

ANDREW ALLEN'S ORAL INTERVIEW AT HJ DALEY LIBRARY WITH MALUACH PAUL ON 15 MARCH 2017

AA Maluach isn't it?

MP Yes Maluach, but when I was a child 20 years ago, the name was Abraham according to what my mum said, but my father being a Christian, too - is Paul. But when I came here, the one who did the form did not include the Christian name, they listed my first name as Maluach but in reality, the majority know me as Abraham and then sometimes they call me Paul. But they are all my name, if you call me Paul, Abraham or Maluach I appreciate that.

AA So Maluach what country did you come from?

MP I come from South Sudan, and I am Australian.

AA Juba, the capital?

MP No, I was from Rumbek and then later to Northern Uganda because when war happened between North Sudan and South Sudan, I was very young, the war did a lot of damage in South Sudan, usually to southerners, a lot of people were killed in South Sudan. The people they targeted were the Christians, and even my father was the one at the church who used to be head of the church, it happened in April, it happened on a Sunday actually, I never remember a lot of things but a lot of damage was done, I will see another time in the future to write a book about that.

AA What made you decide to come to Australia?

MP It is because of that war, my cousins, we initially escaped the war to (inaudible), they were the ones who made me come here, and we all used to live with family, those cousins would sometimes live in my father's house and later we go to their house for a week or two weeks, we eat together, sleep together, do everything together, the time, when war happened, I was with my uncle and that is where I was living with my family, the others, they were dispersed, others were killed and that is why I do not even want to talk about that.

And Australia is a beautiful country, I love Australia for many things, one of them is the beauty, number two is egalitarianism, number three is freedom through security and number four...there is a number four there but I forgot that (laughing).

JL The library?

MP There are two other reasons, it is a very good country.

AA Did you know much about Australia before you came here?

MP I knew about Sydney, the most popular cities in the world are Sydney, New York and London and I thought they were in the same place (laughing).

AA And what about Campbelltown, what did you think about Campbelltown?

MP Campbelltown, being deaf and being without a family at the same time, because of family issues I have depression, but when I came to Campbelltown library, my depression is interrupted. Because I ask something and I feel happy because of the way they respond, mostly Julie, the library lady, you know according to my culture when you talk to someone and someone nods her or his head, you feel happy and I usually see from Julie when I talk to her, she nods her head and I need, whenever I talk to someone, he or she nods her head or if they are in objection to what I am saying they are depressed to me, sometime when I am depressed and Julie sees me, she asks me "Are you ok, what is wrong?" and if a lady asks you "Are you Ok" it takes away ten per cent of your depression.

5 mins

AA Have you had the hearing problem all your life?

MP Yes, I got the hearing problem when I was young, when I was a baby, I caught meningitis, according to what our Elder says, it was meningitis, it was a prominent disease which broke out in South Sudan, it had killed a lot of people, literally a hundred in my area, anybody who survived it would be deaf in both ears or blind in both eyes but a few people who survived it are like me, and I happen to have one ear is deaf – zero, the other one has impartial hearing and I actually got help here, unfortunately my mind has a problem for I could not get a doctor to give me a hearing aid, by the time of Julia Gillard I got a hearing aid, but it is very difficult to hear, I may hear everything loud but not everything, even in my own language – Dinka, I speak Dinka language, I could never hear what people are talking about, but the sound. The one thing I never hear, is kids, I like kids voice so much, they just giggle but when they say "Dad, ...", I never understand that, the other thing I like to listen to is news and I never understand anything, only the caption access. The other one that is good, is scripture, all I hear is Amen and God and Hallelujah, these three things are the things I hear, but it is right for you to hear what people are talking about not only that but it usually prepares me to meet one of them in any committee, in any meeting where I present, unfortunately I decline, most of the time when we are at youth or certain organisations call me (inaudible) I was elected, I was asked to be one of the candidates, and unfortunately I

declined because you need to hear people and what they are talking about because there are always challenges and with those challenges you have to answer them and if you hear those things you will understand them and there is no right to be a leader so I decline, but they still elected me to be one of their representative.

So I need to listen and a lot of the times when I've been pursuing this one some people have been very helpful in Campbelltown, I have a certain lady, called Jessica from hearing, she had been told something about this and I'm hopeful now that they will be doing something, I had an appointment last year and they said I was good to get a cochlear and the lady who examined my ear last time said cochlear is the best because she had found that my ear had what is called ANSD auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder – don't worry about my accent (laughing). So it is God telling me to have cochlear and to be able to hear something, I'm able to do something.

AA So coming to Australia has helped your hearing?

MP No I think the same.

AA Have you experienced racism in Australia?

MP No, racism I feel is from my community not even Australians. But in Australia too there are some communities who make racism propaganda but what I have seen is that they do not talk about that much. The racism I experienced is from my community, there is a guy who lives in Western Australia and when I used my Facebook, I saw that he posted an Australian lady photo, that Australian lady she actually has a weight, a bit big and that Australian lady too, she had a boyfriend from South Sudan.

10 mins

MP I never know them exactly but I saw their photo and in the photo they are hugging one another, so this photo was posted by this guy in a certain forum and then he decided to say a bad word, saying that these Australian ladies are fat and ugly and they are the people who the South Sudanese guys come to marry and leave their culture, when I saw that I was devastated, I felt uneasy because for me, I had a kid with an Australian girl, I have never told you, but I have a baby boy and I love him very much so when I saw his post I reacted and I was against it and I don't want to explain what I said to him, so the guy retaliated by saying "You Maluach, you are deaf, and years ago they cursed you by being born deaf" even though I was never born deaf and "Your sisters in Australia are prostitutes, what type of family are you?" but my family are a very right family, I know that, and in South Sudan in Rumbek, they know that. Being deaf, to survive this tragedy of meningitis, could it be a problem where I'm being mocked and challenged?

So I send three letters to some people, I felt very annoyed, because in South Sudan if you do something bad like this you lose your whole arm, you never get law, you fight but I do not want to fight, no, in Australia, I have Visa, I cannot fight but I wanted to negotiation, I sent a text to some people, I sent three letters, one was sent to Deng Adut a lawyer, he replied very well, the very right way, so what I was asking was to see if there are some people who want to embarrass others like Australians, they should be given a special kind of restricted rules, if I were authorised by a government I could hand down one of the three things to that guy , one – to send them back to where they came from, two – go to prison for five years without bail, three – is to fine them about ninety thousand Australian dollars, and that money could be paid to either doctors or people with a disability. I know it sounds like jumble but it is suitable for them I know, because this one may intensify, there is official group who mean to erase others.

JL Maluach, have any Australians been racist towards you?

MP No, only one time I was using a bus and I gave \$20 to the lady driver in the morning and she said I have no change, she said “Get out, get out” and I said I have no other money in my wallet except this \$20 and she said “get out, get out” and I said “ok, take me to Caltex, Caltex is near, one minute driving” and she closed the door and took me to Caltex and she said “Get out” and I ran down to get change but she went with the bus and one time I needed induction because I was going to the city for the induction but the following day when she came with the bus I entered the bus and paid my fare and she even said thank you to me. So that was not racism but she had a problem maybe with her family in the morning and she was saying “Get out, get out”, I was annoyed that day, it was not my problem, I was not trying to do something, and I decided it was not my problem, before that I used to be happy with her.

15 mins

AA Do you miss South Sudan?

MP Yes, I still have friends and family I miss, if I were educated enough I could do anything to help who are being affected by war, and then to Australia, Australia and South Sudan they are still my countries. Since I came here I have never returned because I don't like war, I'm not even educated enough to help others, I can help myself, help others and build a great relationship between the two countries, I will do something in the future, I miss.

AA Would you like to go back one day?

MP I think in the future if I happen to go, I can go finding like what Deng Adut is doing, I think it is ok, to help others like we have been helped. When we are

bought here it is to help others and we need to help others who are there, to help ourselves and help them. You know I have got a little job now, my income goes on rent and the electricity bill and water and opal card – everything goes there, no money help, it is me trying to help myself and anything I save is saving for my cochlear and yes the government has helped me, I got a hearing aid. But that hearing aid could not help me because of what was later found was ANSD, so if I happen be educated enough, I have to get more job. Can you talk to government to get me more job please? (laughing).

JL Maybe you could go to uni?

MP I want to get it before I go to uni.

AA Ok Maluach the last question I've got is, what do you like most about Australia?

MP Australians are kind, usually the ladies in particular (laughing), I would have to say the kindness of Australia, it is sixty per cent humanity, without humanity do you know where you come from, it is when you believe in almighty God, I see humanity. A lot of my friends are ladies friendly speaking, that would be sixty per cent those kind people. That's what I like about Australia, they always laugh and smile and its good, I do not see it in South Sudan, I could hear it once a week from church when I was overseas but here there is a lot, it is helpful.

You need to be happy, even when there are some obstacles, you need to drink good water, you need to eat good food, you need to sleep comfortably, you need to exercise and make cleanness, those are all I need. And here I see people excited by smile, I like. And when you have this good life, especially when you smile and be comfortable, you need oxygen too, oxygen is the source of everything, when you have enough oxygen, it helps your blood - blood circulation, and having that good oxygen in your body is good for about five organs – we have brain, we have heart, we have liver, we have kidneys and other vital organs, it is helpful – and it started with happiness.

JL Maluach's village is called Rumbek and your son has the same name.

MP Yes, I named him Rumbek because it is a hometown everybody loves and it is the hometown where everything started from in South Sudan.

AA Is there a famine in the town now?

MP Yes there is famine in South Sudan and that famine came from two reasons, one is war and the other one is lack of rain.

20 mins

MP Because in South Sudan about seventy per cent, usually the Dinka, they live on cattle and agriculture, we know a lot about crops, like sorghum, pumpkin and other vegetables, so when there is no rain it is hard to cultivate and if you don't cultivate there is a famine. Not only that, when there is no rain there is not enough grass for cattle and because there is no cows, there is a lot of problems.

The most important things I like too about my life are one - kids, two - I like bible, three – cows, the cattle, they are my favourite animal, number four – trees, the trees that grow up, they are the source of oxygen and number five, ladies (laughing).

AA Ok on that note, thank you for talking to me Maluach today.

MP I'm happy too, thank you very much.

Interview concluded at 22 mins 23 secs

Note: JL – Julie Levell, staff member assisted with the interview.