

The following interview was conducted with Rihab Elhag for the Star City Treasurers AmeriCorps History Project. It took place on May 2, 2006 and the interviewer is Jennifer Holstein.

JENNIFER: Hey Rihab.

RIHAB: Hi Jennifer.

JENNIFER: Hey. Um, so tell me a little bit about yourself.

RIHAB: Like my name and stuff?

JENNIFER: Mmhmm. What's the origin of your name, do you know?

RIHAB: My name is Rihab, um, it is an Arabic name. In Arabic it means a wild, the wildness of the sky.

JENNIFER: Tell me about where you grew up.

RIHAB: Uh, I grew up in Sudan, in Africa, north Africa. It is an Arabic country, Arabic African country. And Arabic is um, the main lang - the first language. Islam is the official um, Islam and Christianity actually, are the official religions of the country. Um, I, I, yea. I grew up there, I studied, I get married over there then I move to another Arabic country in the gulf area uh, called Qatar. I stayed there for five years, I had my son over there, then we moved to United States on September, uh, 2003.

JENNIFER: Yea. Well, well what did you first think, what did you expect, coming to the United States?

RIHAB: Uh, to tell you my life that was the main plan. And then uh, freedom of course.

JENNIFER: Yea.

RIHAB: Yea. And have a good life.

JENNIFER: Hmm, alright. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

RIHAB: Oh yea, I have a big family actually. My mom and father are still alive, thanks God. I have, uh we have four girls in the family. So, I have 3 sisters and 2 brothers.

JENNIFER: Yes.

RIHAB: I'm the second one in the family. My oldest, yea she lives overseas also, and then I have two other girls living in the same house as my mom and yea, and the boys.

JENNIFER: Do you have any fond memories of your childhood, like how you grew up?

RIHAB: Oh yea! It was fun. The first part of my childhood I lived near a beach.

JENNIFER: Okay.

RIHAB: In a beach area, so it was very fun, playing all the day, or the afternoon after school at the beach. And then uh, we moved to another big city, like um, when I was in intermediate school. And then, yea. So it was a good childhood. I can say that I did have a good one. Um, my father is a great man so he worked hard for us to get educated, and that's something different in my country.

JENNIFER: Mmm.

RIHAB: Um, all of our family my sisters and brothers, have graduated from University. Um, I have a Bachelors degree (unintelligible) and Social Studies. My oldest sister has a Bachelors degree in Chemistry. Uh my youngest sisters, one is a lawyer, one is a physician.

JENNIFER: Mmhmm.

RIHAB: Um, my brothers, one is a business man, and the other the youngest is studying math at the University in India. He's studying engineering, so.

JENNIFER: Uh, sounds like .

RIHAB: Yea, education is a main part in my family, so we work hard to get it. And then after that uh, it is not normal in my country for people to have like, uh, to play a sport in a regular way or stuff. But we had that chance also to uh, (unintelligible) sport, us girls and reading and stuff.

JENNIFER: Mmhmm.. Do you have any traditions that you do in your family? Like custom, that you celebrate together?

RIHAB: Yea, we like, yea we have some celebration, days you mean?

JENNIFER: Yea.

RIHAB: Officially we have the Islamic (unintelligible), uh it is a holiday, two, uh, two days during the year where in the yea, four months is apart between them. This is the Islamic one. And then we have the new year, because like, forty percent of my country is Christian so we have the Christmas holiday. And we do have the Easter. And we have uh, the and we have different actually. The Christian people, we have two or three main groups of them, so each one, each group has it's own holidays, so. It's good for us, we have all the holidays with them. So we do have like, 5 I think, Christian holidays and two Islamic holidays and then we do have the Independence Day is off and we have the New Year day is off, too.

JENNIFER: Mmhmm.

RIHAB: So, but these are official holidays, but because the cultures are different like uh, if there is a marriage or if there is uh, like a special occasion in the family, this is a day for a holiday too. Or, like celebration in my family, so. Uh, like marriage has it's own traditions and then we do have the uh, when we have baby there's a different tradition for it, and then. So, every, each culture has it's own.

JENNIFER: Hmm. Alright, um. What tell me about your education growing up.

RIHAB: My education?

JENNIFER: Yea.

RIHAB: The past one or the current one? [Laughs]

JENNIFER: Either one.

RIHAB: Okay. Um, we do like, you mean the education, uh. Okay.

JENNIFER: Like the, like the Arabic language and how you write, um.

RIHAB: Oh, Arabic and how we write the Arabic language?

JENNIFER: What's the difference between here in the United States and back in Sudan?

RIHAB: Oh, everything's different! [Laughs] Um, like education religion is a part of education there, not like here. So, we study the religion Islam for Islam stuff, um it is called (unintelligible) schools, so. Or Christianity if you are Christian (unintelligible) to your religion, so we do have uh. We study general subjects, math, geography, science, and Arabic language and English language. Uh, I started studying English when I was in the intermediate school, but they changed it now, so they get it from, uh, we call it primary school. It is uh, what is the word elementary school.

JENNIFER: Elementary.

RIHAB: So, they change it now so kids start studying English in first grade. And then you study the Arabic language too, and the difference between them is that we write Arabic is the most difficult, more difficult language, but you write from right to left. Um, the letters are different and the numerals are different uh, the grammar is different, everything. And then, you keep studying all generals. And intermediate school is 8 years and then high school is 3 years, that means 11 years from general studies. And then, most of the kids in my country go to University. It is not like here, some people drop out of school. So, because we will need to change our lives so they know that education is uh, I don't want to say the only, but it's the main way to get a bright future. So uh, there is uh, government universities. That means uh, expense is, is uh, limited. The government pay for you. And then there is private education institution. So if you didn't get the chance, or if you doesn't have if don't have high score, to join a university, you go to an institution or university private one but you have to pay a lot of money. And then, uh, after that usually people, after that they get a job. Or they move overseas, to any country, to get another job. And

then, uh, yea that's how it works. These days, most of the people go for the, after graduation, the post graduate education like Master or PhD degrees, so. [Claps hands together.]

JENNIFER: Hmm. Um, tell me about um, like what foods

RIHAB: Oh, the food?

JENNIFER: Like, if there are certain kinds, yea.

RIHAB: Mainly we eat uh, Sudan considered the most richest country in Africa, in land and water. So we have, uh, otherwise the first country is uh, (unintelligible). So, we have uh, big portions of animals. Before wars (inaudible) because now it's different. But so meat is the main part of food, especially beef. We don't eat pork over there. Maybe there is a few pork, uh, pigs. But, nobody eat pork. So uh, you will eat meat, eh, mainly 3 times a day [Laughs]. And then we do eat some kind of vegetables, African vegetables like okra or beans or beet, or like this stuff. And then we have like, have you ever seen the Mexican dorito, or burrito, whatever?

JENNIFER: Yea.

RIHAB: So, yea it almost that kind, we use it for to make the bread. Uh, Sudanese bread, it's a traditional bread. We call it "kissra"

JENNIFER: Mmhmm.

RIHAB: Like, they, they blend uh, they get the corn. They dry it and then they blend it. And then, uh women women who were the people who cook in my country, men usually doesn't, don't cook. So they get this flour and then uh, mix it with some water and leave it out for 3 or 4 hours to make like, a little bit sour. And then, they will, they do it, they make it in the oven. This called "kissra." They use it, people use it traditionally, especially in rural areas, country. But we uh, you will see they usually eat fresh bread. And then, we cook food differently. Like we get the onion and we uh, put in the pan and then uh, after it's like yellowish yellow color and then we add the meat and some water to boil it. And then we add some tomato sauce and this is a main yea, mainly this a first dish. And then you add whatever you want from vegetables, whatever the family want. And then we usually fry the uh, fry the food like the meat and stuff. And oh, barbeque it.

JENNIFER: Hmm.

RIHAB: Uh, and then drinks...uh. Alcohol is not allowed in my religion, so you can't sell it or you can't buy it, officially. But, there is people who do. So uh, it is not uh, a kind of drink. But we, we go for any kind of juice. Orange juice, lime juice, any kind. And then uh, food depends on your income. Like, rich people eat mainly any kind of food. Almost, it is American lifestyle if you are rich or (unintelligible), so. The food is civilized and everything is easy. But, if it's a low income family or people in the war areas and stuff, those people mainly eat one meal a day. And maybe it is even it doesn't consist of all the main food groups. But, yea, that's the main. And then we go for the fruit because usually banana, grapefruit and mango, these are main fruits in my country. Uh, we don't grow, like apple and yea, and grapes in Sudan because it is hot country, but we import

it. So just rich people eat this kind of fruit, but. And then we have the other kind, dates. It is, uh (background noise, unintelligible). So this is the kind of food in my country. We will eat three meals, usually nobody eat at morning. When you wake up, like, and brush your teeth and stuff, we drink tea. English tea, it is tea with bread. Uh, with uh, milk and bread, or whatever. And then you go to school or work, whatever. And then we eat breakfast like, ten o'clock at morning. Yea, normally. And then uh, the supper time is two or three o'clock afternoon. This is lunch time actually. Then supper or dinner, it is late. Like eight, nine at night.

JENNIFER: Hmm.

RIHAB: And it differ. Usually, most people just drink some milk or something at night, so it is light meal

JENNIFER: Hmm.

RIHAB: It is not like here. That's about it.

JENNIFER: Mmhmm.. Um, going back to your childhood. Um, did you, do you all eat together when you have your meals?

RIHAB: Oh, yea! Usually people eat at the same plate it's like, we have the big trays, it is round tray. We call it "sumi" in Arabic. Uh, and then, uh, like say when the meal has four or five dishes, like the main one, soup or, uh we call it "damaa" in Arabic. And then, and this is the food I described for you. And then, usually there is a green salad plate, and this is custom, everybody has to eat it. Like tomato, cucumbers and stuff. Uh, sometimes there is uh, and then there is the meat or fish or any other, fried or stuff. And then, we do like pasta, macaroni. But we don't eat macaroni and cheese, and so we go for the macaroni with meat. Uh, some hamburger, like American hamburger or something. We, we, we put a big amount of food in one big plate, each one. And then we put it in that round, big tray?

JENNIFER: Mmhmm.

RIHAB: And we, the dining room, whatever, uh they put the stuff in the dining room. So all the family eat from the same plate, from the same, yea. From this dish, whatever. After we're done, they take this off and they brought the, uh they gonna bring the fruit. After the fruit, the tradition goes for the hot tea. So, we do uh, hot tea in a big pot? And then everybody has a cup of tea. And this means the meal is done. So we eat from the same plate, in the same place. Nobody has his own plate. This, this used to be like that, the traditional way. These days, especially, we will go for, like American style. So, either they eat outside home [Laughs], or they have their own plates and stuff.

JENNIFER: Hmm, um. Returning to your childhood. Um, do you remember, um, anything about your grandparents? Any stories?

RIHAB: Oh yea! Yea, because family relations is something important in our culture. especially for respect for elder people.

JENNIFER: Right.

RIHAB: So I have a good relation with my grandpa and grandma. My mom, my grandma, actually my mom's grandma's mother, she just passed away 3 years ago, so. She's (unintelligible), actually. And then, traditionally, when a woman have a baby, her mom come and stay home with her and help out with her house and the other kids. So, every time my mom has a baby she comes and stays with us. And then, we live, uh, close to the other, so every Friday Friday is a holiday, is a day off on the weekend, in my country so every Friday all the family, all the kids children take their kids, the grandkids, and go to the grandparents family, and stay all the day and eat all the day, and help their mom. And if they are sick or something, you go during the week. But mainly every Friday is when the day is with your grandparents. Or, if you have a wedding or something in the family, so you go to that house, but. And then yea, it is not like here. Grandparents has a say in the family. So, if they say something, it means it is almost like order. Everyone has to obey. So, even the father or the mother or whatever. So yea. Family relation is so (Unintelligible).

JENNIFER: Yea. Is there any other expectations in you rcountry? That you have to

RIHAB: Oh yea, I have to show respect to people, even if they are your neighbors. And many, eh, all neighbors know each other uh, so. And then, even the neighbor can raise you. Like, he has a say in you. Like if he saw - say a neighbor saw a kid in the street doing something bad. He can hit him, or grab him or whatever, and put him in time out and whatever. And take him home back to his parents or whatever. And then uh, there is no like, it is not like here, like kids can stay outside or stay alone at home. So, maybe mom and dad - after kids come to school, school days start at like seven o'clock at morning, and it end like three o'clock. So if the mom is working and she comes home like, after three, four or five. So the kid have hour or two to stay home alone before his parents come. So, who watch him? The neighbor. There are ladies who is not working, and they watch the kids and keep the area safe and stuff. So, you show respect for everybody uh, in the society or your community, even if you don't know him. And then uh, tradition goes for, like if you sit if you are sitting down and some old people, anybody, old means older than you. So, if you pass, like or go coming toward you, so you stand up and say hi. You can't say hi while you're sitting down. That's not disrespect. And then, like if you are, somebody come home and you're at the door, you have to offer him stuff. So it's the (unintelligible). All your lives always you, the way how you show respect to other people.

JENNIFER: Hmm.

RIHAB: And, offer help for them. Like youngest kid uh, go do the shopping, especially the bread because we usually buy the bread every day, at morning. Because it is fresh. So, they used to send the kids to buy the bread. So, say a neighbor doesn't have a kid. So, your neighbors kid buy for you, and do the work for you. Like, bring you the mail, do the stuff for you, clean your yard and stuff. So, yea, it is because low income and stuff, so there is no co-worker to help you. So they use the kid to help the family. And the other thing that kids are not allowed to work. Like, it is not like here. You start working if you are 14 or 15 to get money. Because you don't have to pay nothing. And uh, the kid doesn't leave, don't leave the home after (unintelligible). No, you can't leave the house even if you are a boy or a girl, doesn't make difference 'til you get married. So

even if you are in the college, or the university or, even if you are working, (unintelligible), you can't leave the house. So you stay at home, the parents pay for everything. Your food, your rent, your clothes, everything. And then we will usually after that, when we get a job, they help, they pay some share to the mom. But, you don't have to. So that's why, your spare time, you offer it to help, in the house. To keep it clean, to make it running, to help the visitor when they come. Serve them, give them food, whatever. And jobs different from boys and girls. Like boys do the shopping, clean the houses, whatever. And then the girls cook, do the laundry if you don't have a servant in the house.

JENNIFER: Mmhmm.

RIHAB: So this is how your house work. Usually, moms the mother she's all who has the house uh, duties. Like, um, she's the supervisor of the house. So men just work, go to work and come back. And have find everything clean and food cooked, and. So the daily basis is for the mom, even if she is working and that's not fair to her.

JENNIFER: Mmhmm.

RIHAB: But that's how it works.

JENNIFER: Hmm. Tell me about the day you got married.

RIHAB: Oh, my wedding? Oh yea, that's a big process! Because uh, traditionally when you want to get married, like say before four or five (unintelligible), man has to pay money to get married in my country. Like, so a man pays uh, the lady money. And he has to buy her gold, a set of gold, and that is very expensive. And then also, we do something called "shera." "Shera" means a set of clothes, like say, eight sets. Sets mean a dress. We do the sari, or the Sudanese top. It is a long piece of uh, silk cloth. We wrap it I don't know if you saw it we wrap ourselves in it. So, you have this one, and then the dress and the shoes, and the bells and the jewelries, same color. So, it starts from three bells if you are low income, it goes to up to twelve or sixteen, whatever. It depends on your income. But, there must be a "shera" anyway, even if you are poor. So, mom buys this one. So the girl, she gonna have the new clothes, the new jewelry, a set of gold, and then the money in cash to help the family. So, to get marreid you have to pay a lot of money. And then uh, usually uh, the man choose a girl and he, he the man, uh family, the groom family go to the gr uh, the bride family and then ask for her hand, or to marry her. So the father, say the father, the groom father say, 'We want to get, we want to marry your daughter, Rihab,' whatever. And then, if I said yes - they ask me, if I say yes that means I agree, so then we start the process. Three or four months after that day, after the family came to my house, the girl brings that "shera", the clothes and stuff. And then for a marriage you have a special kind of perfume. The mom usually uh, the bride mother and her aunts and stuff prepare it. So, after they bring the bride the "shera", the set, they start doing the Sudanese perfume (speaks quietly, unintelligible). And then, after that say, they gonna say, the wedding. For me, I get married (unintelligible), see. So, then (unintelligible) where they do the cards and musician and stuff. And then they stay at the hotel. Some people just do the because it's not like here, you can get married in the street! [Laughs] Like, in the yard.

JENNIFER: Mmm.

RIHAB: So, we put uh, because people has a big yard, everybody has one. So they put all the chairs in the yard. And then, singers! You have to be like we serve a lot, like, the family is big. Say, in the wedding there can, yea there can be, like say a thousand people, or fifteen hundred people. And then, you have to feed all the people. So, usually there is a cooker. You pay him money and he come and do all the food. Because people eat together, so. Uh, there is a suppertime, everybody. We do that (unintelligible) I told you about. And then the people eat in groups. And then, (unintelligible) is a party and, and usually when it is at night, (unintelligible) it is nighttime. So, after sunset because it is very hot in my country so after sunset, they do the lighting and the decoration for there. Or, if you are rich you can go to a hotel, whatever. And then the, the bride wears a white dress and the man, the groom wears a black suit. It is just like the Americans do. And then, there must be a singer, this is different. So the singer come and he sings while people eating. And this, there is a big party, just at night. So next day at morning, there is a Sudanese, Sudanese traditional uh, party. And this goes from the morning, or the afternoon. So the, the bride wears Sudanese clothes and they do a Henna tattoo. If you saw it, it's a black drawing with Henna, it is natural tree. So it goes, after it lasts for fifteen days or something, so. And then, they color all the bride's feet and hands in this. And she wear a lot of gold. Her you can wear your mom's, your aunt's, every whatever. And then, so you, you look beautiful. And then, she wears the makeup and stuff. There is, people who girls who dance, in this tradition. They, they call it bride dancing. It is sexy dancing stuff, but just for ladies. So, usually men can't see, because the bride usually wears short stuff, and especially the jewels and stuff. So, she dance for the ladies and they have fun. And after they're done with this, there is some kind of blessing. Like the mom, the groom mom or the bride mom. They came and like, pray for whatever. And then they are ready to go after this, to start their honeymoon. That's how it goes. So my, usually mainly, my wedding is the same. The difference is uh, yea I didn't do the dance. I didn't like it, so I didn't dance. And then you, I went for a honeymoon, in a hotel. I didn't, didn't travel overseas. Usually, people travel outside the country to have a honeymoon. I didn't because I was traveling anyway, moving with my husband towards our country. So, I will stay with my mom for these days. So, I stayed there, then I moved with my husband and stuff.

JENNIFER: Mmhmm. Tell me about having your, having your children.

RIHAB: Oh yea. As I told you before uh, usually the moms come to stay with you if you have a baby. So, I, I had my baby overseas, in another country. So I send my mom a visitation visa, and she came. I had a C-section, my first one was trouble. It was, he was a premature.

JENNIFER: Hmm.

RIHAB: But uh, yea it was worth it. The first, yea the first was when I stopped working and stayed home. I had difficulites with the pregnancy. And then uh, usually the first babies are someone special because he had the, you know they're very special and stuff. So we had the big birthday after we have him. When you have a baby uh, you usually cut sheeps (unintelligible) and you invite all the friends and family, and then, yea. We did that, we invited all, everybody. Even my son was in the hospital, he was in the incubator, but

JENNIFER: Hmm.

RIHAB: Anyway. And then the mom, she wears good uh, nice clothes and she put uh, jewelries on and stuff. And she, she, she welcome people to her house. Other people cook for you, you don't have to cook because you are sick and stuff. They consider you sick, even if you are not. And then, my mom, for me my mom showed, uh she came after the party, because she wasn't there. Usually the party is on the seventh day, after a week, or after two weeks.

JENNIFER: Hmm

RIHAB: So. People can eat, have fun, bring all their kids and do they, they bring you money, or gifts. It is like a baby shower. And then, after you leave this is the first party and then after you have, after you go, say, seven days we do another party. And then, in this one you don't have to cut the sheep, you don't offer meat. You just, we just do the rice and uh, doughnuts and then , some kind of pudding, Sudanese pudding. You offer it to uh, mainly women just come in this one. Just for women. And then you have to give your friends, like we distribute for all the (unintelligible). So, you take, like take away. And then, who comes to your house come and eat. And this one like, blessing for a baby? We believe that it is like, I don't know what you call it. Like, it is like, no I don't know what they call it in English, but it is like, uh yea. It is mainly blessing for a baby, so God can expect him, and you know what I mean?

JENNIFER: Yea.

RIHAB: And guard him, so.

JENNIFER: Yea. Um, tell me about your journey to the United States.

RIHAB: My journey?

JENNIFER: Yea, what was it like?

RIHAB: Oh, it was long journey, like uh because I used to live in Qatar, it is overseas near Iraq.

JENNIFER: Right.

RIHAB: So (unintelligible) you have to make a connection. Uh, first of all you have to get a visa to get to the States, not anybody can come. And then, I was lucky enough to get I won a notary visa. It is a random visa. The government uh, offer it for people overseas to come here and get a job. So I applied, and I won it. I surprised my, my, yea my husband and my kid, so. And then you have to do like, medical check-up and financial check-up to come here. So we did it, and then afer we get the visa we both had to get (unintelligible). And then we made the connection in Europe, in Germany. You can choose Germany, France, England, anywhere but, you have to make a connection because it is a long flight. And then, we stayed there for a day, and then we came. So my journey is about two days, to come here. And then after we come to the States, we made we also had a connection in Chicago. So, and then we, we (unintelligible). Uh, it was a long journey, but it was good one, yea. And then, we choose Lincoln because my uncle living, is living here. For almost thirty years now. He came when he was in the University, to study. And he didn't go

back home, so he get married here and stayed here. He said Lincoln is a good place to live in. It is quiet and stuff. He used to be an engineer he used to live in Chicago, but he said it is too crowded so he moved to Lincoln. So, when we were planning to come, he said, 'Come to Lincoln, it is a safe place for kids.' So, that's why we choose Lincoln.

JENNIFER: Hmm. Uh, what were your reasonings for leaving Sudan?

RIHAB: Like, go back? Uh, hopefully this summer. My sister's, my younger sister's wedding is on August third August. But, I don't know if I can make it. It is a lot of money, and.

JENNIFER: Hmm.

RIHAB: But

JENNIFER: Why, why did you decide to come to the United States?

RIHAB: Oh, too many reasons! Uh, first of all, to get a good life. Uh, because of political problems and the economic difficulties in my country. Even if you are educated, you can't guarantee a good life. And then, there is war and there is stuff. So, if you have a chance to go away that's why we stayed in Qatar, the Arabic country. Because my husband got a good job there, a good offer. So, we stayed there for five years. And then, when we had the chance to come here, uh, we didn't even hesitate, because we said, 'We want to give our son a good life and good future.' And if he is American citizen even, even if he choose to go back and live in Arabic country, he can be a special person. So, we guaranteed him his human rights and stuff. And then, the other part is the freedom. Even if you are rich and you have money in my country, you are not free. Because you have politics, you have governments, you have the religion and stuff. So, if you, you have the chance to live in a country like here or England or Germany, you can be free. So.

JENNIFER: But, what were your first thoughts when you first came to Lincoln? How it was different and everything. What did you think?

RIHAB: I see -- ah, the first thing is that I like the green. I, I because in my childhood, I live in the beach area.

JENNIFER: Right.

RIHAB: So it was green there. So, when I, we and we came in September, it was a good time

JENNIFER: Mmm.

RIHAB: So I like it, very much. And then uh, I was so worried inside my heart, when we said we are coming here. Because, uh, we just saw America in the movies, Hollywood. So, when we were, we decided to come here, I was I had the feeling that I can't live in the, like you know, the high speed rate of the day, the one you saw in the movie? So when I get to Lincoln, I say, 'Oh! Okay, this is not like in the movies, it is different. It is a real life!'

JENNIFER: Mmhmm.

RIHAB: So, I'm driving now, I go to school, I take my kids to school, I go to job my work. And I don't have, I don't feel or have that feeling of rushing, that I'm running, all the day. So I think I'm relieved, I like it here. Yea, I do like it.

JENNIFER: Hmm. Uh, as you look back, what do you think about leaving the country you were born in?

RIHAB: Leaving my country?

JENNIFER: Yea.

RIHAB: It was a hard decision. Because, for me, I came alone. I didn't bring my family. I think, if my mom and dad are here, it is gonna be easier.

JENNIFER: Right.

RIHAB: But, as I said, uh I, I said I'm gonna, I, I was looking for a good life for my son, so. It is not, it wasn't a good it wasn't an easy decision to take but, after I came here I think I did the right thing, to come. And I will go back and visit one day, to my country.

JENNIFER: Hmm.

RIHAB: And hopefully, I'm planning to bring because we have, after, if I became a citizen I can bring my mom and dad. So, if they come here and they live with me, that's gonna be fun.

JENNIFER: Yea. What recommendations would you give them, if they were coming to the United States? What recommendations would you tell your family? To know about what would you want them to know about?

RIHAB: Uh

JENNIFER: Before they came here.

RIHAB: Mainly, to respect others. Because, we lived all our life, like -- we are the major majority of the country, we are Muslims who are Arabic -- so, we are always above. I don't want to say above, but it was a (unintelligible). So when you, when you move to come here, you choose to be a minority. And this is a big difference between how we lived there and how we live here, now. So, I my father can speak English and he is an educated man, so he knows everything about diversity. And he used to live in England, British. So he knows how to be a foreigner. For my mom it is gonna be hard. Because she doesn't speak English, she is not well educated. And she used to be uh, she, she live all her life and she thinks she's a queen. So, it is hard for her to come here, and people look to her and say, 'Oh, you are black, you are foreign,' whatever. So it will be hard. So, the first thing I'm telling everybody whom I know is coming here, that you have respect others.

JENNIFER: Hmm, do you ever think about going back?

RIHAB: Yea, I have that thought. I have to take my kids back to learn Arabic and Islam and (unintelligible) culture. Uh, even though we have the difficult life, and maybe not everything in my country is right, but there is a lot of good stuff there. Uh, the way we, the way we be raised is good for kids. To respect people, to be honest, to give before you take. And I want them to learn this stuff. I think if we keep living here, in this country, they're never gonna learn how to give. The main thing you learn here is, 'Mine, mine. Take it, take it.' So they need to learn how to give to others. So we go back, and then uh, I will let them hopefully they will stay there during their teenage years, teens. And then, if I have the opportunity, they will come back and study at the University here. And this way, I'm planning to let them know, kids are best from America and kids are less from Sudan.

JENNIFER: Hmm.

RIHAB: Yea, hopefully one day.

JENNIFER: Is there anything else that you want your children, or anybody, to remember from this interview?

RIHAB: From the interview?

JENNIFER: Yea, anything you

RIHAB: Yea, I think American people have a picture of our tendency to be American. It is a good chance. And then uh, you don't have to suffer all your life. For to look for food, to look for education, to look for medication, medicine and stuff. And then, they need to know that there is many, many people overseas, who can't even have a food one day. Like, there is too I was lucky, because my father was rich. Or, we are a high income family. So, I didn't even suffer like the other people. But still - I'm not American. So I I know how to suffer.

JENNIFER: Hmm.

RIHAB: And, I know how it is difficult. If you are, if you have exam tomorrow and the light went off. And this, for me, I have a little (unintelligible). There is a lot of kids in my country, they can't even go to school. And they can't even get their medication, and they didn't even have something to eat. So, if you have the opportunity to be in a good situation like this, just think about others, people over there.

JENNIFER: Well, thank you for this interview.

RIHAB: Oh, you're welcome.

JENNIFER: And uh, it was a pleasure.

RIHAB: You're welcome, Jennifer. And I hope I was

JENNIFER: I hope everything goes well.

RIHAB: [Laughs] Thank you very much.

JENNIFER: Thanks.