



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Raghad Interview

RAGHAD

My name is Raghad. Today is June 3, 2018. I'm speaking with [Rahaf 00:00:04] [Barcudi 00:00:04], who is my sister. Where were you born?

RAHAF BARCUDI

I was born at Homs, Syria.

RAGHAD

What were you like as a child?

RAHAF BARCUDI

I was a shy kid. I liked playing around with my toys and watching TV.

RAGHAD

How old were you when you moved to the United States?

RAHAF BARCUDI

I was 16-and-a-half.

RAGHAD

Why did you decide to move to the United States?

RAHAF BARCUDI

I decided to move here for a safer place and better education.

RAGHAD

How is the US different from Syria?

RAHAF BARCUDI

I would say living in Syria, it's easier to make a living. In the US, I guess life is more complicated, Also, it's definitely a bigger place, more people here. I would say in the US it's more high tech. It's more civilized than back home.

RAGHAD

Tell me more about your home country, Syria.

RAHAF BARCUDI

Okay. So first of all, the language is Arabic. We speak Arabic there. I lived in a town called Homs, which is two hours away from the capital. My high school, or both middle school and high school, were very close to my home. I used to walk there with my friends and, yeah.

RAGHAD

Have you ever been a dangerous situation before in Syria?

RAHAF BARCUDI

So, since we had the war in Syria, I have been in a couple of dangerous situations. One of them is when a group of people attacked my school. A couple of my friends were injured, but I'm fine now.

RAGHAD

Aw, I'm sorry about that. I'm glad you're safe. So if things were safer in Syria, would you go back there?

RAHAF BARCUDI

I would probably go back to visit, and I want to, but not to go live back again because the transition was hard and I don't want to experience that again. Plus, I have my school here now and my career in the future. My life is here.

RAGHAD

Who was the hardest person to say goodbye to and why?

RAHAF BARCUDI

Since me and my immediate family all moved in here, the hardest person to say goodbye to was my best friend. I've known her for a long time and we went to school together for five years and yeah. Yeah, she was the hardest person to say goodbye to.

RAGHAD

What's one thing you miss most about Syria?

RAHAF BARCUDI

Well, I definitely miss my family, my home, my bedroom. But the most thing that I miss is the environment, the loving and the caring people in my neighborhood.

RAGHAD

Was it hard fitting in, like getting used to new traditions?

RAHAF BARCUDI

Yes, it was, definitely. Obviously the language, I didn't speak English when I moved in. That took me some time to just learn the language and communicate with people. Plus, until this moment I feel like I don't fit in just because you miss a lot on the culture. It's not just the language anymore. It's just the whole culture. I didn't grow up here so I don't share a lot of experience with others, so yeah.

RAGHAD

What was your childhood dream?

RAHAF BARCUDI

As a child, I want it to be an architect. Yeah, that was my dream.

RAGHAD

Can you describe one of your happiest moments?

RAHAF BARCUDI

My happiest moment is when I got accepted to UCLA as an engineering major. I was super happy and proud. It's always been secretly my dream school, and I love UCLA. Go Bruins.

RAGHAD

What are you most proud of?

RAHAF BARCUDI

I'm proud of who I became now. I got into UCLA. I actually transferred to UCLA to probably one of the hardest majors to get in as an engineering major to one of the toppest research institute in the world. That is definitely something I'm proud of. Also, not just that, the fact that I was able to learn the language, communicate with people and do that within four years after I moved in. That was something I'm proud of.

RAGHAD

Can you tell me about someone who had a big influence on your life?

RAHAF BARCUDI

It would definitely be my mom. Since we moved here, she sacrificed her work, her entire life for us to get a better education and live in a safer-world.