your education?

NA: In Denver I got a scholarship from the director of English language program.

AF: How did you find them?

NA: Not me, my friend Bridget

AF: How did you find Bridget?

NA: I found Bridget, they were a volunteer in the organization so the director of the organization brought Bridget and her boyfriend to be our friends so they could help us to find things if we need things and her boyfriend at the time helped my husband so he studied so he could get American driver's license Class A so Bridget's boyfriend his name is Robert he helped Kuleng to pass the exam. He work hard on that and for me because I was pregnant at the time. She encouraged me to study English and to take the exam to study dentistry. So now I don't know where is Bridget. I'm looking for her but I don't know where to find her because last time I call her after she married her boyfriend she told me her boyfriend went to Boston. He got a job there and she still is study her PHD at the University of Colorado, Boulder. But I don't have any information after that not for four years.

AF: And UNL- How did you find them?

NA: Also I got a scholarship from angelican church by Professor Mary Willis. She's a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Nebraska. So also she helped me a lot, she talked to a boss that was in charge to get me a scholarship to study English and I have to work hard because there is no need to repeat the class because I have a scholarship so-

AF: How is schooling here compared to the Sudan? How is it different?

NA: In Sudan we work hard at middle school and high school. Is more challenge in Sudan to get high school diplomas that can get you to a university. Like University of Kartum at least you should have 87% to get to the university but university setting in Sudan there is challenge also but it is not big deal like high school and that is most different in education here and there because here high school is not too difficult but here the university is not easy yea, it's not easy because like Anatomy for example I studied Anatomy for one year in the second year in university but here just in one semester all Anatomy in one semester here.

AF: Everything you covered in one year-

NA: Yea, yea, covered in Sudan in one year. Yea, that means like eight months and nine months here I mean two semesters but here you cover subject in one semester, so I think that is the difference. So they say here in the United States is easy to enter the university, easier to enter the university but it is difficult to graduate from it. So, if you bring somebody from high school in Sudan and compare the information he may have with somebody from the United States you can find from the Sudan they are long. They are long.

AF: What were the basic subjects that you studied in high school?

NA: Wow. In high school, the first year in high school we studied language: English, Arabic and French. The three languages. You don't have a choice like here you have to take this all. And then you have Geography. There's projects also. There's two branches, one talking about the weather and the other talking about the continent, the world as in history and mathematics four or at least three class diffusion of mathematics and then you have Mathematics, Geography, History and then you have Art, and then you have Science with three branches: which is biology, chemistry and physics. Also in second year was increase.

AF: The same subjects?

NA: Yea, same subjects, but different materials, but in third year they divide. In Arts class they have like history, and geography and English literature and Arabic and English language and in science class and there is science with addition and mathematics who going to study like engineer. In science with biology are going to study like biological sciences like medicine or pharmacy or dentistry and they are if you want to study like economics, arts, so there are three branches in high school. Then, depending on your grades you can be one class.

AF: You don't get to choose-?

NA: no, no

AF: From your grades they place you.

NA: If you want to study arts, you have to work hard in geography and history and mathematics if you want to study science you have to work hard in science to get that.

AF: And then it's the same at the university- It depends on your grades what you will study there as well?

NA: Yea, yea, it depends on your grades. In Sudan there is a national exam for high school. And in the exam there is a best student among Sudanese. The first student will be announced. Ten of them will be announced. So-

AF: The top ten will be announced?

NA: Yea-

AF: And what do they get?

NA: They get like a 98 or sometimes 99%.

AF: Oh, on the quiz but they get free schooling?

NA: Yea, they get a scholarship.

AF: You weren't one of the top ten?

NA: No, maybe I was top in class or maybe the school, but never top in Sudan.

AF: And what are the different languages that you speak and write?

NA: I speak Dinka, Arabic and now English.

AF: And you can write all these as well?

NA: Yea.

AF: Okay. Let's see. As you look back, what do you think about leaving the country you were born in and coming to the United States?

NA: That's too bad, yea, because now I feel homesick most of the time. And my life compared to life I live now, to life I used to live is too different. Yea, and what made me more sad is my job because I like my job I need to practice dentistry. So, I decide this year I'm going to apply to citizenship of the United States and I'm going to take this exam also. If I pass that exam I can stay here and continue my study and if not I will decide to go back to Sudan. Yea, and stay in Kartum.

AF: How soon would you want to go back? As soon as like a year from now?

NA: Yea, maybe. I want to go back to Sudan next year to see my part of my family there in Sudan. Just as a visit and if I decide to go back to Sudan I can prepare where to stay where to find home, I want to make sure I want good schools for my kids all these and how am I going to pay for that, I have to manage all these things. All these things I can do if I work hard and pass that exam I will not have a problem. I can just visit my family next year and then come back to the United States.

AF: But if you pass the exam, you'd be okay with staying in the United States?

NA: Yea, because I need to practice dentistry, but I was thinking about education for my daughter. I want her to study and enter school here so she can know much about the

language and accent of the United States because she is citizen here and after I want to take her back to Africa to study middle school and high school there and after that she will be back for university.

AF: You want her to go to a university in the United States?

NA: Yea, but I want her to study high school in Sudan because that can make her more challenged and make her to know how to study hard because there high school is not something easy. And my husband says he wants to take her to Uganda or Kenya where the school there are more complicated, yea, we just want her to work hard because I believe in that when a child become more smart and more intelligent in high school she's going to be concentrated in study. She doesn't have to be looking for a boyfriend or something like that, yea. But here I cannot do that because school is too easy. She can do whatever she wants, but I want her to study and get a good education first. And after that it doesn't matter what she's going to do. That's something important for me.

AF: Do you think that it is safe enough in Sudan now?

NA: Yea, maybe 80% safe.

AF: It's what?

NA: 80% safe.

AF: 80% safe.

NA: Yea.

AF: What recommendations would you give others that are following behind you?

NA: When I talk to people who want to come here I tell them the truth that life in the United States or living in general is difficult and you have to work hard to get something. And at the same time you have to spend time with your kids so for people who do not have organized service. You have to organize yourself what you do.

AF: Self disciplined?

NA: But if you're not, you do not need to come here because most refugees, especially Sudanese, here kids are lost because there is no time for time for parents spend all time working looking for money and they don't know what to do with their kids. So for somebody who has a kid has kids, I cannot tell him "Don't come here" but I can tell him "If you come here, it is not easy".

AF: You say it's not easy, you think it's difficult for everyone who lives here or-

NA: Yea, it's difficult for everyone who lives here, I think, because even Americans yea, in the morrow when I take my kids to the day care people when they bring their kids there, they are so active, but when they come back at like 5:00, yea, they are tired. And this you are going to repeat this every day until you retire so the life here itself is not easy.

AF: How is it different from-

NA: From Sudan? In Sudan it is easy to find somebody to help you, you can bring somebody to stay in your home and give him one harrow or him money to take care for your kids and to take care for everything in your home but here you can't you have to do everything for yourselves.

AF: You think people in Sudan are more generous?

NA: Yeah Yea.

AF: And why is that, do you think?

NA: I don't know I don't know. But even in Sudan you can find one of your relative can stay with you and helping you with kids but for me it is not easy so when I done with my job here like 5:00 I have to go to the day-care to pick them up, and we go home, I have to prepare something to eat for them to burp them and to do everything and then after when they go to sleep like 9:00 or 9:30 I am also tired there is no time to study. But if I were in Sudan I can find somebody to find to do all this for me I can just come back from the office and just study for my exam, yea. So the life here even for Americans is not easy, yea, and this the way Egyptians live also in Egypt.

AF: They live more like us?

NA: Yea, in Egypt yea, the life in Egypt is not easy they work hard in Sudan they different Sudanese cannot work 8 hours sharp like here no.

AF: How long do they work?

NA: Maybe six, yea, you can start from 8:00 to 3:00 or 8:30 to 3:30, common hours. And in the middle there is a lunch time which is one hour from 9:00 to 10:30 so the job itself is not too hard in Sudan.

AF: Do you think that people are more trustworthy in Sudan, you can trust them more easily than here? You said that you can just find someone to come to your house and watch your kids.

NA: Yea, yea. People are trustworthy, there's no problem with that. Here I think, most people here are educated in United States most of them they have education so you don't need to go to somebody else home to help you can find your job, there is a lot of job here

a lot of things to do. But there somebody can find himself who doesn't have something there is no education there is no companies like here so they can go to work so you can work at somebody's home who has money to help him. I think that's the main things the main difference, the main reason.

AF: Because they are less educated and they don't have anything else to do?

NA: Yea, less educated, yea.

AF: That's interesting. What recommendations would you give others who are following behind you? Is that the question I just asked?

NA: Yea, recommendations- Others to come or others who live here?

AF: Others who are coming from Sudan- What would you tell them to do?

NA: Yea, this day there's not a lot of people coming from Sudan. But I can tell them if you are here it is better for you to live as a low income person because if you are low income in United States that means you are going to get some chance your kids going to have like Medicaid and this you can take this time to study so you can learn something.

AF: It's better to live-

NA: Yea, yea, to live as low income until you learn English at least. But what they do now they just come here, wife and husband, and working and they don't know English at all, and they don't have the time. If you don't know English that means that you won't understand what your kids are doing and what they are talking about and I think that's main problem going on now.

AF: Because they want to get here, make money to send back to-

NA: Yea, yea most of it they send back most of it they buy houses here so they pay a lot of money to banks and banks so all this you can do this but I think the most grandest thing for them is to get an education. If you are already educated in Sudan because if you are not educated in Sudan I think that is going to be most challenge for you to do so. But if you get something of education in Sudan even elementary school, you can get a chance here to study and people here in United States they encourage refugee to go back to school and study English but most of them they don't want they think that English is too difficult and too hard for them to learn. Yea, so I go to them if you come here you have to do something at least for your kids. I can go back to Sudan, but my daughter she may not, she may stay here, because she was born here.

AF: Because she's a citizen?

NA: Yea, she's a citizen and she learn more about living here so I can take her to Sudan but she can refuse and get back, so the best thing I think I can do for her is to give her

education, yea, to give her education so she can live here. And a good person she can get a good chances to live.

AF: I noticed the value throughout the interview that you place on education. Why, do you notice here that there's not the same value that's put on it? Or what are your thoughts on Americans and how they value their education-because it's free, you know.

NA: Yea, yea, I think Americans they value education also because when I study at UNL, they work hard, they study hard, people. Yea, when I study English language in the English language, we have a lot of materials by tapes or stories yea, the parents in America, American parents encourage their kids to get education and the kids also have to do so because here in the United States you can not study free at the university so they work hard so they can not lose their money if you fail the class you have to repeat it and pay more money for that so the United States education here is more commercial or depends more on financial financial purposes United States, yea. Because here in United States people here are more aware are more taking care about kind of education they have and you have to guarantee after you graduate college or the exam the school are you going to get a good job.

AF: So you think they are more worried about what they're going to make after they have a degree?

NA: Yea, yea, even in the university. I talked to most of them, some people they work hard because they think that if you get like A, A,A, every subject that you not going to get a job easy after you graduate, but in my country sometimes they study but they do not know what they are going to do. They don't care that much. So much like here, yea, because most of the jobs they not give you enough money, like here, no.

AF: They don't give you enough money in the Sudan?

NA: No

AF: What else do they do to make enough money?

NA: Some of them they have businesses they have special business they can do there. There are some valued jobs here to be a judge, a judge

AF: A judge?

NA: Yea in Sudan there is not enough money for that job but it's difficult to get that job but it is still not enough money.

AF: The jobs don't pay enough? The same sort of job won't pay as much-

NA: Yea it can give you, yea, but it's not as much as here. Here the doctor in the United States they have a lot of money here, but in my country, just if you have like a special

clinic you can get more money. But the government itself you can not get good salary for doctors.

AF: But it's still a highly desired job to have-

NA: Yea,

AF: even though it doesn't make enough money?

NA: Yea, because education also in Sudan is a valued like social or community value if you are educated you are going to be respected for people.

AF: Respect automatically comes with education you're saying?

NA: Yea, yea. You are respected if you are educated. Respected.

AF: Even if you don't have money then it's just more-

NA: yea, you are educated. An they have ideas that if you are educated you will educate your kids if you don't educate you don't know how if you have money you can support your kids or encourage them to get education and I experience that from my father because my father he takes care for my education most of his life, yea. He just encouraging us to get education.

AF: He's a teacher himself-

NA: Yea, and he thinks that the life is different from the life we live, so he said in his generation you can marry from 18 so you are going to have a lot of kids but in your generation you value the quality, not the quantity.

AF: He said that's the change from his generation to your generation is quantity to quality?

NA: Yea, yea, not quantity so if you have just two or just one and you give him a good life they are going to have more value than having one hundred kids so he said I want you to study university and have a job even you marry after forty years you are going to have a baby-one or two. You are going to give them a good education a good life so my father he's a great person he encouraging us to study-all of us, yea. There is no somebody married in our family more than in high school, no-

AF: There's what? There's no one who married in high school?

NA: In high school, yea. In high school you are still treated like child. You just go to school and come back. We don't have choice to do anything.

AF: Sports are what people would do after school in America. Did you have any sort of sports that you participated in?

NA: No, no because when I was a child I got a lot of injuries I fractured my arms, I fractured my legs, I fractured my feet, so I can't do any sports.

AF: Do other kids do sports like after school?

NA: Yea, yea,

AF: Like what kind of sports do they play?

NA: They have basketball and football, which is called soccer here and we have many things. I can't remember but we have many things. Especially in southern Sudan they take more care about things like that.

AF: What do you want your children to learn and remember from this? From the whole experience of coming to the United States and then possibly-

NA: I want my kids to learn that the life can change, yea, the life can change because the life I live now I didn't imagine I'm going to live this life because I waste my time studying that mean I'm going to have a good life, yea, and my family they also support us we live a good life in our family but when you came here everything change so I want my kids to learn that.

AF: That life can change?

NA: That life can change. You can turn from good to bad or from bad to good things another thing also and this is challenge also you have to be dependable to depend on yourself and you have to work hard and you have to take care for your family in general

AF: Do you have any other comments or things you'd like people to know about your experience or anything-anything at all?

NA: Yea, yea, my experience I think I travel a lot in Sudan which is called Abea. We are Dinka and all Dinka I believe are part of the southern Sudan, but my area is belongs politically to the northern Sudan so sometimes people think that they are from north, no, they are from south and not from north, but I live in northern most of my life. I live with northern people so, I think from my experience when we live with people who have different traditions and customs and religions, it's not easy. It's not easy to do that, so, when I came here to United States, I think I'm not surprised from many things because I used to do that. People here are different. Different language and different country but I'm still happy with them. I don't have problem because I used to do so. And as most things made me happy here. There is no discrimination due to your religions. Yea, that is still the most difficult thing in Sudan. Yea, even when I'm working a patient can say "I don't want this dentist to treat me because she is not a Muslim". Yea, they can refuse

you because you are not Muslim. Yea, because a Muslim, Islam forbidden that somebody that is not Muslim to ask you- Because if you are doctor you can ask some specific question which are more personal yea, and they don't want you to do that. When they don't want you to know that-when I live in the dorm with them-some girls or some of my colleagues when they-

AF: Muslims?

NA: Yea, Muslims, yea when they when somebody see me they have to cover her hair because there is no difference between me and a man. Because, I'm not Muslim.

AF: her hair?

NA: Yeah, to cover her hair, because in Islam its not good for a man to see your hair just for your relatives and your husband if you are married so when they see me they cover their hair because I'm not Muslim. I'm married but I'm not Muslim so all of this yea, left impression that is not easy to live with people who doesn't like you or somebody who doesn't like you is difficult to do so, so and I don't want my kids to be in same situation.

AF: That you were in?

NA: Yea, Even here or in Sudan I don't want my child to be discriminated for any reason I don't want them to feel that feeling because it is not good. Even in class you feel the teacher he doesn't want you for any reason you don't know. So from my experience I learn a lot from different people because I live in Northern Sudan all my life I just live in Southern Sudan for 5 years or 4 years and a half then I came to the Northern Sudan and in our culture, Dinka, it is not good to do that to discriminate or to be unjust for any reasons or to make decisions or to make generalizations, if you have a problem with Dinkas one person in Dinka, that not mean that all Dinka are bad. No, not in our tradition, custom Dinka cannot agree to do so, yea, that I think is the most thing in my experience I want people to know about me. And I want Sudan to be one country not separated country but because Sudan itself is a great country everything is offered in Sudan, Sudan has any kind of natural resources they have but they can pollute that resources because of all this discriminations illegals African and American or African Arabians all this. But I think is Sudan is come in unity someday and they come and they forgot about nationalist and they just leave us Sudanese, Sudanese are going to be a great country and these people are going to be maybe the country that help many bordering countries but how that can happen I don't know. How that can happen I don't know.

AF: Is there anything else that you want people to know about you?

NA: I don't think so, I don't.

AF: Okay