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CLIENT: Park Teen Center

NAME LIKE TO BE CALLED: Danar

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AND WHAT PART OF IRAQ IS THAT IS?
Kurdistan.

IN LIKE THE NORTH, SOUTH...
I think, yeah, the north.

IT'S IN THE NORTH. OK, UM, WHAT LANGUAGE IS SPOKEN THERE?
Kurdish.

IS THAT THE ONLY LANGUAGE THAT'S...
And Arabic.

ARABIC IS SPOKEN THERE.
Yes.

UM, WAS THERE A CERTAIN TOWN THAT YOU CAME FROM?
Yeah, um, I don't know, I, I just know I came from Kurdistan.

YEAH. UM, WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT KURDISTAN?
Uh, it was OK.

OK? WHAT WAS OK ABOUT IT?
I have no idea. It was like it was nice. Like, like, you know, like hills and stuff. Yeah.

UM HUM. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU REMEMBER ABOUT IT?
Uh, I don't know.

DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR HOUSE?
Yeah.

WHAT WAS THAT LIKE? Well, my grandpa and grandma's house weren't that good, but our house was... Like their house was like crappy. But ours was like, you know... Cause, you know, my dad was rich there. So ours was nice, nice... but our grandma and grandpa's house were like, you know, made out of, I don't know, crap. (smile)

(SMILE) AND SO, UH, WHAT MADE THEIR HOUSES DIFFERENT FROM YOURS?
WAS IT SMALLER?

Um, yeah, it was smaller.

HOW BIG WAS YOUR HOUSE?

I don't know, like two floors. It was like a really good house.

UM, WERE THEY DIFFERENT FROM AMERICAN HOUSES AT ALL?

Yeah.

HOW WERE THEY DIFFERENT?

Um, they are usually smaller and made from different stuff; bricks and, yeah. And there is not like a lot of electricity.

DID YOU GUYS HAVE, UM, LIKE YOU GUYS HAD ROOFS?

Yeah.

WAS EVERYBODY CONNECTED, LIKE...

Some, yeah, some houses were like that they only had like two rooms. Like there was a, the living room they probably kept, counted as a room. But some, you know, the smaller houses, they have like two rooms and probably, they didn't even, some houses didn't even have running water.

REALLY?

Yeah.

DID YOUR GRANDPARENTS?

Uh, they, they, they didn't have running water, but they had like this thingy for water.

LIKE A WELL OR PUMP?

No, just like this huge...

TANK?

Yeah. And then you pump the water out. Yeah.

OK, AND DID YOU GUYS HAVE RUNNING WATER?

Yeah. Yeah.

DID A LOT OF PEOPLE NOT HAVE RUNNING WATER?

Like half and half.

YEAH.

Yeah.

SO YOU WERE ONE OF THE LUCKY ONES WITH RUNNING WATER. UM, HOW MANY FAMILY MEMBERS LIVED WITH YOU?

Um, like ten.

TEN FAMILY MEMBERS?

Yeah. But we, uh, cause, you know, our house was like two floors. (UM HUM) Not like, you know, not like upstairs, downstairs, but like two floors. And so, um, my grandma and grandpa on my mom's side lived there. And my dad's side they lived somewhere else. Yeah.

SO TWO FLOORS, BUT NOT...

Like each floor had like three rooms in it. Like it was...

WAS IT ON TOP OF EACH OTHER?

Yeah. It was like, you know, how ho-, motels are? (UM HUM) Yeah.

OK, SO IT WAS ON TOP OF EACH OTHER, AND THEN EACH FLOOR HAD... (yeah) AND THEY WERE CONNECTED.

Yeah. And had a garden and everything.

YOU HAD A GARDEN?

Yeah. On- like, only some people had gardens.

DID YOU GUYS HAVE A GARDEN?

Yeah. Cause my dad was super rich. Yeah. I'm just saying...

YEAH?

Yeah.

SO THAT MUST HAVE BEEN NICE, HUH?

Yeah.

WHAT WAS THE MAIN MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION? SO IF YOU WANTED TO GO FROM TOWN TO TOWN OR...

Taxi. Taxi.

IT WAS TAXIS?

Yeah. They didn't really have that much cars. So it's either taxi... Yeah.

DID YOU GUYS RIDE BIKES OR...

Yeah, they, we usually walked or took taxis. (YEAH) If it was farther, taxis, but if it was like short, walking.

HOW BIG WAS THE TOWN?

It was like Lincoln.

IT WAS ABOUT THE SIZE OF LINCOLN?

Yeah.

SO THAT'S A GOOD SIZE TOWN.

Yeah.

UM, WHAT ELSE CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE TOWN?

Um, there was a lot of parks. Uh, some places were dirty. Uh, there was a lot of farming.

DID YOU GUYS HAVE A FARM WITH ANIMALS OR ANYTHING?

No. But the place, my grandpa had like cows and stuff, but we had like only chickens. Just like small stuff. (YEAH. UM,...) My grandpa had like, you know, a farm, farm. But just like he had like two cows and a couple chickens and stuff.

HOW FAR AWAY DID THEY LIVE?

Uh, like each of them lived like some, some areas are like connected. They're like connected, like every house, not even the yard. But some areas are like from here to there, you see that brick right there?

SO MAYBE LIKE 100 YARDS? YEAH. AND THEY HAVE, THEY HAVE HOUSES. SO THEY ACTUALLY LIVED VERY CLOSE TO YOU.

Yeah. (AND SO YOU...) No, if you're like, you know, where we lived, it was all close together. (UM HUM) But the yard, but if you lived out there, it was farther from each other. But if you started at some other places that were like not even good like, like farm places.

SO HOW LONG WOULD IT TAKE YOU TO GET FROM YOUR HOUSE TO YOUR GRANDPARENTS HOUSE?

Um, if we walked, like 20 minutes. But if we took a taxi, like five minutes.

YEAH. WHAT OTHER RELATIVES LIVED THERE?

Uh, my, everybody.

EVERYBODY. COUSINS, AUNTS, UNCLES, THEY ALL LIVED THERE. YEAH. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN FUN. UM, WHEN YOUR PARENTS TALK ABOUT LIVING IN IRAQ, KURDISTAN, RIGHT? (yeah) ARE THE STORIES MAINLY POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE?

Uh, it's half and half. But they don't wanta go back right now because of the war. (UM...) But, uh, cause, you know, all our family is there.

YEAH. SO, UH, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE POSITIVE THINGS THAT THEY TELL YOU ABOUT?

Uh, it's a nice place to live, but, uh, things are cheap. Uh, uh, I don't know... But there's not really good jobs there. If you're lucky you have a job.

YEAH, LIKE YOUR DAD, HE WAS LUCKY.

Yeah. But he sold cars, that's what. (OH) Like, you know, he took cars from like different countries, bring them back, yeah.

OH, OK. UM, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BAD STORIES, THE NEGATIVE STORIES THAT THEY TELL?

Um, a lot of people dying and stuff like that.

YEAH?

Yeah.

ANY OF YOUR RELATIVES, DID THEY TELL STORIES?

Uh, um, I don't know. I, I haven't been back for a long time. So I don't really know.

YEAH. UM, WHY DID YOUR FAMILY DECIDE TO MOVE? WHAT STORIES DID THEY TELL YOU ABOUT MOVING?

Um, cause I think back then there was a war going on between like the Kurdish and the Arabic for land. So there were a lot of (inaud) and stuff.

SO YOUR DAD WANTED TO (yeah) THE FAMILY TO ESCAPE VIOLENCE.

Yeah..

UM, HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU MOVED?

Four.

YOU WERE FOUR?

Yeah.

AND WHAT DID YOU, WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT...

We like left everything. We sold everything and stuff like that.

WHAT DID YOU KNOW ABOUT AMERICA BEFORE YOU CAME?

Uh, it was a good place. Yes.

YEAH?

Yes.

DID, UH, DID YOUR PARENTS TELL YOU ANYTHING ABOUT AMERICA BEFORE YOU CAME?

I was four.

SO THEY DIDN'T REALLY TALK A WHOLE LOT ABOUT IT.

Yeah.

UM, DID YOUR PARENTS TALK ABOUT THE EDUCATION THEY GOT IN IRAQ?

Yeah. Most people didn't pass like high-, like 8th grade. Yeah.

DID YOUR PARENTS GO TO SCHOOL?

Yeah.

AND WHAT GRADE DID THEY FINISH?

My dad finished high school. But my mom, like, I don't know, young.

YEAH?

Yeah.

DID YOUR MOM TELL YOU WHY SHE DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO FINISH SCHOOL?

Cause my mom, my dad, you know, my grandpa, (UM HUM) she, he wanted her to work on the farm and stuff. (OH) And like take care of the kids. (YEAH)

AND WAS IT, DOES YOUR DAD TALK ABOUT, UM, HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS TO FINISH HIGH SCHOOL FOR HIM?

Yeah.

WHAT DOES HE TELL YOU ABOUT THAT?

Like cause you, you would get a better life.

DID YOUR GRANDFATHER FINISH SCHOOL?

I don't know.

UM, WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THE TRIP?

When I went back?

NO, COMING HERE.

Oh.

DO YOU REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT..

Yeah, I just remember going to New York before we came here.

YEAH?

Yeah.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE PLANE RIDE?

Yeah. I don't remember it, but I know what plane rides are.

YEAH, YEAH. UM, WHERE HAVE YOU LIVED HERE SINCE YOU'VE BEEN IN AMERICA?

Lincoln, New York and Lincoln.

HOW LONG WERE YOU IN NEW YORK FOR?

For like, uh, one month.

JUST A MONTH.

Yeah.

DID YOU HAVE FAMILY THAT YOU STAYED WITH THERE?

Yeah. We had some people that came with us.

UM HUM. UH, WHAT BROUGHT YOU GUYS TO LINCOLN? WHY DID YOUR PARENTS COME TO LINCOLN?

Cause, uh, they, you know, they just chose places for people.

OK, SO THE GOVERNMENT SAID (yeah) THIS IS WHERE YOU GUYS SHOULD BE.
Yeah.

OK. UM, HOW DO YOU LIKE LINCOLN?
It's OK.

HAVE YOU BEEN BACK TO VISIT IN IRAQ?
Yeah.

WHEN DID YOU GO BACK?
2000.

2000. HOW OLD WERE YOU?
Seven.

YOU WERE 7. SO WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THAT TRIP?
Um, there were a lot of like, cause, you know, it was like during a holiday so there was like a lot of parties and stuff.

OH, WHAT HOLIDAY?
Uh, I think it was Ramadan.

OK. SO WAS THAT A LOT OF FUN?
Yeah.

DID YOU GET TO SEE A LOT OF FAMILY?
Yeah.

WHAT DO YOU GUYS DO TO CELEBRATE?
Uh, we like have like (pounding in the background – inaud) a whole bunch of like people and we have like a whole bunch of food and stuff like that.

DO YOU GUYS CELEBRATE, UH, RAMADAN HERE?
Uh, (inaud).

NO? IS THAT WHY YOU WENT BACK?

Um, um, we had, we hadn't visit for a long time. We, it was just that we went back that day.

YEAH, AND IT JUST TURNED OUT TO BE A HOLIDAY.

Yeah.

UM, WHAT LANGUAGE IS SPOKEN AT HOME?

Um, we speak Kurdish, but sometimes, you know, we speak English too.

SO IT'S A MIX?

Yeah.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT YOU GUYS DO HERE THAT WERE DONE THERE?

Um, like when?

LIKE FOODS YOU EAT OR MUSIC YOU LISTEN TO OR TV THAT YOU WATCH?

Same or different?

EITHER ONE

Uh, like once there is a food here like hand, you know hand food, but most of the food there is like, you know, you don't eat it with your hands.

HERE?

No. No, there. Its mostly like rice and stuff like that. Yeah. And, uh, most people didn't have like TV there. (inaud) most people use bikes, uh, (inaud).

YEAH. SO MOST PEOPLE USE BIKES THERE, AS COMPARED TO HERE WHERE... (yeah) WE DRIVE A LOT. (yeah) AS FAR AS... DO YOUR PARENTS DRIVE?

Yeah.

UM, WHAT TV DO YOU WATCH HERE?

What do you mean? Like cable?

YOU WATCH CABLE?

Yeah.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SHOW?

I don't know.

DO YOU GUYS EVER WATCH ANYTHING THAT'S, UM, ARABIC OR...

Uh, we have a different kind of satellite. We have a Kurdish and like Arabic one. And we have like a regular one.

SO YOU STILL GET TO WATCH KURDISH TV?

Yeah.

WHICH ONE DO YOU LIKE BETTER?

American.

(LAUGH) WHY IS THAT?

Cause it's just... I don't know.

WHY IS THAT?

I don't know.

JUST CAUSE OF THE SHOWS? WHAT CHANNELS DO YOU NORMALLY WATCH FOR AMERICAN TV?

Like, uh, I don't know what this show is called, but where like, you know, comedy cen-, oh, Comedy Central. Stuff like that. E-, ESPN. (ESPN?) Yeah.

YOU LIKE SPORTS. WHEN YOU WENT BACK TO VISIT, WAS THERE, UM, WAS THERE ACTIVITIES OR THINGS THAT YOU DID THERE FOR FUN? (pause) DID YOU GUYS PLAY SPORTS?

Yeah, soccer.

YOU GUYS PLAYED SOCCER.

Yeah.

DID YOU GUYS, UM, GO TO MOVIES, DO...
No, not really.

DO YOU GUYS PLAY CARDS, BOARD GAMES...
We had cards, yeah. There was board games.

JUST REGULAR STUFF.
Yeah.

WHAT DO YOU DO HERE FOR FUN?
Uh, during the summer I go swimming with friends.

DID YOU GO SWIMMING BACK THERE?
Uh, no.

DID YOU GUYS HAVE PUBLIC POOLS?
No. I don't know. Not, I haven't seen any, but I don't think so.

DO YOU GUYS GO SWIMMING? LIKE ARE THERE LAKES?
Well there's lakes, but nobody goes swimming.

HUH. UM, WHAT TYPE OF MUSIC DO YOU LISTEN TO AT HOME?
Um, Arabic (inaud) I guess. (inaud)

DO YOUR PARENTS STILL LISTEN TO TRADITIONAL?
Yeah. Yeah. (YEAH. AND YOU LIKE THAT STUFF TOO) Yeah, kinda.

AND THEN YOU ALSO LISTEN TO AMERICAN MUSIC?
Yeah.

UM, HAVE YOU EVER HAD TO TRANSLATE FOR FAMILY MEMBERS?
My mom speaks English, so does my dad. So nah.

DO YOU THINK THAT WOULD BE COOL?

Kind of. (YEAH) Yeah.

HOW HAVE YOU LIKED GOING THROUGH ELL?

It was easy.

HOW DO YOU FEEL OTHER KIDS TREAT YOU THAT YOU WENT THROUGH ELL?

They don't care.

THEY DON'T CARE?

Nah.

UM, DO THEY THINK IT'S COOL THAT YOU CAN SPEAK MORE, MORE THAN ONE LANGUAGE?

Yeah. Yeah.

HOW DO YOU GUYS STAY IN TOUCH WITH FAMILY?

Over the phone.

HOW OFTEN

Like twice, three times, twice to three times.

SO YOU GET TO TALK TO YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS THERE?

Yeah.

DO YOU GUYS EVER TALK ABOUT AMERICA?

Uh, yeah.

WHAT DO THEY ASK YOU?

Uh, how is it there and stuff like that.

WHAT DO YOU TELL THEM?

OK.

THAT'S IT?

I don't know, what should I tell them?

WHAT DO YOU TELL THEM?

Nothing.

DO, DO YOU, DO THEY EVER ASK YOU LIKE WHAT YOU DO FOR FUN OR...

No, not really.

DO THEY ASK YOU (PAUSE)...

How is school?

DO THEY ASK YOU ABOUT SCHOOL?

Yeah.

DO YOU GUYS TALK ABOUT SCHOOL?

Yeah.

WHAT'S SCHOOL LIKE BACK THERE? DO THEY TELL YOU?

There, there is like hitting there in school. (smile)

THEY HIT YOU IN SCHOOL THERE?

(smile) Yeah. They do.

DO THEY LIKE SPANK EM ON THEIR BUTT OR....

No, hit em on their hand.

HIT EM ON THEIR HANDS?

Yeah. (smile)

UM, (PAUSE) YOU KNOW, I WAS, I WAS IN A SCHOOL IN THE SECOND GRADE, UH, HERE IN AMERICA THEY USED TO DO THAT TOO. (smile) (I know) AND THEY USED TO PADDLE YOUR BUTT. AND I GOT PADDLED ON MY BUTT IN SECOND GRADE. AND SO, BUT THEN THEY STOPPED DOING THAT HERE. DO THEY TELL YOU THAT SCHOOL IS HARDER THERE OR...)

It's like most kids like even if you're in twelfth grade, you might be like with a sixth grader in the room.

ALL IN THE SAME ROOM?
Sometimes, yeah.

WOW. SO HOW MANY KIDS WILL BE IN A ROOM?
I don't know. Like 30, 40...

SO THEY SAY ALL DIFFERENT GRADES (yeah) ARE MIXED TOGETHER.

WHAT ELSE DO THEY TELL YOU ABOUT THE SCHOOL?
Um, it's small.

MAINLY BOYS, MAINLY GIRLS OR IS IT A GOOD MIX?
Yeah. It's like, I don't know, I think it's both but I don't know. I never been to school there.

YEAH. WHAT DO YOU ASK THEM ABOUT THERE?
What do you mean?

WHEN YOU TALK TO THEM ON THE PHONE?
About what?

ABOUT SCHOOL.
No, they ask me about school.

WHAT DO YOU TELL THEM ABOUT SCHOOL?
It's OK. It's good. And like I have good grades here, yeah.

DO THEY ASK YOU LIKE WHAT SUBJECTS YOU HAVE?
Yeah. No, I don't know.

YOU DON'T KNOW.

Why are you asking me these questions? (smile)

BECAUSE IT'S AN INTERVIEW. (SMILE) UM, WOULD YOU, WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOUR FAMILY IS, HAS BECOME MORE AMERICAN SINCE THEY HAVE BEEN HERE?

Kinda.

WELL IN WHAT WAYS?

Uh, like, uh, we listen to like different music. We, uh, like wear American clothes. Like stuff like that. We eat American food.

DO YOU EAT FAST FOOD?

Yeah.

LIKE WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FAST FOOD?

(smile) I don't know. Taco Bell.

TACO BELL. (LAUGH)

Which one is yours? (smile)

UH, SHOOT, I DON'T KNOW. MCDONALDS. (smile) BUT WE, I ALMOST NEVER, NEVER EAT OUT. AND SO, UH, BECAUSE IT'S SO BAD FOR YOU. BUT, UM, I LIKE THE MCRIBS. HAVE YOU HAD A MCRIB AT MCDONALDS?

Yeah.

OH, I LOVE THOSE. I NEED LESS OF THEM. UM, WHAT CLOTHES WOULD YOU WEAR BACK IN... HOW, HOW WERE THE CLOTHES DIFFERENT?

Well most, no, all of the schools you have to have a uniform. Uh, you have nicer clothes here. Yeah.

UM, SOMETIMES DOES IT FEEL, SOMETIMES DOES IT FEEL, UM, THAT YOU LEAD A DOUBLE LIFE? LIKE AT HOME YOU ARE KURDISH AND AT SCHOOL YOU ARE AMERICAN?

Uh, kinda I guess.

IN WHAT WAYS?

I don't know. Like there is different stuff at home and different stuff here.

ARE THERE THINGS YOU DO AT SCHOOL THAT YOU WOULDN'T, YOU'D NEVER DO AT HOME?

Um, not really. Like what? (pause) I don't know, tell me some ideas and I'll tell you. (smile) (SMILE)

I DON'T KNOW.

Alright, then don't ask me.

WELL (SMILE) I'M NOT AT YOUR HOUSE, I DON'T KNOW. (SMILE) THAT'S WHY I ASK. UM, IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU COULD TELL ME ABOUT, ABOUT KURDISTAN?

Not really.

DO YOU GUYS TALK ABOUT KURDISTAN AT HOME?

Um, sometimes.

WHAT DO YOU GUYS TALK ABOUT?

I don't know exactly. That's not what I thought you were gonna say; what do you guys talk about, what do you do... Like what?

WHAT DO YOU, WHAT DO YOU TALK ABOUT?

Uh, how, how they, you know, how it is. If it's good, if the war is there or not. Yeah.

WHAT DO YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS, WHEN YOU TALK TO THEM, DO YOU TALK TO THEM ABOUT THE WAR AND WHAT'S GOING ON?

They're not really involved cause, you know, the north is.... (UM HUM) But they talk about how like, you know, bad it is.

YEAH.

Are we done?

WELL, WHAT ELSE CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT KURDISTAN?

What else do I have to tell you?

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT KURDISTAN?

No.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT BEING IN AMERICA AND YOUR EXPERIENCE HERE?

Yeah. It's better I guess.

IT'S BETTER THAN KURDISTAN?

Yeah.

WHEN YOU GROW UP, DO YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO KURDISTAN?

Eventually. Maybe not. I don't know. Depends.

DOES YOUR DAD HAVE A, HAVE A GOOD JOB HERE? WAS HE ABLE TO GET A GOOD JOB HERE?

It's OK.

YEAH. OK, DANAR, THANK YOU FOR DOING THIS INTERVIEW.

Now do I get 10%? (SMILE)