

Number of Interview: 1

Date: September 27th, 2015

Gender: Female

Name: Doua Ibraheem, دعاء

Country of Origin: Egypt/England

Year of Immigration: 1998

**Abstract:** This interview with Mrs. Doua Ibraheem highlights the experience of an Arab-Muslim woman in the U.S.A. She narrates her experiences and opinions on immigration, family, religion, education, vocation, community, and the consequent relationships among these facets of life. Religion reinforced her self-identity and progressively became important in her life. This led to the successful assimilation into American culture. Her answers support the statement that being a Muslim is far more important to her than being an Arab, an American, or an Arab-American.

**Key Themes:** Choice, Religion, Family, Hijab, Importance of God in Life, Coexistent Independence

Interviewer: So, where is your homeland?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Egypt.

Interviewer: Egypt. What part of Egypt?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Alexandria.

Interviewer: Alexandria, Ok. So is it the main Alexandria that everyone thinks about?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok, Awesome. Can you tell me about the places where you lived and like, how you, where you went to school? Things like that.

Mrs. Ibraheem: I lived in Alexandria, Egypt most of my life. (baby sneezes) No, I lived first in England. My father was taking his, uh, like you know, Ph.D. And that for five years, I went to Alexandria. Like I left to, from Alexandria probably like when I was seven months or so. I came back when I was five years old. I stayed there like, till I finished my last year of college. During college I got married and then I moved here.

Interviewer: Ok, and um what year were you born, by the way?

Mrs. Ibraheem: 1977.

Interviewer: Um so, you were in England. Did you visit any other countries before coming to the U.S.?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Uhh, no.

Interviewer: No, ok. And then—let's see. When did you immigrate to the U.S.?

Mrs. Ibraheem: 1998.

Interviewer: 1998, ok. And were you originally here in Milwaukee when you moved? Or...

Mrs. Ibraheem: No, I was in New York and then we moved. Like, like I just stayed in New York for like I would say for a month and then my husband get a job in Arizona.

Interviewer: Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Uh, Mesa, Arizona and then we moved here.

Interviewer: Ok, did you have any professions that you did prior?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Other than teaching, no.

Interviewer: No? Ok, umm..

Mrs. Ibraheem: But I graduated as an accountant..

Interviewer: Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: But with my children needs and all that so I said I want my summer off so my best interest was to go to teaching.

Interviewer: Where did you get your, um, degree?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Accountant? It was from Egypt but when I came here I finished my credits to get to be a teacher.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Mrs. Ibraheem: And then from there I also finished a masters degree in, uh, education leadership.

Interviewer: Mhm, so ok, so then uh you've obviously got all these, these different beautiful degrees. Uh, um, what kind of schools did you go to in Egypt?

Mrs. Ibraheem: In Egypt, I went to Univerisity of Alexandria, Egypt.

Interviewer: Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: And um when I came here it was University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; and after that it was Cardinal Stritch where I get my degree.

Interviewer: Ok, so umm, she also wants to know how old you are now.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Um, she wants to (both laugh) I'm thirty-eight.

Interviewer: thirty-eight, ok. Alrighty, um so, did you have any of your family members, like your children, born before you moved to the United States?

Mrs. Ibraheem: No. None of them moved here—were, were born here. I was pregnant with my older one but I conceived him here.

Interviewer: And, um, what are their names? So this is the youngest one, right? (points at baby crawling on floor)

Mrs. Ibraheem: This is the youngest one. I have (Saif) "S.I.F....wait, S.A.I.F".

Interviewer: Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Sandra. S.A., Sandra. You know Sandra probably—the spelling. So Sandra.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Sirogg. S.I.R.O.G.G.

Interviewer: (confirms) R.O.G.G.?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Mhm, and then finally Seelah which is S.E.E.L.A.H.

Interviewer: Mk, and how old are all of they?

Mrs. Ibraheem: And how old are who? I'm sorry.

Interviewer: And how old are each of them?

Mrs. Ibraheem: How old, like compare me to them?

Interviewer: Oh, uh, just their ages.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Oh, their ages.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mrs. Ibraheem: The older one is almost uh, like uh, he's sixteen so almost seventeen. The second one is almost sixteen.

Interviewer: Is Seelah, or or who is the oldest?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Saif, Saif is almost seventeen. Sandra is almost sixteen. Uh, Sirogg is going to fourteen soon. And Seelah uh is seven, uh no, eight months. Right, Seelah? Right? I know (baby cooing in background)

Interviewer: She's a cutie, isn't she?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yeah.

Interviewer: Alrighty, and they were all born in Milwaukee?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Um ehh, this is the only one that was born here (gesturing to baby Seelah) but the other were born in Arizona.

Interviewer: Alrighty, we already talked about education. She's got all these overlaying questions here. So, we know that you've not been working because of the children...

Mrs. Ibraheem: No, I have been working. I teach.

Interviewer: Oh, you have been working! Do you do substitute teaching or full-time or?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Full-time.

Interviewer: Ok. Alrighty, and where do you work?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Now I work at New Berlin West High School.

Interviewer: And what grade do you teach?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Uh, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth.

Interviewer: Oh wow! How does that work? Do they have you teaching a specific subject? Or...

Mrs. Ibraheem: I'm teaching Geometry and Pre-Calc.

Interviewer: Wow! So, the stuff that I just can't do, ok. (both laugh) That's exciting! And, ok so, I guess we go on to the more religious questions. Do you pray five times a day? Things like that?

Mrs. Ibraheem: I try my best, yes.

Interviewer: Um, which, mosque would you say you go to the most?

Mrs. Ibraheem: There's one in ISM Brookfield.

Interviewer: Ok, the big one, right?

Mrs. Ibraheem: No, not the big one. It's uh, the one in Brookfield, not Milwaukee. There's one in Milwaukee, but now there's a new one that's built here. Brookfield.

Interviewer: And do you go to that one because it's your favorite one or most convenient or?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Most convenient.

Interviewer: Most convenient, do you have a lot of friends there?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Ahh, yes, I would know people there.

Interviewer: Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: I would say, not 'friend' friends but I know them.

Interviewer: Do you, um, when you go to the ISM Brookfield location, would you say that the majority of the women have the hijab on? Or...

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok. Is it looked down upon on the ones that don't or is it like, you just don't say anything about it?

Mrs. Ibraheem: No, no.

Interviewer: No? Ok. So it's a lot more liberal?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Um, if you're coming to the mosque and you're wearing uh, like really short, like, atairis and like, you know, revealing things now, yeah—you will be. But if you're just wearing like, normal, and you're just like—no, you would be fine. You know the difference between how you can dress up when you go to Church compared to how you would dress going to a party.

Interviewer: Mhm, absolutely. And do they do the services all in um, Fashaa (formal Arabic) or do they speak some English throughout the service?

Mrs. Ibraheem: They do! They speak mostly English.

Interviewer: Oh! Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: 'Cuz there's different people like, my background is Arabic—but other people Urdu (Jordanian Arabic) or whatever, so they speak it mostly English and then they will have some words here and there. She loves paper so she's going to now eat your paper. (gesturing to baby Seelah playing with paper against backpack.)

Interviewer: Oh, that's ok. She can have a little bit of it. Here, I let you have that second piece if you really want it. (both laugh, baby Seelah takes paper) There ya go. Alright, um let's see. Alright, so what was the main, um, was it because your husband was able to get a job to be able to immigrate to the U.S.?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yeah. No, he was here before I married him so.

Interviewer: Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: We came, like, he went to Egypt and then we met each other and then married to each other and then I moved here because he was living here.

Interviewer: Ok, so kinda like my grandpa. That's funny! Ok. It's the other way around though—Grandma because—but yeah. Alrighty, so umm did you face any um, not oppressive, but like um, stigmatization or anything like that when you moved to America?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Ah, no because at that time, no I do not think so. Because, just like, the only thing that was, it was like, my language barrier. But that's all. But other than that I blended in easily.

Interviewer: And did you take english classes when you got here?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Eventually, no it was all from the TV. I stayed home so it was just the TV and me.

Interviewer: That's incredible! I wouldn't be able to do that.

Mrs. Ibraheem: And then I learned English through the TV—that's all, seriously! But we do, like, I was in a, a private school so we learn English in Egypt so we do have a background but we do not speak it fluently. Remember, I also lived in uh, like, my five first years of my life—

Interviewer: In England.

Mrs. Ibraheem: in England. (in agreement) So, like, it was there but it wasn't like I was speaking it fluently. But I would understand it; I would write it fine. You know, reading, composition, all that but it just didn't come fluently. But with the TV, made that part came out.

Interviewer: Which would you say was your favorite TV Show?

Mrs. Ibraheem: It was the LifeTime. It's the channel of Lifetime. Like, with the movies that comes 107 or 108. Something like that.

Interviewer: Yeah! All those, they have great ones around the holidays.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yes, yes, yes—it was from one movie to another.

Interviewer: That's really fun.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yeah.

Interviewer: And then, um, since you do have background in both languages, do you teach your children both languages or do you just English, or?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Eh, I would say, both.

Interviewer: Both? Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: My children will more understand it more than they speak it. But when we went to Egypt for vacation it allowed to—to better talk it.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Mrs. Ibraheem: To communicate. But they won't it fluently—arabic.

Interviewer: Ok, and the arabic that they do speak, is it formal? Is it um, Masri? Or..

Mrs. Ibraheem: Is it, no, it's like. It's all arabic, but it's just like different accent. Like you, know Europe? They still speak English. Different part of Europe do speak different Eng—like, they do speak the same English but it's different accent and they would realize that. So, it's all arabic. But it's just different accent that you can here. And why the Egyptian language is more dominant is just because of the move. It's like the Hollywood. So it's more movies coming out from there so most of the people know this. Like, it's they can hear easily. You know?

Interviewer: Mhm!

Mrs. Ibraheem: So, and I would say Egypt compared to other countries, it's more, it's more the Arab countries, it's the most well established country in the, in that region.

Interviewer: Yeah, I would say so too.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yeah, that's why so.

Interviewer: Ok, well let's see. Well you did not immigrate when you were single so that's not a question for you.

Mrs. Ibraheem: No.

Interviewer: Umm, we went through already (as well). I'm glad you're covering like multiple questions within each question. That's good. Let's find some more stuff for



you. So, basically our number obstacle was language barrier. Umm, when you started working, did they have you do anything additional to compensate for the language barrier or anything like that as a teacher?

Mrs. Ibraheem: No.

Interviewer: Ok, so that's good. Marriage questions, these are kinda fun, right?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Ok.

Interviewer: So, um, first question is kind of ambiguous. Uh, what does marriage mean to you?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Sharing life. Sharing a future together. I would say sharing a future together and like, you know—being somebody that will hold your hand throughout the years.

Interviewer: That's good. Ok, and what factors would you say your marriage has played in your life?

Mrs. Ibraheem: What factors?

Interviewer: Mhm! Like, it's role in your life.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Uhh I'm not sure what you're trying to say.

Interviewer: So, like, like, the first characteristics that you look for in your husband would be—like, like, would it be um, like characteristics of—like, is he a studious person or would you go first for, from his homeland, nationality, or things like that.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Oh, oh so, what would I need from a husband?

Interviewer: Mhm. Yeah, like that's the first part of it.

Mrs. Ibraheem: So I would say at that time I was almost seventeen when I knew him. So, I fell in love with his perfume. I love his cologne, by the way.

Interviewer: That's great!

Mrs. Ibraheem: But after that, it's just like, you know, how he dealt with me and all that stuff. Like, you know, how can he deal with the (mowan?); how can he share a life with me? But that's all. But in the beginning I was too young about like, you know, looking at characteristics of the person.

Interviewer: Mhm!

Mrs. Ibraheem: So, in the beginning it was like how you look and how you talk and how you, whatever. But that's not everything in life, right?

Interviewer: Yeah! But that's actually quite different from like, what a lot of women say.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Really?

Interviewer: Um, when they come from the Arab World because um, like, at least half of the women that I've looked at reports from had said they were part of an arranged marriage or they married them because they were in the same village or things like that. [\*\*trying to see what her response would be to such a statement\*\*]

Mrs. Ibraheem: Ohhhhh.

Interviewer: I'm glad to hear that.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Ohh, ok!

Interviewer: Your story is more, not more american, but more liberal in general and it gives you more power as a woman in the relationship.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yeah. So that, like, that was all. Like we was walking and I smelt his cologne and I fell in love with it, so.

Interviewer: That's very cute! And then, umm, we know that you moved with him because you were married, you were married prior to the move.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yes, definitely. Uh huh.

Interviewer: And then um, would this, would moving to America have been something you would have considered before marrying him?

Mrs. Ibraheem: My father was, I would say, two, three years before that...Before I moved here, my father was here in the United States. And he was a professor at a University at that time with my mother and my sisters. But, I was in my high school so I stayed over in Egypt at that time. And when I decided to come, he, he died. My father.

Interviewer: Oh.

Mrs. Ibraheem: So we came back. Like, we were, my family was here before so it wasn't something that—it was, I was going there. But, it just like, that death came like, and fell everything apart.

Interviewer: Ohh, so it was kinda, it was kinda like a stop in your plans?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yes.

Interviewer: But marrying, what's your husband's name by the way?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Siri.

Interviewer: Ok, marrying him, um, kind of helped move forward with the plans?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: Ok. Um, so now we get to talk about your actual wedding. Would you be able to tell me about the ceremonies you went through and like, the processes?

Mrs. Ibraheem: So, it's like. Most of it we paid, pay kinda half 'n half.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Like, we pay things when we're getting married. Like, my husband pays for things to establish a house. But since we're moving here so there's not much that we did. Like, we get the furniture and all that but it wasn't ilke, you know, a complete house. Because like in the beginnning I lived with my mother-in-law til we, til after my husband get me a separate apartment.

Interviewer: oh, ok!

Mrs. Ibraheem: But in the beginning it was just like, you know, buying stuff. Like, you know and worrying more about the wedding day other than anything, other than anything with establishing the house. But the furniture, we bought the furniture and all that stuff but it was like a house for myself. And then, like, he bought me the wedding dress like, you know the may—everything to establish the wedding day which is too expensive and you can agree about it everywhere.

Interviewer: Oh yeah, absolutely.

Mrs. Ibraheem: So, like, from there we like, we just get married and then he came for a couple of visits throughout like before, like, because I was married when I was a

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junior in college. And then he came around when I was a senior and as I was done my college, then I moved here.

Interviewer: Ok, and then, uh how many days did you celebrate?

Mrs. Ibraheem: It's just like, like it's different than, like, other people that you will hear from. For Egypt, it's just one day.

Interviewer: Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: So like, it's just the of the wedding. Maybe the day before, like the girls from the family, like the my cousins or my neph—people come around from my family like you know, to have fun in the house.

Interviewer: So like an informal bachelorette party?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yeah, party, kind of a party.

Interviewer: Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: But other than that, no, it's just like, one day.

Interviewer: And then you had the religious ceremonies from being Muslim, correct, in the wedding?

Mrs. Ibraheem: It was the day before we did the—

Interviewer: the ceremony?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Not the ceremony I would say, it was kind of um, like uh, the legal papers.

Interviewer: Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: So it's like uh when you're getting married here you go to the, like, you know you do the ceremony at the Church and the you go to court so that you're married, officially married. Over there we do not do it both ways, it's just we do the religious married. Like you the, like you know the legal papers and when, when whoever comes and do it for us, then he go and do it for us, like he make sure it's legal. It's 100% legal. And then they send the papers.

Interviewer: Ok. So you'd say the papers that are legally binding are also religiously binding?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yes, but both at the same time. I'm sorry, the doors were open yesterday when we had a barbecue (referencing to a fly).

Interviewer: No, it's ok. Oh, you should see us in Lalumiere, the language hall. There's a bunch of them.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Do you live in the dorms?

Interviewer: I wish, I save \$10,000 a year by living with my parents.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Perfect!

Interviewer: Yeah! So, you know, I'm being frugal.

Mrs. Ibraheem: I wish that my son was awake so he can hear that.

Interviewer: Well, I've got it recording so I can give you a copy of the recording later. Right? There you go.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yeah. All he thinks about's going away.

Interviewer: And then, I'll probably ask again but did you have any pictures that you wanted to show or remember it by?

Mrs. Ibraheem: For the wedding?

Interviewer: Mhm.

Mrs. Ibraheem: It's, I think somewhere in the basement and I can't find at this point so I will have to, I, I really don't have it.

Interviewer: That's ok. And then um, let's see. Obviously, your parents approve of the marriage since it's a Muslim um—

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yes, definitely. It's eh, most of them. yes I would say there are some cases where the parents do not approve of the wedding but I would say 90% do approve weddings because like it has to be a formal wedding with parents and all that and it's the same way here, isn't it?

Interviewer: It is! I uh, we're having that problem with my brother. We'll say, we'll talk about that afterwards, right? Just because that's deviating. But umm, we didn't really have any obstacles for the marriage. So, you'd say it was a very independent

start to the relationship and no one influenced you two to get married besides each other?

Mrs. Ibraheem: No, no.

Interviewer: Ok, umm. There are no cultural barriers because you're both from the same city and you did obtain a college degree. She's got a lot of overlaps in this. Um, ok. So you have three daughters and one son?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Two daughters and two sons.

Interviewer: Ok, let's figure out which one's which. So this is Seelah

Mrs. Ibraheem: Seelah, she's a girl. Where's your ball Seelah? Are you playing around with your ball?

Interviewer: And then, Saif is a guy, err, male. Right? Sandra?

Mrs. Ibraheem: So Saif is a male. Sandra is a female. Sirogg is a male and then Seelah is a female.

Interviewer: There we go! Ok, we got that. So this is kind of a 'what if' question. Would you consider marrying a man who was born and raised outside of the United States? Yes, you did. Um, so let's turn that question around. Would you have considered marrying someone once you got here and would they have had to have been Muslim and why?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Uh, like, for like, I would say it's over for me, but if it's my daughter and she can get married to someone that's here, I would prefer that she marry—because she was born and raised here in the United States. Yes, I would say I would prefer that but he has to be a Muslim so that he is the same religion.

Interviewer: Mk. Alright—

Mrs. Ibraheem: Because the ki—I want my grandchildren to carry that religion.

Interviewer: Absolutely!

Mrs. Ibraheem: But, if it's my son, I would prefer that he marries a Muslim but if he decides not to marry a Muslim and to marry a Christian that would be fine still for me. But for a woman, no. For a man he can marry a non-Muslim because his children will be Muslim because they follow the father's religion, not the woman's

religion. So if Sandra married a non-Muslim, her children would non-Muslim. You know what I'm saying?

Interviewer: Absolutely.

Mrs. Ibraheem: So that's the faith problem.

Interviewer: That's the exact reason gave about my brother. So, like to give context, my older brother Daniel is um, he just graduated from Creighton University in Omaha and he is engaged to an atheist woman.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Uh huh.

Interviewer: So, she doesn't have a problem with someone voicing their own beliefs, but this woman has no beliefs.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Ohh.

Interviewer: So, that's why my mom does not like that.

Mrs. Ibraheem: But I would agree with her.

Interviewer: Yeah, he takes her to Church.

Mrs. Ibraheem: You can see more with your mother when you get aged more and more, when you get more experience. So, I believe that she's right.

Interviewer: Yeah! Absolutely.

Mrs. Ibraheem: It's your turn to talk to your brother.

Interviewer: And I told her, 'you know what Mom, he'll figure it out on his own. He takes her to Church. If she doesn't find some kind of belief in God from that, I don't know what he can do. So...

Mrs. Ibraheem: Because Christians, like, they know there's God and so that's why I do not mind Sirogg marrying non-Muslim. To marry someone with no belief, no. That's a big no-no.

Interviewer: Mhm, absolutely. Alright, so how involved in the community both, the actual community and the Arab community itself?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Uhh, I would not say too much. Because I am just too busy with life and all that. I used to work at Salamm School so I was more involved in the

community. But since I left there and went to work at New Berlin West, it was now, like I would say, I'm like, I'm away from the community.

Interviewer: Ok, do your children have any activities in—

Mrs. Ibraheem: No.

Interviewer: No? So your sons or daughters don't do any sports or anything?

Mrs. Ibraheem: It's not like that. Like, my children did not, was not raised from the beginning like when they were one year or two year in the Muslim community. So when they came in, like you know, like, already the boys there and the girls already they have their cliques. So especially my boy, like my older boy did not fit in well. And he was like, you know, he was rough but they were trying to bully him but he was aggressive and it was to the point I had to get him out of school. And my other two, Sandra, done well but like when it came to a point where I am leaving I do not want to go drive her all the way there. So like when she went to high school, then she left because I'm not gonna go drive her all the way to Salamm School and bring her back. The other one chose when he moved onto middle school to move onto a different school because, he like to have more freedom.

Interviewer: So are they involved in their high schools and middle schools consequently then?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yep. And their high one is the one in Brookfield.

Interviewer: Do they have a favorite sport or do they all kind of do their own thing?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Ahh yes, Sirogg plays ice-hockey.

Interviewer: Oh, wow! Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: And Saif plays wrestling. He used to play football but every year he would break a bone. He decided by himself that 'I'm not gonna do it anymore' and then he does wrestling.

Interviewer: Ok, yeah wrestling is a little to maintain your physical fitness because you're not bashing into plastic. Um, so do you have any siblings yourself?

Mrs. Ibraheem: My, yes, I have three sisters.

Interviewer: Ok, are you the youngest or—



Mrs. Ibraheem: I'm the second oldest.

Interviewer: Oh, ok so just like me.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yes, right Seelah? (baby Seelah screams)

Interviewer: Hi there! You're having fun with that aren't you? (talking to baby Seelah)  
Alrighty, so let's see umm—do you think the internet or social media makes it easier for Arab and Muslim Americans to meet their future mate? It's a really, innocuous question.

Mrs. Ibraheem: I myself, do not believe in marriages or like you know, that happens through social media. Maybe, like, I'm not sure like, I do not believe in that myself. Maybe other people find it right.

Interviewer: So you would say that they could meet each other through it but you wouldn't say that that's what keeps the relationship going as being able to have met through that and..ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's good to hear. So um, coming around to that. Do any of your children date currently?

Mrs. Ibraheem: No.

Interviewer: No, ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: They know they are not allowed the dating part. And, you find it strange like, like for a girl, a Muslim girl, it's a big, big, big, big no-no. But maybe, boys it's done under the table. But not really through sexual relations. I would say dating is more done by them to know each other.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Mrs. Ibraheem: But with a girl it's a big no-no. With a boy, maybe but I do not want, like, I don't know but I am not saying that but—

Interviewer: Yeah, no I understand.

Mrs. Ibraheem: It happens I would say but it's not like announced.

Interviewer: Umm, don't need that question. Don't need that. (flipping through notes)  
You're children attend public school, all of them attend public school currently.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yeah.

Interviewer: Umm, we already answered that. We might be done. Oh, um, was there a certain age that you chose for your children?—well she's not wearing the hijab right now. (gesturing to baby Seelah)

Mrs. Ibraheem: This thing I leave for—I never you know, because I was not forced to wear hijab. So I won't force my chil—my daughter to wear it. It just like, I feel like when the right time comes, then they will do it. It's just something like, I can't force someone to wear something on their head when they can go outside and just take it off. It's either you want it and you believe into it, or you don't.

Interviewer: And did you start wearing hijab before or after you moved?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Oh, before—after I got married. Like when I had my third child.

Interviewer: Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: So it was kind of like, you know, I felt the need for it.

Interviewer: So, it it, do you think it makes you feel it makes you a part of the community more or—

Mrs. Ibraheem: No!

Interviewer: Or closer to your religion? Or...

Mrs. Ibraheem: No, it has nothing to do with the community. It has to be something that you, a relationship between you and God. Like, it's eh, it's like a mandate that God asks us to do—women, to protect us. Because think about it, like you know um, that you think that it's covered.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mrs. Ibraheem: So no, it's something that more between me and God when I decided like, 'No, this is my time. I'm gonna do it.' I cried the day when I saw myself in the mirror and like, you know, wearing, how, how my looks changed. But the one

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Doua Ibraheem

prayer the I ask God that day is that 'Please God..' Seelah, Seelah (stopping baby)  
'Please God, do not let me take it off.' And, that was it from how many years ago.

Interviewer: Ok. Alright, um so awkward questions about 9/11. How did the day of  
9/11 go for you? Did it like did anyone address you that day?

Mrs. Ibraheem: No! No, everyone says—no I didn't.

Interviewer: Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: I guess sometimes I feel the look. Like especially when I went to a  
public school. Sometimes, some students, the look. But other than that, no. I was  
not wearing the hijab at that time and my head on 9/11 when that happened.  
Although that time—can you say hi Sirogg? (talking to son walking downstairs)

Interviewer: Hi!

Mrs. Ibraheem: That's my third oldest. My third one. So, I was not wearing a hijab so  
it was fine for me. They would more say that I am a Mexican than a Muslim so I  
blended in easily, but I didn't feel it myself. Maybe other people felt the hate or  
whatever. But I'd say no. Seelah Seelah leave him alone please. (talking to baby  
approaching interviewer shoe)

Interviewer: Does that feel funny? It's suede. Alright, and then um, so you said you  
didn't wear it at the time.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yeah

Interviewer: Do you wear your hijab where you work now?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Oh yeah, I do.

Interviewer: Ok, since the 9/11 have you had anyone actually come up and  
aggressively confront you?

Mrs. Ibraheem: No, no.

Interviewer: That's really good to hear. Um, we have the answer to that. Oh, other  
than the hijab, do you have any other cultural clothing?

Mrs. Ibraheem: No.

Interviewer: No, ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Like, I mean Egyptians do not wear (abay-yuh) all the time. Like you know, unless they're young lovers. A good number of them wear the (ai-yays) and which is coming from other people.

Interviewer: Um, I know I'm kind of bouncing all over the place now. Let's just keep going—

Mrs. Ibraheem: No, you're fine.

Interviewer: going with the questions. So you have three sisters. Do any of them live in the (United) States (of America) as well?

Mrs. Ibraheem: No, they all live in eh. Both, bo—two live in Egypt and one is, her husband is working in Kuwait. So that's why she is there with him, but she lives, like she is just there because her husband is there working but when he is done, she moves back to Egypt.

Interviewer: Ok, and do any of them work?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Uh, yes one.

Interviewer: Just one? Ok.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Oh uhh, one other one worked but with the near need of her children then she stay home.

Interviewer: Oh, oh ok. That's good to hear. So it sounds like your parents are encouraging of um knowledge, and um all that on both sides.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Oh yeah. All of them attend college and graduated. Sirogg watch out! Jai-yed (good)

Interviewer: Alright, um are there any particular services or resources that you think the Arab and Muslim's Research and Resource Institute should provide to meet the needs of communities to which you belong? So like, that's the group that I'm doing this research for. Um, is there anything that you think an institute like this could provide for the community that would benefit?

Mrs. Ibraheem: Um, (long pause) I would say most of women I see around in the community. I would think they should have a better chance to be educated and finishing their degrees because they came, lie, you know, the well dominant people here in Muslims are like, you know Palestinians. And I'm not saying all of them, but a

good number of them didn't reach their four(th) year in college so I would say that you know, maybe something to better let them know, like, you know, open their eyes that education is worth it and like you know, even if their husband can support them 100%, it's something that you do for yourself. I think this would be a good move in the community if we can encourage women to go back to school and even if they're older.

Interviewer: Absolutely, and so um, staying on the topic of encouraging women, I know you know about the liberal versus the non-liberal portions of the Mosques. 'Do they look down or not look down on women not wearing the hijab.' What about the women, especially the young women, who have almost given up their religion because they moved here or because they're trying to enforce their educational rights? Things like that. Do you think there would be a more constructive way—

Mrs. Ibraheem: to get them back to their religion? So you mean the other way around?

Interviewer: Mhm.

Mrs. Ibraheem: Yes you can, but you know if there is people, young, like not older people. I would say young people speak up about religion in their own words of teenager words. You know, so it's not the old people talking. Muslim, true Muslim people that talk to these people. Hey baby, hi Seelah! Are you coming to Mommy?

Interviewer: And is there anything else that you think would be important to share concerning the topic. So the topic overall would be Arab Muslim Women in the Milwaukee area. Brookfield is roughly in there. What uh, how do I put this—so anything having to do with the culture, the religion, marital, social to religious relationships. Things like that.

Mrs. Ibraheem: I don't think so. I think we covered everything.

Interviewer: Everything? Ok, and I think we're good there.