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Idiris

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TSOS

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302 Idiris Abdile Interview Transcript Somalia to Utah

Interviewer: How old are you Idiris?

Idiris: I'm 18.

Interviewer: Where were you born?

Idiris: I was born in Somalia, six years ago.

Interviewer: Six years?

Idiris: Ago? No actually.

Interviewer: You lived for six years in Somalia?

Idiris: Yes. Six or seven years.

Interviewer: What do you remember about living in Somalia?

Idiris: I don't know. I was too young, just playing.

Interviewer: Where did you go after you left Somalia?

Idiris: I was with my mom the whole time. We were just family together. We never left someone behind. So we lived in Somalia, then we moved down into

Interviewer: Do you remember living in Ethiopia?

Idiris: Yes.

Interviewer: Tell us what it was like living there? What kind of town or city did you live in? What was your home like?

Idiris: It was like the I don't know. They built some houses with wood and floating and stuff. When you go now, like on vacation. But it wasn't really a fun place. No electronics, no TV or anything. Just like an empty place.

Interviewer: What did you do for fun?

Idiris: Playing with my friends, swimming a lot, and playing soccer with my friends.

Interviewer: Did you go to school?

Idiris: Yes. I was in fourth grade when I left to go to

Interviewer: You lived in Somalia until you were around seven, and then you moved to Ethiopia. How long did you live in Ethiopia?

Idiris: I lived there for around seven and a half years.

Interviewer: Until you were around 14 or 15?

Idiris: Yes, 14 or 15.

Interviewer: Why did your family decide to leave Ethiopia?

Idiris: They had discovered you get the chance to go to America. He heard that you study, how you live and my dad was shocked by some guys. He thought about the study and it was because of my dad.

Interviewer: After your dad was injured your family had the opportunity to come to the U.S..

Idiris: Yes. He told them about what happened to us in Ethiopia.

Interviewer: What did you think about Ethiopia and coming to America?

Idiris: Ethiopia, it wasn't like Somalia back there. Shooting all the time, tires burning on all the markets. Living in Ethiopia was always a happy place for the kids. I missed Ethiopia actually.

Interviewer: Tell me what you miss about it.

Idiris: My parents, the way we used to hang out a lot. Swimming, it was a really cool place.

Interviewer: Are your friends still in Ethiopia?

Idiris: Some of them are, yes. A lot.

Interviewer: When you were 15, about three years ago, you left Ethiopia. Tell me what you remember about the day you left Ethiopia and came to the U.S.

Idiris: Yes. I remember that we had to get in the bus, and all my friends were hanging out by the bus, saying goodbye to me. Some of them were crying about me leaving. It was really hard to leave them behind.

Interviewer: You said it was really hard to leave your friends behind. Are there other things that were hard to leave behind?

Idiris: Yes. My Grandma, she still lives there. And my big brother and my step-mother. He was with us and he left when he was leaving from Ethiopia to here.

Interviewer: What did you bring with you from Ethiopia?

Idiris: Nothing. Just my clothing. But I still have some clothes from down there.

Interviewer: What was your first impression of the United States? When you walked off the plane what did you see and experience?

Idiris: I landed in New York City. It was all plain and soft. In Ethiopia, we got our first flight from Ethiopia to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia to Germany. Germany to New York, New York to Texas, Texas to here. So it was a really long flight to get here, and I was feeling tired and sleeping all the time, so I didn't notice anything until I got home.

Interviewer: Did you know anything about Utah before you landed here?

Idiris: No, nothing at all.

Interviewer: What was the most difficult part of coming here?

Idiris: When we got to the taxi's, none of us speak English. Everybody laughed, we thought we just left there and nobody cares about us anymore. We were sitting there for around four hours I think. We couldn't speak. The front desk lady was sitting there and asking when was our flight, when where we going to get home? So language was often hard.

Interviewer: You speak really well now, how did you learn English?

Idiris: Having a translator.

Interviewer: You just graduated high school, what was it like going to high school in a new country where you don't speak the language?

Idiris: Yes. I started school for the ninth grade. I failed all my ninth grade classes because I was just sitting there and doing nothing because I didn't know the language. So I started picking up in my tenth grade and 11th grade. I didn't graduate on time but I did graduate late. I graduated summer school. So the language was difficult for me.

Interviewer: I can imagine it would be difficult. What motivated you to get through it?

Idiris: Living here it's always been hard, but if you don't get a diploma you're not going to get ahead so. I was always trying to impress and help my family because, our nobody in my family has ever graduated. Not my mother or my dad, nobody. My big sister dropped out of high school because of the language and she has just arrived in the U.S. I wanted to be the first to graduate in my family, and I finally did.

Interviewer: Congratulations.

Idiris: Thanks.

Interviewer: What are your plans for the future?

Idiris: Help my family, that's all I always do and I'm willing to keep doing.

Interviewer: Whenever people hear the word refugees sometimes they don't know what to think. They don't have the experiences that you and your family have had. When you hear the word refugee, what do you think of?

Idiris: Refugee, I don't think it's a big word to me, because I get used to it a lot, and I've heard it a lot. Being a refugee is just a word to me.

Interviewer: If you could give advice to someone who was going to go through a similar experience, to leave their country and to come here, what advice would you give them to help them?

Idiris: I would tell them, learn in school. Learn English, nothing English, no other subjects. I would tell them make sure they can speak English better so that when they get here they can help themselves out. Because nobody is going to be hear all this with you, and trust with all this for you. It's hard.

Interviewer: What would you say your biggest accomplishments are? What are you most proud of in your life that you have done?

Idiris: Graduated from high school. That's my biggest accomplishment. It is always so hard to graduate from high school. I only have been in school for two years I think. Back there I was in Kindergarten, I was in little kid school. I haven't spent my whole life in school. When I just got here I just started school three years ago.

Interviewer: This is your first time being in school.

Interviewer: That's amazing. You said you wanted to help your family, what ways do new families in the United States need help. What types of things can we do to help new families?

Idiris: I'm not sure how to answer that.

Interviewer: Is there anything you wish other people would help you with when you came here that they didn't?

Idiris: No, we had a lot of help from every place. Every community, they helped a lot. That's how we got here. Translated a lot.

Interviewer: Besides helping your family, what other things would you like to be part of your future?

Idiris: Getting my own family. Start a new life and If I could be in the Marines some day. The U.S. Marines. I was planning to join and have my career with them.

Interviewer: Why the Marines?

Idiris: The Marines, an active job. They fly, I like doing active stuff, sports. Going around, travelling a lot. That's the thing I like about the Marines.

Interviewer:Very cool. What do you like to do for fun?

Idiris: Play, hang out with my friends. I don't really like doing study a lot, but I do sometimes. But I know I have to go to Community College, so I do study a lot.

Interviewer: Is there anything specific that you want to study at college?

Idiris: No, I haven't decided anything. I don't know if I could be a pilot too.

Interviewer: When you think back about your journey from Somalia, Ethiopia to here, what have you learned through that journey?

Idiris: Somalia, there was always violence. Always fighting. I don't even know why or the reason. ...

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you have learned from your experience, important life lessons? Or things that you hope to remember?

Idiris: One of the things I want to be in the Marines, just go back there and do something If I can learn something from the Marines I can just go back to my country and start doing what I learn from here and do back there.

Interviewer: Back in Somalia?

Idiris: Yes, back in Somalia.

Interviewer: Do you have plans to go and visit?

Idiris: Yes.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you'd like to share, or something you're hoping I would ask that I haven't asked?

Idiris: No. I can't think of anything.

Interviewer: Thank you so much.

Idiris: You are very welcome.

Interviewer: It's so inspiring to hear your story and see your family.

Idiris: Thanks very much for coming here.

Interviewer: You're welcome.