

**The Ugandan Asian Archive Oral History Project**  
An Oral History with Anwer Omar

Archives and Research Collections  
Carleton University Library  
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*The Ugandan Asian Archive Oral History Project*  
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Narrator: Anwer Omar  
Researcher: Shezan Muhammedi  
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**Abstract:**

Mr. Omar arrived in Canada during the 90-day expulsion period and was soon rejoined by his younger brother and mother in 1973. He sponsored the resettlement of both his mother and brother from a refugee camp in England.

Mr. Omar recalls a pleasant childhood in Uganda with warm weather, time spent with family and friends, as well as an excellent education system. He attended Kololo high school an off shoot of Makerere University's teaching designation at Kyambogo. He had just completed his training when the expulsion was announced and he was forced to flee.

Upon arrival in Canada, Mr. Omar recounts familiar struggles with the weather and adjusting to Canadian life. He also reflects on the generosity of many Canadians and their willingness to help. He spent his first few years in the small town of Perth which he described as the perfect place to be resettled in. He remained active in various sports clubs, religious groups, and various volunteer organizations in Canada and the rally car scene in Uganda. Mr. Omar is now retired but continues his volunteer work and support of local initiatives.

This oral history was conducted at Mr. Omar's home in Ottawa.

Anwer Omar: "So I was born in a little town called Mengo just on the outskirts of Kampala and that area had a large Ismaili community. I would say that 80% of the Asians there were Ismailis. I'm not sure why but that's where I grew up, that's where my mother was born and we lived not too far from Kampala. See Uganda at one time had kingdoms right? There was the king of Buganda and he had his parliament right there so we lived not too far from there. From what I gather it's back in sessional now. That parliament is back because as you know the king was killed and all that. He was a very classy gentlemen. If you look at Buganda the people of Buganda they are the most educated. As you go north the education became less and less. Now of course things have changed but that's how it was.

The tribe that Idi Amin came from, you know the north Uganda they were very uneducated there were still people running around without clothes. Places like Karamoja and that. So I was born in Mengo as I just relayed to you. There were not too many schools there was just one three room school that was run by the Aga Khan community. So that was my primary school and then we all outgrew the school and they shipped us to the main primary school in the city. So that was sort of our beginning and then we all went in different directions. I did finish my primary school there and then I joined another school and carried on. So my connection with the Ismaili community is really big and it's continued to carry on. I've got some really good friends here. And like I said I ended up going and teaching at an Aga Khan school. So if you want to ask questions maybe that would be better?"

**Shezan Muhammedi: "Sure, yeah no problem. I'll start with what was sort of your family's history?"**

Anwer: "Well my grandfather came from Junagadh, Indian and our estimation is that he came in 1910. And obviously, they all came when they were building the railway from Nairobi to Kampala. You know the British already had used the Indian labour in India and at the time Africa was pretty, the Africans had not reached the stage where they could do all this, so rather than reinvent the wheel they just brought the Asians down. Built the railway line and as they

were doing that many just stayed back. And those who stayed back flourished because they worked hard. They all started with little stores, or dukas as they called them. And that's how my grandfather came and I'm not too sure but he then ended up eventually in Mengo, in this little town and that where my mother was born, her brothers were born, and the whole extended family was there including me. My father came here in the thirties; he wasn't born in Uganda. I guess it must've been an arranged marriage or whatever happened there. So my grandfather died in 1940, around 1940 but now I still have my mother has passed away but I have a step uncle in England and his children are there and I have other uncles who are half brothers.

My real uncles they all passed away a long time ago but my mother just passed away in 2008 here. So that's sort of the background but I had not much connection with anybody in India. So in 1993 Parveen and I went to Pakistan and India. And when we went to Pakistan, as you know when there was partition when India and Pakistan parted company a lot of the Muslims from Indian ended up in Pakistan. And in that migration, a lot of my relatives ended up in Karachi. I had one connection and we went and met him and then he took me to meet my closest relatives that I didn't even know existed in 1993. Closest in the sense that my grandfather's brother lived in Uganda and this was his youngest brother's children that I met and they showed me photographs and everything. It was an amazing time for me because I didn't even know they existed. I had no connection and my grandmother, so he considered her a mother and they were saying that they were waiting for one of us to show up. She had passed away but she had lived until 102 and then I met her children which would be my cousins. I was just really floored. This gentlemen that I had a connection with he knew all these people because we all came from the same part of India.

That was the only time where I was able to connect with the relatives there. So basically that's our history and like I said I was born in Mengo. I did my high school at a school called Kololo a very very famous and popular school in the town of Kololo. I did my teaching not at Makerere but Makerere had an off shoot just for the teaching designation, they had a place called

Kyambogo so that's where I went and got my teaching designation. I had just finished when all this happened."

**Shezan: "And then what were your parents doing in Uganda?"**

Answer: "My father was not very educated but he was very enterprising. In those days he had multiple businesses. He had a store which that was one of his last businesses. He had a transport business and then he had a lumber yard and he had as I recall they used to make starch. Now I really cannot say very clearly but he was in the business of making starch. I still need to get a little more background on that from my uncle. I still have this one question that I never asked him but he definitely had a lumber yard, a couple of trucks so he used to transport things within Uganda. So that was the main thing until he passed away. My mother didn't obviously work they were generally all housewives and so on. He died when I was pretty young, I was only probably ten. So my mother basically brought us up. And I have a younger brother who lives in, just north of Toronto in Port Perry. So that's sort of my education part of it.

Of course, in '72 is when we were asked to leave and all the dramas and all the traumatic experiences occurred but we were fortunate. As I recall not as many Asians were killed as blacks were. Over 300,000 blacks were murdered by Idi Amin. 350,000 is the estimation. Asians were being picked up a few were killed. I know of three families. There was an Ismaili family and they had a gas station and just randomly picked up by the army. I had a very close friend who had a very thriving tour operation. When tourists would come he would take them on safaris. All they wanted was his Mercedes car. You know that's what they were doing. Don't forget that the army that was there, when you think of a soldier you think of educated and all that but Idi Amin had his own tribal people who were uneducated. Most of them were very criminally minded people and they really hassled everyone from the time he announced and made this proclamation that Asians should leave until we left. I'm sure your mom has relayed some of these stories to you.

The things we had to go through like this friend of mine who they just picked up right in the middle of the city. They threw him into the trunk of the car and drove away and then of course we were all searching for him. Finally we found his bullet ridden body on the side of the street. They just killed him. But I think maybe twenty people at the most were murdered by Idi's goons. But they beat up a lot of people and they stole a lot. They would come every evening when you were sitting at home and they would show up at your door. And you had no recourse because who would you report to? The police were frightened by them. The police were educated. They had to go through proper processes but they would not tackle Idi's goons right?

They would come to people's homes. Fortunately, they came twice to our place and didn't do anything. They came in and said we hear you've got monies and all this. And we said ok just go ahead and look around and then they just left. There were cases where they would come and hassle the women, grab their jewellery, and it was very common. We were ok when you were in the city because there weren't too many roadblocks but anybody coming out from any of the other cities outside of Kampala like Jinja, Mbarara, Masaka, and all those places. They would be traveling to Kampala which you had to do when you were getting your clearances for papers. There would be roadblocks. They would stop you. They would steal money from you. They would harass you. Even when we were leaving we had three roadblocks in the twenty-one-mile road. One thing that the Canadian government did, they were pretty smart, in the end they had Canadian diplomats driving with the buses and the army did respect that. So they had hired a bus, I left on the 23rd of October very close to the deadline which I think was the 9th of November, so I made very close to the time. So they said meet at 7 o'clock at this hotel and there will be a bus and they had two diplomatic cars but still we were stopped three times. The army would come in and open your suitcases and if they didn't take anything away then when you went to the airport they would take what was left.

Like I had a few things but I told them just take. I was at a stage where I said take anything you want. I was going with just one suitcase, you left your house open, you left your cars open, there with the keys. So you had to have that attitude. There was one girl that I knew she was an

Ismaili girl and she had just got married and she had put on a lot of jewellery on her. I told her, "this is not going to work out." She said, "well I'm gonna try." And they grabbed everything from her. They put everyone through a lot of traumatic experiences like that. Fortunately, they didn't beat up anybody at immigration but they took whatever they wanted. You had no recourse. Somebody just sent me a clip the other day of the last days, it was a British guy, a BBC guy who did the interview and they were showing how they had pulled off a lot of Indian luggage just sitting on the tarmac. So I don't know if those people ever for anything or not.

But the Canadian government did a fantastic job. We didn't even have to buy and airline ticket. At one time what happened was when they started to take people you had to buy a ticket. You obviously needed money but you would go to the bank and they had stopped giving you monies. So what do you do now. And so then the government said we'll take you and you can pay us later which they never asked for. They basically brought us here for free. And you know the rest of the story how the guy was there, how they were processing us, and just going through that particular immigration process was just difficult. We stood in every line for each embassy. I stood in line for the Indian embassy, the Pakistani embassy, and none of them wanted you. That really sort of troubled me that you were of that origin and they didn't want to take you. They just said forget it.

Thank God there were some embassies that did. There were still many people there that were still British subjects. Now I call those people smart because they never took up Ugandan citizenship."

**Shezan: "And you guys had? [Ugandan citizenship]"**

Answer: "Well I was born there so I was a natural citizen. This is what had happened Shezan. When he [Idi Amin] said leave you had to go through a verification process. Miles and miles of lines you stood in just to verify your citizenship. And I was born there, I have a Ugandan passport and the guy tore it up and said "no, no". There was no reason, some others they

would let through. That verification process in itself was very traumatic because now people were stateless. If they had said no you can stay, I probably would have still stayed. I don't know how that would've ended but they made us stateless. So now I had no documents, nothing in that sense. So we were standing in line in front of every embassy. Now fortunately my mom had found a British Protectorate passport. This was issued by the British government when they had brought people from India so you were still under their umbrella. I showed it to one of the lawyers and he said, "yeah you've got good grounds for her to be able to at least go to England," because we were running out of time. And my brother was under 21 so in those days anybody under 21 you could put them on your parent's passport so that worked out really well.

So I couldn't be put under her passport but to get in the line and get through to the British embassy took us two days. So my friend and I we would sleep overnight and my uncle didn't live far. So I would go and sleep there and we would take turns and we finally made it in two days. Once we reached there they were able to give her a British passport. So she got it and we sent her and my brother to England. I didn't know where I was going at that time but I had a good friend of mine who had already got his papers. My closest friend stayed back until my mom got her papers and he went with her. So he was able to establish contact and let me know where they were. And then in that time I must have gone to the Swedish embassy, the American embassy, German, every embassy you can think of just applying. The Swedish embassy did come in the end and took a few people, Australia came and took a few people but Canada really and thanks to the Aga Khan again he opened up the doors. Trudeau said 5,000, as you know at the time 5,000 the majority was for the Ismaili community and little bit for the Goan community but then many of us got the opportunity in that process. When they were showing that number system that they had, I had my number but they did not come. It would not come and I said, "what the heck is happening here?" and there was no way you go could go and stand in line and find out. Fortunately one of the girls who was working there was a neighbour of ours. Somehow she had lucked into helping the embassy. So I went to her house and I said, "listen this is my number." She said, "ok let me see." My application had just fallen at



the bottom somewhere so I had never come up. So she managed to pull my application up. So I got an interview within two days.

And when I went to the interview the girl who interviewed me I knew her

Laughter

I mean at that time it was just automatic. Once you got there they were gonna take you that was the attitude that the Canadian government had. That they had to go through this formal process because they had even set up labs for medical screening right there. As soon as they say yes, I went there, there was an x-ray technician, taking the stool samples right there. And I don't know if they really had the results but they said you know you're through. So anyways this girl I had met and I didn't see her again until 2010. I had known her from my childhood but we had lost contact over the years and so on. She then had come to study in Canada and married a Canadian. So she had come back teach there [in Uganda] with her husband. So she was a Canadian in a sense so when I went for the interview she was there. It worked out nicely, one of those things where you are in the right place at the right town. And I met her in 2002 since '72 at the Uganda reunion. She was one of the organizers! Her name was Nancy Agard at the time. Her brother John was a very famous soccer player. He was the goalkeeper for Uganda's national team. He still lived in Uganda he never left.

Anyway so on the 23rd of October was when I had my thing to leave but then after that you still had to get tax clearance which was another nightmare experience because you had to go and stand in lines to get this verification. Basically what they are getting tax clearances to check that you don't owe them anything, we had never worked because we were still going to school. It's not like here when you go to university and also work, that didn't happen. But to get in there again, I had luck. This good friend of mine who was still holding back for me, came with me when we went to get the tax clearance and by the time we got there the guy who was working was one of his classmates. A black guy from high school. He went to this school called City High.

So they connected. Rather than sit there for a few hours he was able to give me my stamp reasonably quickly.

Any way so on the twenty-third we just left with one suitcase and ended up in Montreal.”

Shezan: “Did your mom and your brother go with you?”

Answer: “They were in England. I had a contact so I knew where they were. They were at a refugee camp in England. That's how they did it in England. Everybody ended up in some camps. Basically they were all old army barracks and they were treated well and everything else but we were lucky. We ended up in Montreal on the 24th of October '72 and when they were interviewing each one of us to see where would you like to go and so on. A lot of people had friends in Toronto and Vancouver so they said that they wouldn't mind going there because my friends are there. The only place I wanted to go was Cornwall which was 75 miles from here because I had one friend who had come here before all of this trouble had started. He was here a year earlier, so I said, you know it would be easier for me, so we used him as my contact address. So anybody who went anywhere in the world, they wrote to him and he eventually passed all those letters to me and that's how we stayed connected. But at that time Cornwall had a big recession so they had 17% unemployment. So the immigration officer says, “no, no, I can't send you there because there aren't any jobs. Any other choices?” I said, “No, send me anywhere.” He says, “Perth.” So obviously from our geography we knew Ottawa, Montreal, and Vancouver but Perth, where the hell was that? But going to Perth was one of the best things that ever happened to me.

Any way so we ended up in Ottawa for a night and then there was a bus that arrived in Perth and there was a guy from what they used to call it the Manpower offices. Burke Brisson, I remember him very well, we became good friends afterwards, so he was there to receive us. They put us up in a motel and with me was an Ismaili couple, Mr. and Mrs. Shamji and there was another guy he was from Masaka or Mbarara Arjit Karia was his name. So four of us ended

up there and the three off them had only a high school education. So really the only jobs they could get were factory type of jobs at that time. Within a week they all had jobs. Now I was struggling; it took me ten days to find work because I had education and of course they could not give me a teaching job because I would need my teaching designation. After ten days I told the Manpower guy, "I don't care, just get me factory job." I was at a stage where I wanted to get started. So he said, "Oh that easy." So got a job at the factory. At that time Perth was a booming town, they had a lot of industries there. A little town but lots of industries. So they got me into this company called Code Felt

So when they interviewed me they said work for six months and we've got an office opening up and we'll consider you for that then. I got a job in the factory and I enjoyed it. I had never worked with my hands before so it was an experience in itself and I met all these old timers who had been from Perth who hadn't even been to Toronto. They had never left that little hub of the town. Within six months they opened up the office and they offered me a job. It was a bookkeeping job which I had never done and they told me not to worry, they will train me. From there I became the office manager and then you know, I started to do well. They put me into a little bit of sales, marketing, eventually they were opening up branches so I became the manager and I went to Toronto. That's how I ended up in Toronto in 1979. So I had lived in Perth for seven years. The reason I said that was the best thing to happen to me was because even back in Uganda, ever since I was young, I was very active. The motor club, being on the executive club there, I was also on the board of Uganda schools cricket association. That was a body that controlled all the cricket within the country and if you wanted to choose a national side I was part of that as well. So I was always doing those types of things without ever thinking that all these little experiences I had would come in handy.

So when I arrived in Perth within the second day I had an interview with a radio station. So when they heard me speak English they were shocked and I spoke reasonably ok, I was able to express myself. So from that interview I started to get invitations to various clubs like Lions and Kiwanis, Knights of Columbus, and Jaycees, Canadian club to go and speak to them. From there

I started to make friends and then I joined one of the clubs and slowly got active in that area and started to do community work. The other Ugandans who were with me left within six months. They said, "this is not for us, there's no life here, nobody to really interact with." I thought it was great for me because it worked out. Yes I was removed from the community but then to me that was my community and my main aim was to bring my mother and brother down. So I just focused myself on that. Within six months I was able to bring them down. The criteria were very simple in those days like you didn't have to, as long as I had a job and all that, I was ok. By that time I had established myself within six months. By the time I had made some good friends they all helped me, these are all Canadian people right?

So my mother and brother arrived in Perth and my brother was fourteen. He ended up going to high school there in Perth. So that's basically how we started in Canada. So in '79 I ended up in Toronto and I started managing one of the companies, one of the branches. From there slowly I bought into the company and then in 1990"

**Shezan: "So then did your mother and brother come with you to Toronto"**

Answer: "Yes eventually they did. And then eventually I bought into the company, the same company I was with and then I became a partner in this. It was a felt manufacturing company so there was about fifty people. By the time I had opened up a branch in the US, one in Chicago and one just across the border in Watertown, and one in Montreal. So that was sort of my thing, to look after all of that. In the process I was also offered partnership in the company. What was the year? '96 the company started to falter. The wholesale was doing fine but the manufacturing part was declining. By that time I had met Parveen in '82 and we got married in '82.

My three daughters were born in Toronto and our last address there was in Ajax. And I was very active again, once I moved to Toronto I was running a lot of things and part of a few organizations and very active. So kept up that activity and you know, of course I got, like I told

you in '82 I ran into one of my close friends in Uganda and I joined the Aga Khan cricket club. To this day we still have our friendship there. So I played cricket for many years in Toronto. Lutaf Virani, you know the member of parliament Arif Virani? His father and I played cricket together in the same club in Uganda called Wanderers. So I ran into him one day here, I was just walking down the street and he was shocked. He told me that they have a cricket club and so on. I joined the Aga Khan club and of course I went to the other clubs and again I got involved in cricket big time up to the Canadian level on the executive side. I played till I was pretty old but I had passed my prime to play for the country or anything but club level was great. From that we developed a lot of friendships etcetera etcetera. But in '96 once the company started to falter we decided to come back to Perth.

Then I brought my whole family there. So that's how I ended up living in the country there. So that's when we bought a nice house and my kids all went to a primary school in the village. It was called North Elmsley public school but that was one of the best things to have happened because we lived in a community that was mainly just farmers. So all the neighbours were farmers and their children had different values because over there what happens is that when you are the child of a farmer you have to do farm duties. So you sort of see that and they grew up with that type of thing and then they did their high school there and of course came to university here. But then my company closed there in '98. There was no way we could sustain it anymore.

What had happened was that we used to make real felt and wool felts which were made in a very traditional way and so on. It was very labour intensive. When the market was there it was great but then the Americans came up with this needle punch synthetic felts that worked ok but were a quarter of the price. So basically they just knocked us out and there was no way we could revive this company because you wouldn't believe but the equipment was from the 1870s. So to try and refurbish that it was impossible. It was German made equipment and it was terrific equipment but you just had to mothball everything. Anyway so I stayed there until '98.

Then I had to reinvent myself thinking what do I do now? I got into business consulting and all that. So it worked out for me and over the years. In 2006 while the girls were here my wife got sick and so you know it came to a point that it didn't make any sense to live there. Though it was a beautiful peaceful life, you didn't have to rush, life was good and again I had become active. So I was in the chamber of commerce and again doing my thing. But looking after the property became a challenge because most of the contracts I was getting work were outside of Perth. I'd be in Toronto for a month or I'd be driving everyday to Ottawa and so on and so forth. So it didn't make any sense to be staying there. So we decided to sell in '96 and because of her transplant and so on it made sense to come here.

In that time my daughters was almost at the end of high school and the others were just finishing. Any other questions?"

**Shezan: "And then so when you guys first came into Montreal and then ended up in Perth, what was sort of that initial settlement experience like. I guess like the winter and all that jazz?"**

Answer: "That's a terrific question. Now when I arrived, in those days it used to be very cold, I'm telling you and don't forget we were coming with summer clothes. I had these leather soled shoes and nice thin pants. So the first time and the first day, I don't think I even had a pair of jeans. So I went to work, ten days later, I remember very clearly it was the 10th of November and it started to snow. I was wearing these shoes and I had to walk because I had no transportation. It wasn't a long walk maybe a 15-20 minute walk from where I was. I started to slip and slide so I talked to the Manpower guy and asked what I should do. He said, "don't worry, I have a friend of mine who owns a store. I'll take you there in the evening." So we went, such nice people I'll tell you Shezan, so he said, "ok whatever you need don't worry about paying, just pay me when you can." So I bought myself a pair of jeans, winter shoes, and the jackets we had got in Montreal. That was one thing that they did when we were there they took

us to this little spot and they had all kinds of jackets but I didn't have gloves or anything like that. So I bought it from this place and he wrote it down and he said "just pay me whatever." In those days I think my pay was sixty-five dollars a week and I had got very cheap accommodations so I was able to pay him on a weekly basis and that's how it happened.

The way I had approached this was that I wanted to make it. So I didn't care. Yes it was depressing in the beginning but my attitude was to make it. Like I said, I got involved in this organization and they invited me to many events. The other guys felt behind, those other three people. They were not the type to come out and mix with people as fast as I did. So for me it was no problem. I started to make friends. The guy from Manpower became my good friend. He would take me to hockey games, go to the movies. The movie theatre was like, how far was Smith Falls from Perth? About twenty minutes away, Perth had 6,000 population and still does but it is really developed. It serves a large community because there's a hospital there. It serves about 20,000 people from all the other villages and everything else. So like I said from that one interview things really took off. And then I became very active in the community which helped me forget about everything else.

I started to move up too. I started to sit on the chambers as a board director and then I became president of Jaycees. Have you heard of Jaycees's at all? It used to be very big back in the day. It used to be called the Junior Chamber of Commerce and it catered to young business people between the ages of 18 and 39. That's how it started, it started in the US and basically what it did for you was it had tools where they would teach you leadership skills. So while you're doing that you're also doing community service. But they changed the name to Jaycees and opened it up to everybody not just business people but it was only a male organization in those days. Now it would be against the law to do that. So I joined that and it was one of the best things that happened because I met young Canadians who I associated with and when they saw my skill sets as well and I started to events they were floored that I could do such a good job. Within like a year I had organized the Santa Claus parade there and I didn't even know anything about the Santa Claus parade. And in 1974 I was organizing soap box derbies and things like

that. I was doing a lot of community fund raising type of things and in '76 I became president of that organization. So that sort of kept me going and I just didn't look back.

The only thing that I missed in that first ten years was cricket because I didn't even know it existed. It wasn't even in my thoughts because it wasn't in my mind until I went to Toronto. My experiences were very pleasant and I think people developed a lot of respect for me. At that time we were the only coloured people in that town, it was a completely white town. So people asked me, was there racism? Once people started to know you there was no problem because they said, this guy is as good as us or even better because within a few months I started to do people's income taxes. So all those old-timers were going to those income tax people and I asked why they are going to those people. They said "oh it's very hard." So I read and said, "no I can do this." So I charged them 5 bucks 10 bucks in those days and I did all that income taxes. So I developed that as a side business and as we were going along once I was in the Jaycees we used to organize dances. Dj-ing was just getting into vogue at the time, most of the dances would have live bands. So dj-ing was just getting in and for our dances we had to bring in a guy all the way from Ottawa to do the dj-ing. He would come with his records and you know. It wasn't as fancy as you see it now. There wasn't as much mixing and your mixers were very simple. And I loved music, I had a tremendous knowledge of music even from back home. English music and so on. So I started a dj-ing business on the side and I thrived and a flourished in that. I had one system at first and then I had two systems going and then I hired a guy. So I played all these local dances. I would go into villages that if you blinked you would miss them. They would hire me and you would go to a little community hall and 300 people would show up from all these little places. So all of that added to my life a little bit. This was all on the side, this was weekends right? I would be playing generally on Fridays and Saturdays so that went for a few years.

So that went well and I had that little income tax going on the side and in that time I developed a lot more businesses experience. I mean I had zero prior experience. Though I had an opportunity to teach and in hindsight I should have taken it. There was a visiting professor from



Kingston, Queen's University who had left me his address and said when you come there get in touch with me and I'll help you. So I wrote to him that I was here and in the beginning I didn't have the means to travel and it wasn't that easy to get around. So I wrote to him and he says, "yup no problem, I can get you into the university but you'll have to do two years." I should've done it but I said to myself that I had done my three years and at the time I'm think of getting my mom and I already have a job, should I do this? In hindsight I should've done it because it's something that I always enjoyed. Over the years I had run business courses and I ran all kinds of functions and in those you're always speaking and expressing yourself but it never happened. But anyways life took me in another directions

Once I got into this bookkeeping thing I tried to learn and taught myself. Basically I'm self taught in business and became reasonably ok at it that I could give advice to other companies and I've done that over the years. Even know I get a lot of people calling me. People who know me and I still help them out if I can and so on. And I do a lot of work in the cricket community here. Auditing and wherever I can help. I'm busy with other things including being on the condominium board here, and we're all self managed condos so we do a lot of work as well. The only bad experience was when my wife went through the transplant part of it. That was the really, to me, the hardest part but from the day I arrived I was luck touch wood that we flourished very well. And you'll see this was the experience with most Ugandans. You'll come across very few you didn't succeed because I think we came with the mindset that we wanted to succeed."

Parveen Omar: "Basically you couldn't go back so this is where you arrived and you had to learn to work around it. And I think it's a personal thing, I mean, I have to live here, I have to make the best of it. And I think if you have that mindset you can pretty well make it anywhere. You can't ever had that thought that I can go back because there was no way to go back."

Answer: "At least not at the time"

Parveen: "But that was 10-15 years down the road by then everyone was settled here."

Answer: "So I generally did very well in every respect and thank God everything else worked out. As you become parents your biggest desire is that your kids get educated and touch wood my daughters have done very well. They've all done well in their professions so now I'm just waiting for them to get married."

Laughter

Which is not happening too quickly except for one. They're all holding back and I'm confused why they're holding back. I assumed that while they were in university they would meet someone. One of the twins met someone and that's why she moved to Toronto. She was going out with this guy at university and they just remained friends over the years and then it slowly developed. So she's getting married next year. That's why she moved to Toronto and she got a transfer from her job because he already has a really good job so it didn't make sense for him to come here and look for something. And she was able to get the transfer which was the key and she lucked into a good job.

She ended up doing her master's. One of the twins did that. She ended up doing some research on cancer at Ottawa General Hospital with a couple of doctors. This is the one of Smythe Road. It was one of those, you know, research is fine to an certain extent because what happens is that most of the research is funded by pharmaceutical firms so the doctors are fine because they've got their profession and they're doing this on the side. But she wasn't moving anywhere so I said one day if the funding goes then you're out of luck."

Parveen: "And she would basically have to do all the paper work for the grants and there's a lot of grants to apply for. So she would be sitting here and working at 2 o'clock in the morning."

Anwer: "Yeah there was a lot of pressure and she did most of the stuff and ran the lab and did all that which is great, I mean there's nothing wrong with it. But I said, "you're moving no where," in terms of her pay structure because they would only pay you whatever the grant amount that was coming through. So I told her to start looking somewhere and she found something. The first job she applied to she got. She applied to Canada Post and they were looking for somebody to manage their hazardous product line."

Parveen: "It's transportation of hazardous material. They were servicing all of Canada but they were not doing it internationally. So they just extended boundaries and then every time it was going to a different country you have a different set of rules but then you have to apply the Canadian rules which come first and then everything else. Yeah like the Samsung thing that happened, that was her making the decision that Canada Post would not transport any of those phones."

Anwer: "So she was in the news on that. She lucked into a very good job. Once you get into some of those positions the pay is good with a great pension plan etcetera etcetera. So when this happened she said she's thinking of moving. I said not to go blindly and suppose you don't get a job. Just ask them if they will give you something. They said, "yeah you can have an office anywhere." So it's perfect, she's now living ten minutes from where her office is but she comes here often. Her main hub is in Ottawa so she come here and we see her quite often. Those are some of the positives that have happened. Any other fill in the blanks?"

**Shezan: "Then um, did your mom and brother sort of have that same experience that you did?"**

Anwer: "My brother was fine, my mother no. Her first language wasn't English. She never learned English there but I must say once the grandkids were there"

Parveen: "Even with Prim, she learned a lot. She could have a conversation, she had this lady across the road who basically helped her to go the grocery store, help her go and buy clothes which were mainly pants and tops because she only had those long dresses. So Prim really helped her with all of that.

Answer: "That was another positive about living in a small town. It was very nice and they took her under their wing. She started to chat with them and picked up the language. She became so good in the end that she could have a conversation with anybody on the street. She would meet anybody and they'd have a chat."

Parveen: "And then her granddaughters insisted that she learn her ABCs. They were in kindergarten and they would teach her. I don't know what they were called, you could actually wipe it off, it was a new brand of slates. So they would have her and they would teach her the alphabet and they taught her how to write her name and I think them going to school was a positive for her because they taught her."

Answer: "So that was a plus for my mother because of the community. In that very short period I made some good friends and I have just recently reconnected with this family. The son's mother was like my extended family. I met them right in '72 itself and they took me under their wings in a sense and they became my second family. When my mom came then they would come and take her around. So they were great. My mom obviously missed the community but once I managed to get a car within six months then we managed to connect with the community there. So every so often I would take her there. So for her it was a bit of a tough settlement.

My brother was only fourteen so he just went straight into high school and adjusted. He did very well too, he had music interests when he was there and he got into the school band. He still plays to this day he goes and jams with a few guys. They usually go and play music at fund raisers for cancer and stuff like that. Everybody just volunteers. He was a drummer and he still

has his drum set and stuff. And he's done well for himself. Again look how luck is, he was fourteen so when he came there our psychology had changed about going to school and working. I got him a job at a bakery at 14. By that time I had come to know everybody in that town so there was the great bakery with really nice people that used to hire students. So they hired him and he started to learn how to bake and do this and that's what his profession is now. So once he finished high school he went to Algonquin College here.

First because he was very good at art, drawing and all that so he did graphic arts as his degree or his diploma really at the time at Algonquin. But then he was having a hard time finding work and he said what do I do now? So I said, "listen you learned how to do baking and all that, why don't you go and do a course professionally?" He said, "yeah I enjoyed it but," so I forced him and told him to go for it. He had the talent and I knew he could do it. So he went to George Brown and they have a good culinary thing there but he focused in baking desserts and stuff like that. And he's always worked in that field. He started with Maple Leaf foods, any of their frozen desserts he's the one who's developed them for that particular company. And then he first started at Sara Lee and then he went to them and now he's working for a US company. He left Maple Leaf after 16-17 years and he's done well from himself. And he married a Canadian girl right from his high school from Perth. They've got two children and his daughters have finished university. So he's done ok and he visits every so often and I go there too.

He found his own way out because it wasn't a very traumatic experience because by the time they came I was reasonably well settled so I was able to give them some support and teach them the way but yes my mom had a bit of a rough time but once we moved to Toronto it was great. The community was there so she was able to you know mix with others and by that time I had developed a lot of contacts there and I had started to do a lot of work in the community. Just to give you an example, in '79 when I moved there one of the biggest problems, like the Ismaili community was already well organized, they always have been, the Muslim community just lacked an organization where if somebody passed away everyone ran in five different directions. There was only one mosque at the time and it was not as easy so with a bunch of

guys we started an organization called Nur-E-Islam Society of Canada. Our aim was to buy graves for Muslims. That was number one and to help any family that had somebody who had passed way. If someone had passed away we would look after their family.

See you folks already have a system where you pay so much money and if somebody dies it's like clockwork. It's done in 2-3 days and you have the jamatkhane room [prayer hall for Ismaili Muslims]. For us it was a traumatic experience any time someone dies. I'm very happy to say that by the time everything was in position and I had left we had already bought 400 graves and at that time we used to work in the funeral home. They gave us a room inside their funeral home where we could perform our own religious ceremonies. We had everything we needed there and all they did was transport the bodies and we did the whole ritual thing. And we connected with these cemetery that's called Beechwood. It might sound morbid a little bit but we bought out graves in those days for 200 bucks but now they're like 2,000 bucks.

In fact, her father [wife's father] at the time I told him that we should buy them. Both of them passed away and we used two graves. When my mom passed away she was rested at a grave in Toronto. So through this it was amazing that we made contacts with different communities. It started as an East African organization but then we got people from Mauritius and Trinidad, you know other Muslims from different places. One thing I found was the people from Pakistan didn't want to mix with you as much but we would help anybody. We didn't have to know you and you didn't have to pay us anything but we started a membership where you pay \$25 to belong to Nur-E-Islam which helped us to get funds and we would run fund raising and that's how we bought the graves. I think we spent \$400,000 over the years to buy those graves. So I got very involved in that area and besides community I got involved with a lot of things.

Especially with someone's father who's become a little extremist now but I don't know if you've heard of Tarek Fatah and he's become this big star in India. He's written two books but he's still a very good friend of mine. His views are becoming a little bit extreme. But google him, you will learn a lot. He's written one book called "The Jew is Not My Enemy," which of course he got a

backlash from the Muslim community. But he's reasoned himself and given good reason and one was his, I have the book here, it's a long title. He's an author in his own right and he had a radio show in Toronto on CFRA. He writes every Wednesday. I never buy the Toronto Sun, it's not a newspaper that I would read but every Wednesday he has a write up in there. Basically his focus is on all the extremism in Islam but he has taken that to another level. So he's getting a lot of flack from Muslims and so on. He's become a big star over in India. In the last two or three years he's been invited by some author's forum there. Now if you go and Google him you'll find 50 or 60 Youtube interviews in Indian. Parvin said she's back but as of two days ago every television station had him on. The way he talks about himself as an Indian that was forced to go to Pakistan because he doesn't feel that Pakistan is a country in its sense since it is a failed state. I mean there's no doubt about it, it's a mess and it will never come out of that. So he's always talking against the country. So he gets a lot of threats and in 1995 he ran for a provincial seat and I was his campaign manager.

We've been good friends and we still keep in touch and all that. The daughter of course did journalism and she's now moved from radio to television. So vast experiences I've had, you know, doing all that. I still keep busy doing these things and that's the main thing. I find that with our community, our Asians, that once they get to a certain age, like I'm 69 now, once they get to a certain age they don't want to do anything. They want to sit at home. They don't want to get involved but I say if you keep your mind going and keep doing things at least you'll feel better about it. Like my friends in Toronto who I used to play cricket with they're still amazed that I'm still involved. I'm umpiring, I'm teaching other umpires, giving courses and basically it's my passion so it keeps me in touch with the sport and I love the sport. Any other things? "

**Shezan: "Yeah and then so my last question is usually, how do you identify yourself now that you've gone through all these things? Are you a Pakistani Ugandan, Ugandan Canadian, there's no wrong answer."**

Laughter

Answer: "No, there's no problem. I consider myself a Canadian Ugandan really. I mean obviously you never forget your roots but I'm Canadian really and of course my children are born here so that's all they can identify with though we have given them the benefit of our culture and everything else. You know they picked up a fair bit but we have not pushed anything on them but we've said it's good to know the languages. I mean your mom, your dad will have one advantage over a lot of Indians say from Trinidad and Tobago and all those places is that we can speak almost all of the Indian languages because the beauty of where we lived was that we had every Indian community on that street and you knew every one of them. So I had Sikh friends and so I can speak Punjabi from just listening to each other. Gujarati is my mother tongue and hanging out with kids who were from Pakistan or their parents were so I could also speak Urdu and Hindi. So these are languages we just picked up as well as the local language like Swahili a common language in all of East Africa. So I emphasized with the girls to learn. They went to Pakistan not too long ago since Parveen relatives were getting married.

I was a little bit reluctant to let them go because of all the bombings and killings as they happen very randomly. Unfortunately, the fanaticism in Pakistan has gotten to such a stage that if you are not a Sunni Muslim then you are not a Muslim. They started attacking first the Ahmadiyyas and most of them have run away. Then they started attacking the Shias and Ismailis and Bohras. They're attacking them because they are saying they are not Muslim. Who are they to say who is a Muslim and who is not? That's what I told my girls is that I never push anything about religion on them. I said yes you need to know your religion but to me religion is here. It's in your heart, it's not about all this business about wearing hijab and all that it's a personal thing. To me, again, if you go back say even in the '90s the phenomena wasn't there. Where did it come from? It came from Saudi Arabia with all this Wahhabism and if you really dig deep into the religion of Islam there's no mention of hijabs or anything. It's an Arabic outfit, it's a cultural thing. But now Muslims have embraced that and are outwardly doing this.



At the cricket ground to give you an example. There are teams that are 95% Muslim. In the middle of the game they all want to play. Really right now? Why do you need to do that? I tell these young guys, yes I appreciate that you are very good Muslim and you want to pray five times a day but you know there's a thing called Kaza you can go and do that at home. You don't have to do the outside thing. Then when they play cricket they start using abusive language and then I grab them as an umpire. I say, "you just prayed and now you're using abusive language?" It just doesn't jive with me. They think I'm not a good Muslim and I tell them that I don't care. I said being a good Muslim is doing good deeds. It's not about keeping a long beard and all that crap. I said I might not pray five times, I do pray in my own way but I make sure that I tell my children to do good deeds. Help others that's the main thing. Go do meaningful community work but Islam has gone in the wrong way. Sorry I'm going on to other religious topics. It's not part of this but that's why I appreciate what Tareq does at times because he really rings focus to the extremes in the religion.

You know at one time they were pushing for Sharia Law in Ontario. He was the main guy who raised the awareness that hey this is coming, otherwise wake up what's happening in England is going to happen here. You'll get that backlash and when you Google him you'll see tons of videos and when you listen to him you'll also get, what I like about him is that he has tremendous knowledge in every aspect. Now when he's talking in India it's flooring the Indian guys because they don't know as much about India as he does. So now he's getting a lot of attention. He's speaking at universities, colleges, and he's getting invited here and there. He's mixing up with film stars, he's got posters on the street. The other day he posted on the Facebook that oh my God I am embarrassed and I said it's the price you pay for being a star. The next thing you know he'll have a role in a movie. And the guy I really do admire him because he had cancer right on his spine so they didn't think he was going to walk. He's beat that and he walks with a cane now but he goes all over the place. He's gone to Geneva. He's invited all over the world to speak on issues of radicalization. In fact, there's a clip if I find it I will send it to you. The senate a couple years ago was looking at terrorism in Canada and he was invited to speak at the Senate. So I picked him up at the airport and I dropped him off

there. He just let those guys have it because some of them were so naive about it and they didn't even realize that if you don't watch it's here too now. If we don't keep ourselves, yes we must help.

So he's really brought focus to extremism but a lot of Muslims hate him because in most of the cases he's telling the truth. Sometimes he pushed the envelope a little too hard but he gets threats. When I go to his house he shows me and he tell me to listen to all the voicemails and threats he gets. They want to kill him and they asked me in India "you're thrashing Pakistan, aren't you worried that you'll get shot and killed?" He says, "I'm 65 now if they kill me I don't care. I've done my part." A great attitude and we hit it off really well. I lived in Ajax when we first met. He came from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia and then came to Toronto. We just met and became friends and then we did a lot of things together. One of the projects we used to run was getting Pakistani and Indian communities together to celebrate together. It worked for a couple of years but you know I find Indians are still very flexible and Pakistanis are not. Extremism has gotten in there and they don't want to talk. They still have this thing which is sad in a way. Anything else?"

**Shezan: "Can you expand a bit on what it means to be a Canadian to you?"**

Answer: "To me it's basically what I really have appreciated is freedom of speech. To me that is significant. The way that democracy works here everyone has equal rights and at the same time you have the right to practice your own religion, speak in your own language, and they've really put a focus on diversity. I'm very proud to be Canadian. Whenever I go anywhere I speak very highly of Canada because I'm very proud of what being a Canadian offers to you and now with Trudeau there I mean the way he's sort of brought more focus and being a real proper human being. Showing compassion and I think that's what Canada has always been. That's why they're admired around the world. You go anywhere and you say you're Canadian and you'll get a lot of respect. When I used to travel in the early seventies, I would go to England or wherever and I'd have my Canadian sticker on. So to me that's what it has given us there has been no hindrance

as far as expressing yourself which a lot of countries will not allow you to do that. Right now in Pakistan just as we speak they've closed down all Christian TV stations. That's another community that they're attacking. The majority of the ones who could get away are in Toronto and the very poor ones are left there and they're being persecuted by the locals. They bring up these trumped-up charges about blasphemy. There's one poor woman in jail for years for no reason. So to me that's where they are at and look at where we are at. If you've done something wrong you go through the right processes, you get your chance to defend yourself. There it is a hit or miss type of thing.

Now an American would look at it in a different light with what is happening there. I don't know if you watch the news but there's a supremacist group that's very Nazi like and now they call them the alt-right. I mean I'm watching that and I'm saying wow. That's not an exception there are many people who think that and there are some here too. But the way that we run our government we don't give them as much of a chance to create a platform. I'm sure there is racism here but that's the other thing I respect about Canada. Personally, I have never ever experienced racism in Canada. Maybe there is in the back of somebody's mind. Like yesterday I was at the AGM of this condo building and I'm the only coloured guy there everybody else was all old white guys and I put in three years and I just completed my three years and I'm not running again. When I gave my little spiel one lady came and I guess she had a different impression of Indians and she said, "you speak really well and I heard you've done some really good work." So these are people who have never had exposure right? You'll get those old-timers that live in towns and villages. But I have never had nor my children have had bad experiences."

Break

Answer: "We were lucky personally, a couple of my neighbours were beaten up. We were lucky, they came in a few times but nothing major happened."

Parveen: "You know why? Because mom speaks Luganda"

Answer: "That really helped, my mother could speak the local language. If you didn't see her face you'd think it was an African woman talking, she was that fluent in it. So somehow she used to connect with people very easily that way. Maybe that could be the reasons, I don't know. I know a good friend of mine, in fact I just showed you a photograph of my friend Raj, I said this guy passed away. They came and we were neighbours like across the street. These black guys came in the evening, we didn't know they were members of the army since they came in plain clothes and came to the house. They said, "oh I'm sure you're moving, are you selling anything?" Subash didn't think and said, "oh yeah I've got a television to sell," because they were leaving right. They respond saying, "ok we'll come back in the evening." Not only did they come back and take the television they also picked him up and took him away.

Now once you're taken by the army the chances of you coming out is very remote. Now we started to panic because we didn't know where they had taken him. But we were lucky, the next day, there's another photograph of a friend of mine who owned car dealerships in Kampala, the car I used to rally in was Saab and they were the dealers of Saab cars and they had Volvo and in the end they got Mitsubishi. They had three dealerships so we went to his elder brother, we knew he had connections with the army guys. So we told him what had happened. He said, "oh the major of this particular prison comes to get his cars from this dealership, I know him personally." He called him up and sure enough they had taken him to this notorious place where you went in and you never came out. It was called, you might have heard of it, it was called Makindye. When people went in they would just kill you. They used to make prisoners kill each other and mostly it was all black but I think two or three Indians were killed there. That's where he was. So this guy said, "hey he hasn't done anything, he's a good family friend." They were nice enough to let us come over and pick him up the next day. He had his British passport and everything was ready. The very next day we put him on the plane and he went. His older brother stayed because of me to make sure that I got mine and my mother's things were happening. He wanted to go with her to make sure she was ok. That is one that has happened in front of me and then one of my friends with the Mercedes. Personally, we were ok

but I know families where they have gone in taken the jewelry out of the house. Mostly Indians have a lot of jewelry, that's one thing they knew, so they just grabbed it.

Overall we settled alright, we've done ok. The only thing is I have never been back and the reason in the beginning was very simple. It was such a beautiful country and when I would see pictures of it broken up with bullets and destroyed roads. It had one of the best road systems you can imagine, your mom could tell you that in Kampala there was a nice highway. Beautiful and clean with plants and flowers. A few years later when I saw pictures I said I would like to remember the place as it was. In 2012 I almost went. Somebody there decided to hold a Uganda reunion there. Everything was going great and then Ebola broke out in 2012 in Uganda and there were four cases. That's a deadly disease and the whole thing got canned after that. Last year my friend and I said maybe we should make a trip and then he fell sick. This is my friend Raj. He hurt his back and all that and then we decided to scrap the trip. It's still in the back of our minds.

One of my reasons was that it would be nice to visit so I can see my father's grave. My uncle went back and he's restored my father's grave and all that. One of my uncles actually went back and lived there for a while and he worked there along with his son. His son unfortunately caught malaria which of course got cured but malaria can reoccur and when it comes back it attacks your brain and he died. He was only 35. So his grave is there so when he was getting buried there he searched for all of our relatives and paid to have my father's grave nicely done up and everything but I haven't been back. Has your mother been back?"

**Shezan: "No, so that's the big toss-up. I've been trying to see if she wants to go back. For her she's a bit torn, on the one hand she has good memories of home and it would be hard to see it. And then she also said the flip side is that she's also still a little bit upset. I don't know if I want to go back to the place that kicked me out."**

Anwer: "I think I am beyond the upset part but definitely that was my reasoning that I had such great memories and we had a great childhood."

Parveen: "Sometimes when you have good memories it isn't worth it to go back and see those places. Like your house, when your friend brought back pictures of your old house. People had very nice fires but there were wood fires all around the side of the house which has left them all black."

Anwer: "See the area that we lived in if you do go was a place called Kololo. It was a residential area and some shops that was it. Now when we left obviously when we left the people from villages took over the homes. Now all those homes have no maintenance. So they're cooking with charcoal and all that so the houses are messed up. And then I was shocked my neighbours house is now some kind of a computer store and the street was a beautiful tar street and it's all broken up. But on the other side this whole area has developed with homes on the hill. The hill is taken over and people have built lovely homes. Affluence is there now but parts that are broken and people who have moved from the villages haven't been able to upkeep the homes. So that is sort of where we are torn between going or not. If something happens then we'll go but I'm sort of beyond that.

And some people have gone back and taken their children."

**Shezan: "I really want to go"**

Anwer: "Yeah, right now it is booming. The only thing that has happened in Kampala, I have a friend who just came back, what used to be a 15-minute journey has now become a two hour journey. He said that because everybody is doing well in the old days only so many Africans had cars but now everyone has cars. So there's been a big population explosion in the city. A lot of people have come from the villages."

Parveen: "And he was complaining about the road system itself that he had to drive around potholes and all that."

Answer: "Besides that it is so slow. One guy has taken a video where he's sitting behind from Kololo to Kampala used to take 15 minutes and he's sitting there for two hours in traffic. So it's really congested and there's no more buses. We had a fantastic bus system just like you have OC Transpo. What did we call it? UTC, Uganda Transport Company and it was a terrific, very well run, and proper system. It was a amazing because I used to take it all the time to go to college. Obviously once all this trouble happened they could not maintain the upkeep. Now there's taxis everywhere. You should see the taxi stand where the bus used to be. Thousands and thousands of taxis. That's how people travel now. They're mostly vans if you're going some distance. You just rent them and they take you wherever. So that has helped to congest the streets further because with buses you can leave your car at home and whatever.

Anyways it was a great place to grow up. One thing that I really appreciate was the education we got. I'm telling you one thing that we got was a solid education. Even in high school. Makerere University is one of the top universities in Africa. In fact to get into medicine people used to come from around the world because it was a terrific medical school. People from Tanzania, Kenya, they only had so many seats for them, ten each. So they would take them so that university is still doing well. Still one of the topnotch universities in Africa. Recently there was a strike because the professors they had not gone up for a long time. So this was like just two or three weeks ago which has never happened.

Unfortunately, the sad part about Africa is that I can already see what happened to us is starting to happen again. What has happened is as you know the Chinese are really hustling in to Africa, big time, they are going into any African country that has any resources. They go in and they say we're gonna help you out which is what they do. They help you with your railway lines etcetera, etcetera but while they are doing that they sneak in. So besides the Indians going back and have started building their little shops."

Parveen: "What happened was you Indians left and within ten years they had fresh Indians from India come and build up things."

Answer: "They were doing the same thing that we were doing. So now they're even taking away some of the business from Africans and the Chinese have come and taken over from everybody. You can't compete with the Chinese now. So now there's a double whammy. There's already trouble starting. There was one little town where the Africans really got up in arms and they had to close all the stores. So there's trouble starting, you know that ad I showed you in that magazine, he's one of the richest people. It's a phenomenal story with this guy. He left Uganda when we did and went to England. He didn't do too well. He was driving a cab in the end and somehow something happened and somebody told him he should go back. At that time when the new government came in that asked people to come back. So he decided to go there and somehow the guy had brain and he went in '85. Now he's one of the richest guys in Africa and is the richest in Uganda. He started a bank called Crane Bank, after the international banks he's the third largest in the country. Africans have slowly started to take over that. He's almost been booted out so you can see the trouble brewing.

But the guy has done so well. He owns schools, he owns resorts, insurance companies, etcetera, etcetera. So when I asked for that ad in the magazine I had already made a connection with that guy. So we just said hello and made it happen. I just sent him a little note that we are doing this reunion and we would appreciate any help by putting an ad in there. My aim was to keep the price of the tickets low for the reunion but raise funds through advertising. You won't believe with 25 ads, a lot of my friends in England got a lot of ads, I only got a few. So he said, "yeah sure," so we charged him a couple hundred pounds or something.

So if you look you'll see that he's bought most of Kololo. Those hills and the houses most of them belong to him. When he started making money he started to buy the property but now



the Africans are also looking at him in a negative way. Even though he employs something like 10,000 Africans in his businesses.”

**Shezan: “Yeah just like the Madhvanis and Mehtas. “**

Answer: “The Madhvanis were huge, the Africans shouldn't have had anything against them because they not only provided so many jobs they provided housing to the Africans. The way they did it, schools, they built schools for the Africans. What they did was they were very foresighted people. They had these huge sugar plantations and they built homes. So when you worked for him you got a place to live and the children got a school to go to. I mean you can't go wrong. Same thing for the Indians that worked there. Raj's father worked there and he had a house right there. They didn't have to go and rent a house or whatever.”

But then the Madhvanis owned the beer companies, sugar, cotton, and coffee. The other big family were the Mehtas they were huge too.”

**Shezan: “I think the Mehtas are still there”**

Answer: “Yeah they are still there and the Madhvanis have gone back.”

Parveen “And their children got married to actors in India.”

Answer: “Yeah it's the Madhvani's children that married the actors. Mumtaz herself was married to Madhvani.”

Parveen: “I'm talking about her daughter”

Answer: “Her daughter is married to Firoz Khan's son. Your thinking of Juhi Chawla. One of the Mehta's Shaker Mehta he was a famous rally driver. He became really big, he also became a

world champion and he also passed away. But because of him they donated that race track right in his sugar plantation. So whenever there was a track race we all went to the sugar plantation. It was right on the top of the hill. It was a nice track that was cut. Those were what they called motor cross. It was a dirty track and you would race your car and your motorcycle. So it was you know, we had all that kind of life and excitement. There was no way we would have left that place but right now I'm impressed when I look at the car rallying scene there. Africans are doing very well."

Parveen: "But it was only the Indians having all the fun back then"

Answer: "Yes the Indians and the Brits and a sprinkling of African rally drivers like my friend Mubarak and only him because he worked for Gian motors which had the dealerships and his son was a good friend of mine so we got the sponsorship and all that. So there was a sprinkling of Africans then but now, I'm in very close touch with the Ugandan rallying scene, and the Africans have terrific rallying cars now. Just look at their equipment and they are way beyond where we were. So they're doing ok, like they've become affluent and a lot of them have done well. That's good and it's their country and I think Amin that was his biggest complaint that the Africans weren't doing well. It was not because anybody had stopped them right? It was the Indians that had"

Parveen: "Indians have a tendency not to mix"

Answer: "That's true. We didn't mix as easily because you didn't have to. You had your own community and you had a few Africans friends here and there in positions and that was it. But Amin didn't look at it that way he argued that my people don't have anything and you [Asians] have everything. But he forgot that we worked for it. Nothing was handed to anybody but now I think the Africans have become good business people. I was just looking at the top 12 richest people in Uganda, two or three are Indians but the rest are Africans. Some of them are billionaires so they've done well. Yeah if you ever get the opportunity you should go."