

Transcription: BV023.16.18
Interview with Shanaz Khan
Audio Recording: 2023_0016_0018_002.mp3
Interviewer: Rajdeep Dhadwal (INTVWR)
Interviewee: Shanaz Khan (SK)
Date of Interview: September 24, 2023

- 1 INTVWR: This is Rajdeep Dhadwal. I'm interviewing Shanaz Khan September 24th, 2023 at the
2 Burnaby Village Museum. Okay. I guess I'll just start. When were you born?
- 3 SK: 1950, January 1954.
- 4 INTVWR: Okay. And where were you born?
- 5 SK: I was born in Suva, Fiji.
- 6 INTVWR: Okay. Who was in your family when you were born?
- 7 SK: My parents, like my grandparents, aunts, and uncles. We had a big family.
- 8 INTVWR: Oh, wow. How many aunts and uncles did you have living with you?
- 9 SK: Oh, none of them lived with me, with us. We lived on our own. We lived with our
10 grandparents in the very beginning when I think I was born in the hospital and then we moved
11 out. My parents always worked and so we always had a home of ourselves.
- 12 INTVWR: Oh, okay. Your grandparents didn't live with you?
- 13 SK: No, we no, my grandparents never lived with us. So my dad's side of the parents lived on
14 one side of the family, and my mom's parents lived **00:01:00** on another side of the family. They
15 both had very big families, like 10 children on each side. So they all lived on their own. We
16 never lived with our grandparents.
- 17 INTVWR: Oh, okay. So they all lived separately. And then, wha- , how many siblings did you
18 have?
- 19 SK: I only have one younger brother.
- 20 INTVWR: One younger brother, okay. What year was he born?
- 21 SK: He's one year younger than me, so I'd say 1955.
- 22 INTVWR: Okay. What did your parents do for work?
- 23 SK: My mom worked in a department store as a cashier and my dad ran his uncle's business,
24 which was like a rental car, motor parts, and sawmill. He oversaw the business for my uncle.
- 25 INTVWR: Okay. And how long did he have that business for?
- 26 SK: Since childhood, since I've known. My uncle had this business. He was a very huge
27 businessman in Suva. And so my uncle, my dad did that until we immigrated to Vancouver.
- 28 INTVWR: Oh, wow. Okay. And then your mom was a cashier for **00:02:00** how long?
- 29 SK: I would say, since I can remember. Since I was born.
- 30 INTVWR: Okay, so she's always been...

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31 SK: She was home for a few years, I'd say, until I went to kindergarten and grade one. Then she
32 started working all the time, and then she started working full time.

33 INTVWR: Right, right.

34 SK: My mom and dad had me very young.

35 INTVWR: Your mom and dad's names?

36 SK: Dad's name is Mohammed and my mom's name is Liz.

37 INTVWR: Okay. All right, so I have a sense of what your life was like in Fiji. Did you go to
38 school there?

39 SK: Yes, I did. We went to kindergarten, and then we went to uh, I went to a private Christian
40 school, and then I went to a high school.

41 INTVWR: Okay, so you were there for a while?

42 SK: Yes. I came here when I was 17.

43 INTVWR: Oh, wow. Okay, 17 years. And what was the reason for your whole family or for your
44 family coming?

45 (sound of phone ringing)

46 SK: Sorry.

47 INTVWR: That's ok.

48 SK: [inaudible]

49 INTVWR: Oh we'll just cut it out.

50 SK: Well, **00:03:00** I've got to make sure it's not my family. Oh I don't know. There's only
51 scammers always calling. They hung up.

52 INTVWR: I get a lot of scammers.

53 SK: [inaudible] as soon as they call once, that's it I block it.

54 INTVWR: That's smart.

55 SK: Yeah

56 INTVWR: Once you pick it up then they know that you're...[inaudible]

57 SK: I don't pick it up at all, I just block it right away.

58 INTVWR: Yeah.

59 SK: Yeah, [inaudible] and it's all that 778 number right now. 828 something. Yeah, its-

60 INTVWR: That's weird

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- 61 SK: Yeah. Anways.
- 62 INTVWR: Anyways, um. What was my question, Oh yeah, school, or sorry why you came here?
- 63 SK: Well my dad's younger brother had moved, I think, a couple of years before that and he said
64 that it's better for the kids to have better education. I mean, even though we spoke in English and
65 we had a university, he said it's for better not just for the education but for the growth, and their
66 outlook, everything, just completely different. They need to know to learn different cultures and
- 67 INTVWR: And what year did your dad's brother come here?
- 68 SK: I'd say 2 years before us. So 1970, **00:04:00** I would say.
- 69 INTVWR: Okay. Were did he live? Vancouver or Burnaby?
- 70 SK: Yeah, in Vancouver. We always lived in Vancouver.
- 71 INTVWR: Okay. So when you were 17, you came here with your whole family and you were
72 living in Vancouver. And what was your dad working as? Like, what did he start working?
- 73 SK: Well, actually I went to JO for a year.
- 74 INTVWR: Where?
- 75 SK: John Oliver high school.
- 76 INTVWR: John Oliver, oh. Okay. I didn't know what that was.
- 77 SK: Okay. Oh, yeah. You wouldn't know because you're not from Vancouver.
- 78 INTVWR: I'm from Surrey, I don't know.
- 79 SK: John Oliver for a year, it was quite challenging actually, the kids and everything. Even
80 though we spoke in English really well and we dressed properly, and stuff but it was quite
81 challenging to get used to the system.
- 82 INTVWR: Yeah, What kind of experience did you have?
- 83 SK: There was no, I didn't find anybody making fun of you or poking and stuff like that, but it
84 was just hard to get into it, I think. I found it just different to get into it. You know like, when the
85 bell rings, you move from one to another class. Back home, you stay in the same **00:05:00** class
86 as the teacher comes to you.
- 87 INTVWR: Oh, I see.
- 88 SK: Yeah, that's what it is. A different subjects every hour or whatever, the teacher comes back
89 and forth. Here, you have to go from one room to another room to another floor. It was different.
- 90 INTVWR: Yeah, so the culture shock.
- 91 SK: Yeah, it was quite a bit of change. I then I went to Langara college for another year. I
92 thought I'll become an accountant., but then it was very challenging to learn the accounting

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93 system because it's so different. And then by that time, my mom was homesick so we went back
94 home.

95 INTVWR: Oh, okay. How long was it between you coming here and you leaving?

96 SK: About 10 months.

97 INTVWR: Okay, so you only stayed for 10 months. You graduated high school and you went to
98 Langara and then like, "Let's go back home." Okay.

99 SK: And when we went back home, I went straight to work. I worked for Westpac. It was an
100 Australian bank.

101 INTVWR: Okay, Westpac. How long were you there in Fiji? The second time.

102 SK: 10 months.

103 INTVWR: Okay. You did 10 months here, and then you went back for 11 months, then you
104 came back here. **00:06:00**

105 SK: Yeah, because we didn't want our visa to actually expire.

106 INTVWR: Oh, okay. The second time you came back with your whole family again? And your
107 mom was fine at that point?

108 SK: Yeah at that point. And then we, before we left, we had already bought a house. We had
109 bought a house on Fraser in 26th. We rented it out because we knew we were coming back. We
110 stayed with my uncle for a couple of months and I think we bought the house right away. I don't
111 remember renting anywhere. We bought the house right away and then before we left, we rented
112 the house and then we left. And then when we came back, we had to give notice to the tenants.
113 They moved out, we lived in it for a little bit - not long, a few months. We decided to buy a
114 brand new home on Victoria Drive.

115 INTVWR: Okay, and that's in?

116 SK: Victoria and 54th, in Vancouver.

117 INTVWR: 54th, so you stayed in Vancouver?

118 SK: Yeah. I stayed in Vancouver until I got married in '77. Then I lived in Surrey for 2 years
119 with my husband. Yeah, '79. It was just too much of a commute because by this time I was
120 **00:07:00** working in the bank and it was downtown. It was just too much like a Bank of
121 Montreal.

122 INTVWR: BMO, yeah.

123 SK: Yeah, it was just too much of a commute from Surrey too, and I worked long hours - like
124 9:30 to 6:00. The commute was long. My dad would give me a ride or my husband would pick
125 me up. They did turns, which was really good. I found another job with Scotia Bank in
126 Vancouver as a part-time because that's where I was starting. But I never worked part-time

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127 because once they realized how good I was with work, they just let me work full-time. They
128 gave me a full time job.

129 INTVWR: That's awesome, okay.

130 SK: Yeah, that was at Granville and 8th. That was Scotiabank.

131 INTVWR: Okay, Scotiabank.

132 SK: That's when I worked full time until I had my son, in 1985.

133 INTVWR: 1985.

134 SK: Then I took a year off and I went back to the bank for a year and worked nights because I
135 wanted to be with him during the day and it wasn't working out because it was just too
136 challenging to come home **00:08:00** at 2 in the morning. So then I decided to leave that and
137 decided to go and change careers. I went into baking, a chef training course.

138 INTVWR: Oh, chef training. You told me that, yeah. Where did you go to school for that?

139 SK: I went to a Pierre de Bérulle culinary school. It was a French cooking school back then.

140 INTVWR: Okay. In Vancouver?

141 SK: Yeah, it's in South Granville, Granville and 7th. Yeah. So I did that for 6 months, I
142 graduated, and my mom was looking after my son at that time. I graduated and I worked at
143 different restaurants and bakeries. I did that for a few years, then I found out I was allergic to
144 flour and I had to quit that. I went back to banking and I started part-time. I started because I
145 wanted to take my son to school back and forth. After I dropped him in school, I would finish
146 before 3:00 until he was about 10 or 11, then I started working full time.

147 INTVWR: I see. For that **00:09:00** decade, you worked part time.

148 SK: Yeah, I did work part-time to drop him off because I wanted to make sure that he was in
149 school and I picked him up.

150 INTVWR: Yeah. Where was that bank that you were working at?

151 SK: It was still Scotiabank?

152 INTVWR: It's still the same one. Oh, okay. All good. They took you back.

153 SK: Yeah, same bank. Oh yeah, they wouldn't have, no, no. They were happy that I was coming
154 back because I had a good record, yeah my employment and everything and my work history, oh
155 yeah. So I worked at the Scotiabank till I moved, so I moved around quite a bit. I worked there
156 then I worked at the downtown Scotiabank, the Social Tower, for 10 years until they closed our
157 accounting department. Then I went and did leaky condo loans for Scotiabank and I went into
158 mortgage underwriting center until they decided to close the office, and that's when I got laid off
159 and they said, "Find your own job." I couldn't find anything. I said, "No. I took a severance for a
160 year and three months." I just said, "I'm just going to..." Because by that time, the 2 years that I

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161 had worked at this particular office was very stressful. There was a lot of racism there. **00:10:00**
162 Absolutely.

163 INTVWR: Yeah. What experiences did you have there?

164 SK: Oh, they would talk behind your back. They would always complain because I was also a
165 supervisor and they would criticize me saying I'm not doing my job properly. But they would go
166 to the manager, not to me directly, and the manager would only do a hearsay. Not talk to me
167 directly.

168 INTVWR: Right, right, right.

169 SK: Oh, big time. There was just a lot of racism there because there was a couple of Punjabi
170 young women and me, so old Chinese and stuff. But it was always the Chinese and the whites
171 were together, the white people sorry, Caucasians. And then they were always criticizing Indian
172 people. And there was like I said, 3 or 4 of us. And we did well, it's not like we were, and you
173 know... It just didn't. There was just something, I don't know what it was.

174 INTVWR: Maybe they just used you as a scapegoat.

175 SK: Yeah, and we were all good workers and stuff so we had. No, we were not lazy. And we
176 were not smokers and most of them were smokers. So every half an hour and hour, they were out
177 there, you know, smoking away.

178 INTVWR: Yeah, yeah. That must have been really stressful. **00:11:00**

179 SK: Yeah, that was the 2 years I had to go on stress leave once and stuff because it was just way
180 too much. And then when they decided to close the office, they moved it to Calgary. They gave
181 us an option 'go find another job' which was really ridiculous because I was in the bank 25 years
182 or 'take the severance'. I said, "No, I'm taking the severance." So I stayed home for one year,
183 collected the severance, and got my life back on in order again so that I could actually. And then
184 I went on EI because it was a layoff. I was seeing someone at that time, he was a geologist. He
185 got a job in Tumbler Ridge as a geologist. He said to me, "Well, I'm working that. Do you want
186 to work up there? I'll find you a job or I'll get you interviewed and stuff like that." You can move
187 for 2 years. I hummed and hawed and said, "I'm still very young." And so, I did. I moved up
188 there for 2 years and I worked in a mine as a project accountant.

189 INTVWR: Okay. I thought you were a miner.

190 SK: No, no, no. I can't do that. I've got to go to school. He was **00:12:00** a geologist. No I
191 worked in a trailer, out of trailer for 2 years out of a trailer in -20, -30 degrees.

192 INTVWR: Wow, that must have been such an experience.

193 SK: In wintertime. Yeah, it was. Actually, I'm glad I did that. It was a really good experience
194 because I know a lot about coal now. It was coal, like the mac-coal. I knew a lot about it. How to
195 get up at 5:30 in the morning, go to work, and bring the snow down out of the trailer doors to get
196 in. Do all the different parts and know about the trucking and everything. Looking at a small

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197 mining town, very small. Like, just really, really small. Like, one grocery store. People were
198 friendly and stuff, but there was just nothing for me coming from a city. And to go up there, I
199 would have never survived.

200 INTVWR: Like, long term.

201 SK: Yeah. There was no way, even though the money was good but there's nothing there. I
202 mean, I missed my culture, I missed my family, my son was only like 20-21 at that time - 23,
203 maybe? Yeah, so 2 years later, then my son was getting married, so I packed it up and I came
204 back. **00:13:00** He decided that he better come down and he rented a house. I just stayed here
205 and tried finding a job here. There was just impossible. By this time, I was like in mid to late 50s
206 now. It was challenging because either I was too experienced or underqualified, too old, or
207 demanding too much of a salary. So I didn't do anything then and I couldn't find anything. So
208 financially, I was fine. I had a financial advisor and he said it was fine. Like if, I wasn't just
209 going to go work at a grocery store and stuff with all that experience and everything, I just didn't
210 think minimum wage was my thing to go. So financially, it was fine. Like I decided that, 'Okay.'
211 But it's too bad because I really missed working and I really am smart enough and young enough
212 to that. I really wanted to work. So I started volunteering. I was volunteering and I became a
213 fitness instructor with the YMCA. I ran the Sun-Run clinic for 5 years. I was a fitness **00:14:00**
214 instructor for 10 years. I ran the running club from the YMCA. I volunteered for my strata a
215 couple of years and then I quit that. I volunteered at the Bonsor senior center by Metrotown. I
216 went back on the strata in 2018 until last year. Now, I'm back into looking for volunteering
217 again.

218 INTVWR: I see, which brings us here.

219 SK: Yeah, I do enjoy volunteering and I really want to give back. I've always volunteered some
220 one way or another.

221 INTVWR: Yeah, so you retired around like mid-50s and then you started volunteering at that
222 point?

223 SK: Yeah.

224 INTVWR: Okay. When did you first move to Burnaby?

225 SK: I moved to Burnaby 19 years ago. After I got separated, I had to move. I was looking for a
226 townhouse, like a corner unit that had a window, kitchen, and a patio. 19 years ago, I don't know
227 how would that be?

228 INTVWR: A long time ago. I can't do math.

229 SK: Yeah, **00:15:00** 19 years ago. Before that, I always lived in Vancouver from the time we
230 immigrated.

231 INTVWR: How would you describe the life in Vancouver versus Burnaby?

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232 SK: So where I live, is, I don't know if you want the complex name, it's in Burnaby. Yeah, it's
233 in Burnaby.

234 INTVWR: Yeah.

235 SK: It's close to the well, yeah and then people would know about it.

236 INTVWR: You can just give me like, like you live in Burnaby. So the culture of Burnaby and
237 Vancouver is different.

238 SK: Oh yeah. Yes, well where I live, it's quieter, it's beside a park and everything. It's close to
239 everything. Like, it's close to highway one, grocery stores, and everything else. I actually like it
240 better. I think it's less congested where I am. It's closer to everything. I don't have to commute a
241 lot. But I do have to go to Vancouver because my son lives in Vancouver and my dad lives in
242 Vancouver. So I do have to go to Vancouver. And I only go to South Bend because that's the
243 area they live, or if I go downtown if I have a hair salon, or shopping, and stuff. But I **00:16:00**
244 find, yeah it's busy. It's congested.

245 INTVWR: In Vancouver, yeah.

246 SK: It's busy, it's congested. But I live most of my life there I know my way around. So it really
247 doesn't bother me.

248 INTVWR: Yeah. How would you say Burnaby has changed over the last 19 years you've been
249 here?

250 SK: Oh, big time. So the department stores like big, like Costco and uh... I don't know about the
251 highways and stuff, but I think the improvement in Metrotown, improvement in Brentwood now
252 - the more grocery stores, it's more, I think I've seen more coffee shops, more restaurants, and
253 more grocery stores. It's actually quite good. It's like walking distance to a lot of places, which I
254 really enjoy. Like, I want to just get out and walk rather than always driving.

255 INTVWR: Right. So it's more walkable now?

256 SK: Yeah, it's more walkable. It's more easily accessible, too. Like, there's more selection of
257 everything. I mean, Vancouver has it too, but I think you have to always drive depends on where
258 you live.

259 INTVWR: Yeah. Vancouver, is also, yeah some **00:17:00** places are just very congested.

260 SK: Yeah, some places are congested.

261 INTVWR: Yeah.

262 SK: Like Champlain Mall area, I find, is very congested where my dad lives. The parking lot is
263 just quite congested. Where my son lives, it's actually quite open and quite nice there.

264 INTVWR: Yeah. Maybe, it just depends on where you are.

265 SK: It depends on the area, I think.

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266 INTVWR: Yeah, yeah. And how would you say when you were younger and you came here the
267 first time, what was the shopping experience like? Like, grocery stores. Could you get Fijian
268 food or Indian food?

269 SK: I don't remember that very much because my mom and dad did most of the grocery
270 shopping. At that point, I think we were like school or then working. I think Victoria Drive, there
271 would be a lot of Chinese stores on Victoria Drive. There was an Indian store - oh, I forgot to get
272 the name of that one particular Indian store that we used to get that we also had. If people were
273 visiting from Fiji, they would bring stuff. They would get through agriculture and bring things.

274 INTVWR: Right, okay.

275 SK: Um my parents... and then we also had quite a few families **00:18:00** that had started
276 immigrating after us. They would actually make the suggestions to my parents and say, "Go over
277 there, go over there, go over here." They did the grocery shopping. I actually hardly ever went
278 with them.

279 INTVWR: Do you remember the intersection of that Indian store by any chance?

280 SK: Yeah, it would be around 35th and Victoria Drive.

281 INTVWR: Right, 35th and Victoria, right. Then they had Chinese stores there too.

282 SK: Yeah. Chinese stores all along Victoria Drive. A few here and there, but not that many.
283 Main Street, there was Main Street, the Indian, Indo-Canadian stores there.

284 INTVWR: Yeah, yeah.

285 SK: Some on Fraser, maybe.

286 INTVWR: Fraser, yeah.

287 SK: Because we were on Victoria Drive, you would go along 49th or 54th, and then you would
288 be in there.

289 INTVWR: Right, and I remember you telling me the second house you bought was by Victoria
290 Drive or was by the store?

291 SK: The second house we bought was 54th in Victoria Drive.

292 INTVWR: It was by all the stores, so you could just go there.

293 SK: Yeah, most of the time. But it's not just that we only had Indian food, mom also **00:19:00**
294 made other types of like stir-fries and stuff like that, but predominantly it was Indian food.

295 INTVWR: Yeah. Do you, what was your favorite dish growing up?

296 SK: Oh, I think curried fish with coconut milk.

297 INTVWR: Curried fish with coconut milk, okay. Do you still ...

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298 SK: Because we grew up on an island, so every weekend, my we would go to the beach there.
299 And so the fishermen would actually fish like come early morning, 5:30, 6.

300 INTVWR: Okay.

301 SK: And they would have the seafood lined up on the sand. I remember us going to pick up what
302 dad would want for that particular day and then we would bring it home.

303 INTVWR: Oh I see, okay. Yeah, that's very fresh.

304 SK: Yeah, it was fresh. It was actually really quite a nice experience.

305 INTVWR: Yeah, that's cool, that's a cool experience to have.

306 SK: Yeah, we did grow up with a lot of fish and lamb. Lamb is my favorite.

307 INTVWR: I've noticed my fiancé's mom cooks a lot of fish and lamb curries.

308 SK: Yeah, I like lamb. I love lamb, rack of lamb and curried lamb.

309 INTVWR: That's like a very Fijian staple, would you say?

310 SK: Yeah, because the lamb was just - like, we had so much **00:20:00** land there so the lamb was
311 there. And the goat, but goat was not my favorite. Chicken was my, we had chicken too because
312 we had chicken everywhere.

313 INTVWR: In Fiji...

314 SK: Yeah, [inaudible] you cut it in the backyard, clean it up, put it in hot water, feather it off, and
315 there you go, curry chicken. As soon as we find we have family coming, that was the main thing.

316 INTVWR: Yeah, so here though, when you were making curries here, you just went to the store
317 and got chicken that's already made.

318 SK: Chicken's already cut up and ready to go.

319 INTVWR: Yeah, yeah, okay.

320 SK: That was my favorite too. Yeah, roti and vegetables. We had local vegetables like jackfruit.
321 And that was my favorite, so jackfruit curry.

322 INTVWR: So your mom probably made a lot of that.

323 SK: Oh, yeah. My mom was a really good cook growing up, even here.

324 INTVWR: Yeah, and she learned from her mom? I'm guessing.

325 SK: Probably, yeah. I don't know. My grandma taught my mom much because my mom had 10
326 other siblings.

327 INTVWR: True, maybe one of them taught her.

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328 SK: Sorry, but I better not say this but I always say this. My grandma was too busy having
329 **00:21:00** children.

330 INTVWR: That's where...

331 SK: Yeah, because my grandpa, my mom's side grandfather was a cook on a, on a fishing vessel.

332 INTVWR: Oh, cool.

333 SK: Yeah. He would go out fishing and stuff. Every time he would come back, we said grandma
334 got pregnant, you know.

335 INTVWR: Oh, my goodness. I mean, it's not a total lie.

336 SK: Yeah, she, It's really almost like true. Like, there's only a couple of years difference between
337 my mom and her sisters. And then I have an aunt who's my mom's sister, who's younger than me
338 by a couple of years.

339 INTVWR: That happens sometimes.

340 SK: Yeah and then I also have an uncle, my dad's side, who was also younger than me. You
341 know, like hello, your daughter's producing and now you're having some? I say that, but my
342 aunts they get kind of, "Oh." Well, it's a fact. I mean, really?

343 INTVWR: Yeah, that's true. So do you call them like [auntie]?

344 SK: Oh no.

345 INTVWR: Or are you calling them by their names?

346 SK: Oh, yeah. I don't call them by - they're younger than me.

347 INTVWR: That's what I would think, that's what I was wondering.

348 SK: Oh yeah, I call them by the name. Even my mom's sister who **00:22:00** lives here, there's
349 one sister that lives here, I think she's in her mid-70s. I just call her by her name. I'm not going to
350 call her aunt.

351 INTVWR: That's fair, yeah.

352 SK: Yeah, same, there's another uncle, he lives in Fiji, I just call him by their name. There's no
353 way I'm calling them aunt and uncle when they're only like a few years older than me.

354 INTVWR: That's fair. I have uncles that are a few years older than me. I just call them by their
355 names. Yeah, it's kind of weird right, because they're like your peers more than your...

356 SK: Well, they are. Because really, we have a lot in, we can talk about things and stuff and relate
357 to it. So they're not that old that they don't understand what you're saying. They have the same
358 type of mentality.

359 INTVWR: That's true.

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360 SK: So I just can't see them calling unless they're in their late 70s or 80s and stuff. You know, I
361 do have aunts and uncles that are that old.

362 INTVWR: Yeah, okay. That makes sense.

363 SK: Yeah, but not when they're a few years older than me.

364 INTVWR: Yeah. Then you're just like, "You're like my sibling." More like my -

365 SK: Yeah, we can talk about it and stuff.

366 INTVWR: Yeah. So when you're growing up, did you have many Fijian functions that you went
367 to? Was the community not here?

368 SK: No, no we used to go to like birthday parties. What I do remember that was the best thing
369 **00:23:00** that we used to do - at least once, my uncle, one of my uncles, had a bus company.
370 Like, a transport, a bus company. So once a month, my dad would, we would rent and we would
371 take that bus. My dad would actually go borrow the bus and then he would actually go pick up
372 all the aunts, uncles, and all the cousins from everybody's house. We would actually
373 communicate that will be ready at 9:00 or 8:00, we have to go. So my dad would be the driver
374 and we would pick all the uncles and aunts, and someone would bring, someone would bring the
375 food. We brought our hats, straws, baskets, mats, and stuff. We'd go for a picnic about, I don't
376 know, an hour or 3 hours away sometimes. We would all go because my other uncle, that ran the
377 business, he had a house, he had bought a house on the beach. So we would go there, use the
378 house, use the toilets and stuff and cook the food there, have lunch there, stay on the beach, and
379 stuff, around 3:00 or 4:00, pack up and then come home.

380 INTVWR: Oh, that's **00:24:00** nice.

381 SK: But that's how when my dad started saying, "Okay. You got to go in the ocean, you got to
382 swim, and stuff." But it was challenging for me because I got quite scared.

383 INTVWR: Yes, yeah and the water must have been different than [inaudible]

384 SK: Yes, very rough because it's open ocean, yeah.

385 INTVWR: Yes, yeah, so -

386 SK: Yeah. There was no breakers. Like, you can go to areas and resorts where they make it. This
387 was quite open ocean like the waves. My dad was also another thing, too. That was not good. He
388 would just throw us in the water and say, "Okay." You're just struggling with the salty water and
389 the waves coming at you, and just beating at you. It was really not a good and pleasant
390 experience for me. I think I've always not liked being out in the ocean. I took swimming lessons
391 after that just so that they would encourage me to, in Fiji.

392 INTVWR: Yep

393 SK: But I, I couldn't do it.

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394 INTVWR: In Fiji, did you have the same experience where you went out to the ocean?
395 SK: Yeah.
396 INTVWR: But it was different?
397 SK: Well, that's when I started getting that experience.
398 INTVWR: Oh, I see. He started doing that back then.
399 SK: Yeah., yeah.
400 INTVWR: Oh okay.
401 SK: Then when he realized, my parents realized that I was not **00:25:00** you know not, doing
402 well and I was afraid of the water, they started taking me to lessons in Fiji.
403 INTVWR: Oh, I see, okay.
404 SK: Yeah, at the YWCA, we used to have a YM and a YW. They had a big swimming pool,
405 outdoor, and I still couldn't get over that, that fear.
406 INTVWR: Yeah, yeah, even today, you don't?
407 SK: No, even today, when I do go to Hawaii and stuff, I've gone on trips. I would just go to the
408 edge and come back. I've actually had a few experience in Hawaii too where the ocean was so
409 rough on the North Shore of Oahu, where I almost lost my bathing suit because the wave was
410 big. I just went and sat down.
411 INTVWR: Oh my goodness.
412 SK; And then I took kayak lessons here at Jericho, you had to flip the kayak, and that's when I
413 lost it as well too. I couldn't come up. I said, "No more."
414 INTVWR: Yeah, I can't do kayaking. I look at the water and I'm like, "It's too close to me." I
415 don't know how deep it is.
416 SK: It's common though, because I also have a girlfriend that grew up in Hawaii. She doesn't
417 swim either. She doesn't go in the water either. She doesn't like ocean.
418 INTVWR: That's interesting. My cousin grew up on Vancouver Island. He also doesn't really
419 like being by the ocean. **00:26:00** That's very odd.
420 SK: I love it. I love the sound, I can sit on the beach, and enjoy. That's all I do. I'll go check the
421 water and I'll look around, but I can't handle it. So where I live, there's a swimming pool which is
422 only like 5, 4 feet deep. That's fine as long as my feet touch the bottom.
423 INTVWR: Then you feel safe?
424 SK: Yeah. So I can actually, what I do is I do water aerobics so I go back and forth. Then when I
425 was living in Vancouver, I was a member at the YMCA because I was teaching there. So I would

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426 go and do water aerobics there, but I had that belt on so that I could go in the deep end. I took
427 lessons there and I still couldn't so do it.

428 INTVWR: Yeah.

429 SK: Even up till now, everybody makes fun of me. I said, "I don't care."

430 INTVWR: Yep, it's whatever you're comfortable with.

431 SK: I really don't care, because when I went to Hawaii a couple of times with my previous
432 partner, he had numerous accidents because he would just go in the boogie board and go there.
433 The ocean is rough, actually. People don't realize how rough the ocean is. He got hurt a couple of
434 times and thrashed around. I said, "Well, I'm 00:27:00 sitting here watching you."

435 INTVWR: Yeah. You're like, "I don't have to deal with that. I don't have to do that."

436 SK: Yeah, It's always been there with me.

437 INTVWR: Yeah. I mean, that's fair. I think a lot of people do have that fear. And they just don't
438 talk about it.

439 SK: Yeah, but if somebody says, then I would bring it up. Otherwise, I don't talk about it.

440 INTVWR: That's fair. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm going to guess then. When you got lessons in Fiji
441 when you came here, did you do any like recreational stuff in Burnaby or when you moved to
442 Burnaby?

443 SK: When I moved to Burnaby?

444 INTVWR: Yeah, you were the fitness instructor.

445 SK: I was running, actually. I started running in Burnaby when I moved here. Yeah I was
446 running actually but then I found out that I think with all the running on the cement, there was
447 more cement and where I live is more cement. There's hardly any like tracks area. Unless, you go
448 to BCIT and then you just go flat black. It's too boring when you go to Swangard Stadium and
449 run through the bushes and stuff and trees. I'm not familiar with that. Yeah, no and then I started
450 having knee problems. So then I started, I found out that I had 00:28:00 a torn cartilage so I had
451 to have knee surgery. And then that got better and then I started running again, and then the right
452 knee went. So I...

453 INTVWR: I can't catch a break!

454 SK: No, so I had to stop running, actually. So then they encouraged me to just keep walking and
455 doing the water aerobics. I started going to yoga, that's it. Just walking, yoga.

456 INTVWR: And where, which recreation facility have you used?

457 SK: So in our complex, I use our gym.

458 INTVWR: Oh, okay. That's nice. I wish my apartment had that.

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459 SK: Yeah, we pay extra for that.

460 INTVWR: That's, that's why.

461 SK: And it's good, it's really handy because now I don't want to go to a gym. But I was taking
462 yoga classes somewhere else like Fitness World then I stopped doing that, and then I started
463 going to Bonsor for the yoga classes.

464 INTVWR: I've heard, I interviewed someone else and they were saying how Burnaby's really
465 good for active people. There's just tons of facilities and recreation places here that you can go
466 to. Like, very active community.

467 SK: Yeah, it is. So like in Burnaby, you've 00:29:00 got the Bonsor, the Cameron, and the
468 Sinclair Centre. It's quite a bit and there's lots of yoga places as well. You can come to Central
469 Park for a walk and you come to Burnaby Lake here. Yeah.

470 INTVWR: Deer Lake, yeah.

471 SK: Yeah, yeah, there's quite a few areas for walking and stuff. North Burnaby, I guess, the
472 trails. Burnaby Mountain. There's trails, but it's always seems like you have to drive. I prefer to
473 actually just get out of the house and walk.

474 INTVWR: Right.

475 SK: But, the other place that's good is below Marine Drive the River District, which is sort of
476 borderline Vancouver bound.

477 INTVWR: Like, Fraser Mill? No, I think it's something else.

478 SK: Further down.

479 INTVWR: Okay, further down.

480 SK: So like Byrne Road where marketplace is Market Square, where market place, where the
481 save-on and stuff. That's really nice trail along there too. That's a really nice shopping area too.
482 It's a strip mall, London Drugs, and everything else. Is there Canadian Tire?

483 INTVWR: Right, right, okay. So would you say that Burnaby since the 19 years you've been
484 here, 00:30:00 I know you mentioned that some areas have become more like shopping districts
485 and stuff like that, would you say that when you moved here it was more nature or is less nature
486 because there's like an active community? We've got a lot of tree cover, but how do you think
487 that's changed?

488 SK: There's more, there's more trees.

489 INTVWR: Like more trees now.

490 SK: Yeah. My complex seems to have like and they don't want to, they want to replace it. I don't
491 know what Burnaby has, just a lot of, my complex has a lot of it. And I think the way it was

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492 planted back then, years ago. And the cities have a hard time, they don't want to cut any trees
493 down unless it's diseased or it's causing a problem to the foundation.

494 INTVWR: Right, right.

495 SK: More trees, I would say. Like, if you look at Central Park. But they're also clearing a lot of
496 places and stuff too.

497 INTVWR: That's what I'm wondering because you have Brentwood.

498 SK: Yeah, it's all building.

499 INTVWR: Like yeah -

500 SK: There's a corner lot at the corner of Canada Way and Willingdon that used to be trees and
501 stuff. Now, it's all cleaned out and I think there's a building going there, I don't know. You
502 **00:31:00** see less and less, it depends on the area as well, I think.

503 INTVWR: Right.

504 SK: I think they're trying to do more housing. Oh another thing too is they're trying to do more
505 housing where there's Skytrain stations.

506 INTVWR: Right...

507 SK: So at the corner of also Gilmore and Lougheed, there's a big condo complex going because
508 Gilmore station is a train station. So that used to be quite like vegetation, trees, and stuff but now
509 there's huge high rises going there.

510 INTVWR: Yeah.

511 SK: So there's no, you know.

512 INTVWR: Does it make you feel like it's becoming more like skyscraper feel?

513 SK: Yeah, it is, more populated.

514 INTVWR: Yeah, more populated.

515 SK: Absolutely more populated now.

516 INTVWR: Yeah, so when you came here 19?

517 SK: It wasn't like that before.

518 INTVWR: Even in Vancouver.

519 SK: Yeah. Even for 10 years ago, it wasn't like that. Yeah, it's actually changed. Like even
520 Brentwood, before was quite nice when there was the old Sears and everything. And you could
521 just, there was trees still all around it. Right now, you hardly see anything, it's all cement. Like
522 you see condos and cement, and sky train station.

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523 INTVWR: Yeah. It's kind of interesting how they're doing that to all the Skytrain **00:32:00**
524 stations. They're all the same design.

525 SK: They're trying to have more housing, I guess, because there's much problem with housing.

526 INTVWR: Yeah. I mean, do you, did you find that problem when you were moving to Burnaby?
527 Housing?

528 SK: No, no. It was quite accessible, and the prices were quite different. Oh, my goodness.

529 INTVWR: Prices are very high right.

530 SK: Yeah, it's like four times as much now, like what I would have to pay for my townhouse.

531 INTVWR: Yeah. I mean you're lucky you got it at the time you did. Yeah, you kind of and also
532 when you moved here the first time, like when your parents bought houses, probably way more
533 affordable.

534 SK: Yeah, I think we paid like \$30,000 or six, \$30,000 or something. I can't remember, it's a
535 long time ago.

536 INTVWR: That's crazy.

537 SK: And then, \$69,000, I think, we had bought the house in Surrey when I lived there for 2
538 years. We sold that for \$110,000. The house we bought again was \$80,000 in Vancouver. That
539 townhouse I bought before that, that's **00:33:00** \$40,000 and then this one here. Yeah, it has
540 changed quite a bit. It's amazing what people don't realize that I've been here 19 years and that
541 how much I paid for then and what it's worth now. In 19 years, it's grown. They say usually
542 townhouses or condos, the value doesn't go up, but

543 INTVWR: Oh no, they do.

544 SK: They do. It depends on the townhouse and the area, and the location is huge.

545 INTVWR: But because there's so much demand for housing, I bet that if you sold your
546 townhouse now way more than what you paid.

547 SK: I would have multiple bids on my townhouse.

548 INTVWR: Yeah. In a second, you would.

549 SK: Yeah. Oh yeah, I do, because people want I'm always having agents putting stuff in the door
550 because my mailbox is locked. Because it's outside and only the postman can get into it, so they
551 can't get into it. And I don't get junk mail because I put a sticker in it. There's always something
552 at the door.

553 INTVWR: That's, that's what it is.

554 SK: Yeah, it's ridiculous. You know like, they're always looking. They say I sold one here. And
555 so if you're interested, just call me. But where **00:34:00** to go after I sell mine?

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556 INTVWR: Our, our apartment was sold for \$3900, or for 39, wait, \$39,000, no \$390,000. I'm
557 trying to remember, I can not do my math right now, but that's how much it was sold for. And
558 then we actually got it for under the asking price because so much renovation had to go into it.
559 That's why.

560 SK: Oh, I see. They made up for it.

561 INTVWR: Yes. But then the next apartment in the building that got sold at this point, it's
562 \$500,000 and up. In 2 years it just half \$1 million. It's crazy.

563 SK: Also my townhouse is actually quite desirable because it's in a corner and I have a patio.

564 INTVWR: You probably have a nice light there too.

565 SK: Yeah, so the kitchen has a window, the bathroom has a window. From the top floor, you can
566 see the park.

567 INTVWR: Yes, yes.

568 SK: So you get all the sunlight in from the west, from south and then the west. It's actually and
569 it's got our own garage, like, so it's private. You go into **00:35:00** the garage, then you go in
570 through the door into the laundry room. Yeah, so security wise, it's very good. And then I have a
571 spot outside as well.

572 INTVWR: Ok well, I would hold on to your townhouse.

573 SK: Oh yeah, that's what my son keeps saying. He said, "Oh, we need to keep our property in
574 Burnaby." Because Burnaby is actually growing quite fast, too. When you think about it, there's
575 no where else to go. Actually Burnaby can't go anywhere because one side is Vancouver, the
576 other side becomes Port Moody or Coquitlam, and then that's it. So Burnaby's in, you know - but
577 I also find in the beginning, like not in the beginning but in the last few years, the crime rate was
578 higher in Burnaby.

579 INTVWR: Okay.

580 SK: Yeah so, I don't know, it's shifted now. It seems like it's more Richmond or Port Moody now
581 because you hear quite a bit in Port Moody.

582 INTVWR: Yeah, even Coquitlam.

583 SK: Yeah, and Abbotsford. But a couple of years ago, when I was on a strata council, like we
584 had the Burnaby RCMP. They did a zoom call and they were talking about the crime and stuff,
585 how to protect **00:36:00** your property, what's and what's wrong, and stuff. They did say that
586 Burnaby had the highest crime rate back then. What it is is from Vancouver, they can't go
587 anywhere so they had to come to Burnaby.

588 SK: Yeah, that makes sense.

589 INTVWR: So the crime happens here and then they take off to Surrey or Delta.

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590 INTVWR: Oh, yeah. You just have to be in the perfect place.

591 SK: Yeah, in the middle. Yeah because Vancouver, that's it. You go down south, that's the border
592 already now. And north, you have to go to Whistler and stuff.

593 INTVWR: But for the most part, have you felt safe for the most part living in Burnaby?

594 SK: Oh yes, yeah, I have, and I have an alarm but I do feel safe. But you have to know like
595 anything, you have to know your whereabouts, you can't just aimlessly walk.

596 INTVWR: That's true.

597 SK: Like, even with all the running and walking I do, I actually am very aware. I don't have
598 walk, moon music walking or anything. I am actually very aware of where I'm going.

599 INTVWR: Yes. Interesting. Yeah you know, that's good. That's something more people need to
600 know.

601 SK: Totally. Even when I was running, I used to carry a pepper spray because I was attacked a
602 couple of times with dogs. Like, they would come **00:37:00** at you. So I carry pepper spray and
603 nobody would know. But now, I just have my cell phone all the time and just ready to take
604 pictures or whatever but you have to be. People just sort of, aimlessly walk in or they run at
605 night, then they have the Walkman on, and they listen to music and stuff. And they asked me
606 numerous times, "Do you have the podcast on? Don't you get bored walking?" I said, "No, I'm
607 enjoying my surroundings." I have people watch. I watch for cars. I see who's doing what.

608 INTVWR: Yeah.

609 SK: And I see who's doing what just in case somebody attacks me from behind or you never
610 know, what you know.

611 INTVWR: Yeah, but at least, like you know I think it's really good that you take care of yourself
612 and also teaching other people.

613 SK: Yeah.

614 INTVWR: You mentioned Sears earlier. So is that like the place where your family would go to
615 shop for things?

616 SK: Oh, we had Woodward's.

617 INTVWR: A Woodward's?

618 SK: Yeah.

619 INTVWR: Okay.

620 SK: We had Woodward's and yeah we had Sears. Woodward's was my favorite actually, we did
621 have Woodward's and we had Sears.

622 INTVWR: Was that a clothing store? Woodward's?

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623 SK: Yeah, grocery and clothing. **00:38:00** It would be something like Sears.
624 INTVWR: Okay.
625 SK: It was locally owned. He was a local owner.
626 INTVWR: Oh, okay. Where was that?
627 SK: Downtown Vancouver and in Oakridge.
628 INTVWR: Oakridge, okay. I'm guessing they don't have it anymore.
629 SK: Oh, no. They went out of business, which is really sad. Then Zellers, there was also Zellers.
630 INTVWR: I loved Zellers, yeah.
631 SK: Yeah and then the Bay.
632 INTVWR: So they had a lot of big department stores.
633 SK: We then Eaton's, we also had Eaton's.
634 INTVWR: We had Eaton's, okay.
635 SK: Yeah, we had Eaton's. Yeah, there was quite a bit of department stores. That's where we
636 would shop.
637 INTVWR: Interesting. Did you mom tend to buy clothes more than make clothes?
638 SK: Oh, we never made clothes. And I had, my parents were, we didn't wear hand-me-downs.
639 INTVWR: Okay.
640 SK: And we didn't go to, I, I, I had that in me. That I, I grew up seeing that because my mom's
641 side of the family was quite poor. So I did see that there was a lot of hand-me-downs and stuff.
642 **00:39:00** And I was definitely not going through that direction. We had things sewn back home
643 in Fiji because hey would have local dresses like the Fiji Hawaiian, the tropical dresses,
644 underwears and all that stuff, bra, bought from the store. But say, if I had a dress made or if I was
645 going to a party or a function or a wedding, then my mom would have it sewn for me, special.
646 INTVWR: Oh, I see. Okay, she did that here in Canada and in Fiji?
647 SK: No, not here. Not here.
648 INTVWR: Okay, not here. Just in Fiji.
649 SK: Just back home.
650 INTVWR: Oh, okay, okay, okay.
651 SK: Here, we went to all the department stores.
652 INTVWR: Oh, okay. So if there was like a Fijian function, did you wear just like the Western
653 clothes? Dresses?

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654 SK: Here or there?

655 INTVWR: Here.

656 SK: Oh, no. if there was a Fijian function - if it is a religious function, yeah no, we would have to
657 wear I would wear an Indian suit.

658 INTVWR: I see, okay.

659 SK: If it was an Indian wedding, I would wear a saree or an Indian suit, yeah.

660 INTVWR: Those Indian suits would come from Fiji?

661 SK: No, from here. There would be a few occasions here or we would find a tailor that would
662 sew it.

663 INTVWR: I see.

664 SK: There would be tailors that **00:40:00** would sew an Indian suit. We just, you know parents
665 knew, and families knew each other and say, "Oh, she sews this and she sews that. Go see this
666 person." Yeah, so Mom would arrange all that stuff until I got married and older, and then I
667 started doing my own thing by going to Indian stores and buying ready-made stuff.

668 INTVWR: Yes, yes. So at that time, they didn't have Indian clothing stores?

669 SK: Not that I know of. I think they did in Main Street. I think there might have been a few here
670 and there, because there was a lot of people here before us.

671 INTVWR: Yeah, a lot of Punjabi too, right. I don't know how many Fijians were here though.

672 SK: No, a lot of Punjabis. Not very many Fijians back then in '72 and '73.

673 INTVWR: Right, right, right.

674 SK: It was after that that a lot of my other aunts and uncles came.

675 INTVWR: Yeah, that's when they...

676 SK: So there would be stores or we would have its own.

677 INTVWR: Right, okay, okay. So that's good, you had a network of people that you could kind
678 of ...

679 SK: We would get the fabric. And I know like, I think there was a rock a saree house that's been
680 there for eons.

681 INTVWR: Yeah.

682 SK: Yeah, I think my parents, my mom would buy the fabric and then we would have it sewn til
683 a certain time. Then when the readymade, started coming in, there were pre-made one.

684 INTVWR: Yeah, then you just **00:41:00** bought those?

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685 SK: Yeah, then we just bought that.
686 INTVWR: That's so interesting.
687 SK: Yeah.
688 INTVWR: So when you bought clothes or sorry when I guess you sewed them, you got them
689 sewed in a Fijian style?
690 SK: No, we got them sewed just like the saree.
691 INTVWR: Oh, just like a saree.
692 SK: Yeah. Just like the suit, the pants and -
693 INTVWR: Okay, I was thinking of tropical dresses for some reason in my head.
694 SK: No, no, we didn't wear any of that stuff when we came, when we moved here.
695 INTVWR: It's too cold.
696 SK: Yeah, it was too cold. It's completely different
697 INTVWR: Surroundings...
698 SK: Yeah, yeah different environment and completely different culture. We, we adapted right
699 away.
700 INTVWR: Okay.
701 SK: I mean, some people I noticed, I have a hard time. Oh I never wore any Indian, like Fijian
702 dresses and stuff, maybe at home, but never outside. Oh, we were very adamant because as soon
703 as we came the second time around, we all got jobs. So we worked in a job we had to wear like
704 you know slacks and pants and tops, and stuff. And in wintertime, we had coats, things, and
705 stuff. So we at home, maybe summertime, my mom would wear a summer dress.
706 INTVWR: Right, right, right.
707 SK: But no, never outside. **00:42:00** Oh yeah, no.
708 INTVWR: Do you feel like, people would have looked at you if you wore differently?
709 SK: Differently? Yeah, I would say so. Yeah because we adapted very well. We saw what the
710 culture was about and we saw, you got to adapt to the city that the country you're in. So we saw
711 what it was and right away, we adapted to it right away and changes, and stuff. Because then my
712 cousins were here too, like my uncle and his wife. They will tell us right away, "No, this is not
713 traditional or this is not anymore Fiji. You can't wear this. You can't wear that." Yeah.
714 INTVWR: That's interesting.

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715 SK: That helped us quite a bit too. And then we saw each other, we saw what was going on, and
716 we worked right away. Mom worked for CIBC and my dad worked there. My brother started
717 working for Woodward's.

718 INTVWR: Oh.

719 SK: And I started working for Bank of Montreal. So there was that right away. And we had to
720 take the bus to work, say, occasionally.

721 INTVWR: Yeah, interesting, okay.

722 SK: Yeah. My dad would say, "Drive my mom." And I would take the bus every morning to
723 work.

724 INTVWR: Interesting. And your brother probably took the bus too?

725 SK: Yeah. No, by that time, I think after he worked for a while, I think he had a car because
726 **00:43:00** I went to on a bus with a friend as well. And then when I got married, I was driven
727 because I didn't learn how to drive until I had my son. Yeah, I waited a while.

728 INTVWR: Yeah, yeah that's okay.

729 SK: Yeah, waited awhile. I know.

730 INTVWR: I was going to ask you about when – So, oh right, so when you were growing up in
731 Vancouver and when to, when you came here to Burnaby, you like, what kind of, what religious
732 functions or like Fijian functions did you have with your family?

733 SK: Um I, oh like, say weddings.

734 INTVWR: Okay, weddings. And were they at the mosque like you had, or did they?

735 SK: No, we don't have weddings at mosque.

736 INTVWR: Oh, okay.

737 SK: We never do. Mosque is not for weddings.

738 INTVWR: Where do you have your weddings?

739 SK: The wedding would be, [inaudible] in a nikah, so that could be at home. A very small or
740 they would come to the function and then we would have it in a hall, a party in a hall. Oh
741 sometimes, the nikah and the wedding would be in the hall.

742 INTVWR: Interesting. **00:44:00**

743 SK: The nikah first, like I did, my sons one, the nikah first and then the reception right after that.

744 INTVWR: Okay, so all the same day?

745 SK: Yeah, so the mosque is only for prayers and funerals.

746 INTVWR: Okay, yeah. Prayers and funerals. I didn't know that.

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747 SK: And say, religious function. You want to do a prayer on behalf of my mom, so it's like
748 prayers only.

749 INTVWR: Right, right, right.

750 SK: And then a meal would be served, like here.

751 INTVWR: Yeah.

752 SK: So, yeah, other than that, nothing else.

753 INTVWR: Interesting. So you don't go to this mosque because...

754 SK: Well, we do if there's a function. So say, if there is a funeral and they would prefer to come
755 here. Because say, if there's numerous funerals and they can't cater to the funerals, the one at the
756 Jamia mosque in Richmond, then the alternative would be here.

757 INTVWR: I see.

758 SK: So then my family would tell me and say, "Okay, the funeral is at this one on Canada Way
759 and Sperling.

760 INTVWR: Right.

761 SK: Today at 1 o'clock so then we would come here.

762 INTVWR: I see, so the mosque **00:45:00** is for both Sunni and Shia right?

763 SK: Yeah.

764 INTVWR: So okay, so, but more people of a certain –

765 SK: Sunnis come there.

766 INTVWR: Tend to go there. Sunnis tend to go there, but you could technically go there if you're
767 a Shia.

768 SK: Yeah, okay, but I don't know very many Shiites here, I only know most of the Sunnis, just
769 the people from Fiji. My family and any other Fijian people that are here, like Muslim people.

770 INTVWR: They tend to be Shia.

771 SK: No, Sunnis.

772 INTVWR: They tend to be Sunnis. Okay, I see.

773 SK: And then the mosque in Richmond, say if, you know, we, somebody we know passes away,
774 then we go there because it's better made for. Over here, too. You have to get bathed, you have to
775 get prayer, and stuff.

776 INTVWR: I see, okay.

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777 SK: And then you take it to the cemetery, and the Muslim have a separate section of a cemetery.
778 It has to be buried a certain way.

779 INTVWR: And then the women, they can go to the cemetery? No?

780 SK: No, so they go in the cemetery but they can not go right where you get buried. They have to
781 stay.

782 INTVWR: Oh away from it.

783 SK: A little bit of farther away **00:46:00** until it's buried and stuff, and you have to say your
784 prayers. And then after that, you can go back to the.

785 INTVWR: Oh I see, and is there a Muslim cemetery in Burnaby?

786 SK: No, it's all full. We had it in at, one at Imperial and Patterson. There's one there, it's full now.
787 There's only certain sections that we get, like a, a portion of it. And then we would go to White
788 Rock or Surrey, there is one there. It's getting full as well. The next one would be Chilliwack.

789 INTVWR: Interesting. Then you got to go all the way there to Chilliwack.

790 SK: Yeah, nobody goes after that.

791 INTVWR: Oh, once you run out of choices.

792 SK: Once you're buried, we usually don't go. I mean, you know, it's kind of, challenging. You
793 can do prayers at home. It doesn't necessarily mean you have to go to the cemetery all the time
794 because it is pretty intensive. Like, you got to have a shower, be very clean, and you got to wear
795 a suit. And you go there, you do your prayers, and stuff like that **00:47:00** to make sure. Then
796 you come back home and get a shower again because you were going around dead people.

797 INTVWR: Right.

798 SK: So, it's really a, you know like time-consuming, process.

799 INTVWR: Okay, yeah, that makes sense.

800 SK: And you can do the same thing at home, pray for the person at home.

801 INTVWR: Yeah, yeah.

802 SK: Yeah, absolutely.

803 INTVWR: Yeah. Did you ever find that being a Muslim changed anything when you were
804 growing when you came here? Like, did anyone ever say anything or?

805 SK: No, I, I followed my religion. My dad is quite religious, so we, we, I followed him. He
806 would tell me this and that. The festivals, the fasting - no, nothing's changed. I mean, I think we
807 don't socialize as much now like before. We during fasting months and stuff, we would go to
808 people's home, and doing Eid. When it's our festival, we used to go socialize quite a bit before
809 when we were growing up, but not now.

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810 INTVWR: Do you think it's because of the pandemic?

811 SK: Yeah, that has stopped quite a bit. And then you have to commute from here to there, to
812 there, so if you close, it's like an open house on the Eid day. **00:48:00** So if you close your home
813 when you go to somebody's house and somebody came to your house, so it doesn't really look
814 good. People usually stay home, so that they can have company coming to the house because
815 you're having an open house. If they're used to coming all the time, like my parents home, there,
816 someone's always home.

817 INTVWR: So when you moved to Vancouver and Burnaby, you had people coming over
818 during...

819 SK: Not at my home, but they, I used to come to my parents home.

820 INTVWR: I see, I see.

821 SK: Because that's where my family made all the big meals, and the big snacks, and everybody
822 was there. We all congregated there.

823 INTVWR: And you felt okay and openly being Muslim?

824 SK: Yeah. No, I didn't have an issue with that.

825 INTVWR: Oh, no one ever said anything.

826 SK: No.

827 INTVWR: Yeah, that's good.

828 SK: No, nobody ever said anything. I don't actually preach it out there. I don't go into arguments.
829 I don't discuss religion at all with anybody. They all know what I am, but I just don't get
830 involved.

831 INTVWR: Yeah, like it's a personal relationship.

832 SK: I don't get involved with that or politics and stuff and my race and culture. I actually don't -
833 unless somebody criticizes **00:49:00** me or puts me down or they don't know any differently.
834 Then I would have to correct them.

835 INTVWR: Okay. Well, that's good. I'm just really fascinated about, I don't know too much about
836 the different. Like, too much about Islam. I just know what everyone else knows. For me, I'm
837 just like, "Oh, I have all these questions."

838 SK: Yeah, but we are very strict. Like, we have to do the five times a day. I don't do that -so the
839 last one would be like after sunset and stuff. And when we fast, actually, it's very strict. The
840 Sunni is pretty strict. You have to be clean, have your hair washed all the time, pray. Even now
841 when we pray and stuff, you can't be around animals and stuff. And you can't be physically
842 thing. You got to have a shower before you do that. You got to wash a certain way. It's pretty,
843 pretty strict.

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844 INTVWR: It's a whole day thing?

845 SK: Yeah. It's pretty strict if you follow it to the T. In your lifetime, they recommend that you go
846 do a Hajj. Yeah so -

847 INTVWR: Yeah. I remember my family friend Ali **00:50:00** that I told you about.

848 SK: Yeah.

849 INTVWR: I believe he did Hajj once, and every Eid, like we would go down to his part in the
850 house and we would just eat with them. Yeah, it was really fun and making me think of nostalgic
851 times.

852 SK: Yeah it's true, but it is pretty, pretty strict.

853 INTVWR: Yeah, so you just do your own thing. And like...

854 SK: Yeah, I follow it and stuff, but I don't preach it. I do it at home.

855 INTVWR: Yes, yes, okay. Interesting. When you moved to Vancouver, did your family go to the
856 mosque? Was there a mosque they went to?

857 SK: Most of it, yeah. My dad would go to the mosque. I'm trying to think which one. I think the
858 one in Richmond.

859 INTVWR: Okay, it's probably closer to Vancouver.

860 SK: Yeah from Vancouver. It was closer to Richmond. And I think, I think my dad wants to start
861 getting elderly and stuff. Like sometimes they would rent a hall. There was one, I think, just off
862 Victoria Drive, a couple of halls that my dad would go like a centre. Dad would go to that.

863 INTVWR: Interesting.

864 SK: Now, it's challenging for him because he's **00:51:00** getting elderly and he uses a cane. So
865 he really can't go to mosque. And you can do the same thing at home.

866 INTVWR: Yes, okay.

867 SK: Unless, it's a funeral and he really wants to attend then he would go make time to go.

868 INTVWR: And he lives by himself right now?

869 SK: No, he lives with my, no, my brother and wife.

870 INTVWR: Oh I see.

871 SK: My brother, his son and wife.

872 INTVWR: Right, right. Yes, okay. He has got some support. And if he wants to go somewhere,
873 they'll take him?

874 SK: Yeah, we take him,. We take turns. I will go help out. My sister-in-law does.

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875 INTVWR: Oh, okay, okay. So did your mom or you go to the mosque growing up or?

876 SK: No. Usually we don't go to the mosque. Usually women, they don't go. A Friday is our holy
877 day, so most of the time all women would go if they wanted to go pray and come home, but we
878 never did.

879 INTVWR: I see, okay.

880 SK: We prayed at home.

881 INTVWR: Right, right.

882 SK: Yeah, I didn't think there was a reason for us to go.

883 INTVWR: Okay. Then your brother would go with your dad?

884 SK: Yeah, yeah, my brother would go with my dad, mostly on Fridays. That's the holy day.

885 INTVWR: Did you find that when you were here? **00:52:00** Like, was your work
886 accommodating to religious days or

887 SK: Yep, yeah.

888 INTVWR: So they let you pray as well during the time?

889 SK: Oh, you mean at work?

890 INTVWR: Yeah, like at work.

891 SK: No.

892 INTVWR: Okay, not at work.

893 SK: No if we were working full time and we were at work, no, we wouldn't do anything. We
894 wouldn't go make time, go into a separate room, and pray. No, no we never did any of that.

895 INTVWR: Some places do that now.

896 SK: Yeah, they do. Some places, some people are a little bit more religious - very, very strict
897 religion and they have to do it. They do do that. We never did that. My dad wouldn't do that. He
898 would just come home and do it at home.

899 INTVWR: I see, okay, okay.

900 SK: We never did that.

901 INTVWR: Interesting. Okay, I don't think I have any other questions now but is there anything
902 you want to share about your life in Burnaby?

903 SK: No. Actually, I do enjoy living in Burnaby, I really do. It's convenient to a lot of things.

904 INTVWR: I've heard that a lot from people I've interviewed. Burnaby is very central.

905 SK: Yeah, especially where I live.

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906 INTVWR: Yes.

907 SK: It's **00:53:00** very central. I can also go to Vancouver in 5 minutes or like go east more into
908 Burnaby. I really enjoy shopping on Hastings, the heights.

909 INTVWR: Oh, the heights. Yeah, I like that area.

910 SK: Everything's in there. Metrotown is good. I know it's congested, but if you go early enough
911 when it opens and stuff. I only go and do what I really need to do and get what I have. And I
912 don't wander.

913 INTVWR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

914 SK: And it's fine.

915 INTVWR: I found out recently that there is a Fijian festival in Burnaby.

916 SK: Yes, there is at Swangard Stadium.

917 INTVWR: Yes.

918 SK: It's usually in July or something like that. In July.

919 INTVWR: Have you gone there?

920 SK: No, I've never gone.

921 INTVWR: I just found out about it. Yeah, I'm very interested in seeing what that's like because
922 now there's a bigger population of Fijians

923 SK: Community.

924 INTVWR: Yeah, community in Burnaby. Do you find that there's more Fijians here than when
925 you came here?

926 SK: I don't actually socialize a lot. I don't go to much social functions and stuff because we have
927 a very small family. **00:54:00** My family doesn't socialize with other family unless there's a
928 family function.

929 INTVWR: Right, I see.

930 SK: Yeah, we don't, I don't know. I don't know, I might know one or two people but I don't
931 usually. I think I just have I'll just do my own thing. I do my own shopping, I see my own family
932 and I go to movies with friends or stuff, hang out, and that's it.

933 INTVWR: Yeah.

934 SK: I don't usually –

935 INTVWR: Yeah, well, it'd be interesting to go see what that's all about.

936 SK: I'm actually I'm very independent, I do my own thing. I really don't depend on anyone. Say
937 if I have to go to the gym, I have to go for a walk.

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938 INTVWR: No, that's great.

939 SK: I just do my thing.

940 INTVWR: You just do your own.

941 SK: You can't depend on people because you know, their schedules and -

942 INTVWR: Yeah, everyone's got their own life, they're doing their thing, and you have to do your

943 thing. Yeah, that makes sense.

944 SK: Yeah, and I have a small family, I only have one brother. So and you know my dad's side or

945 my mom's side is hardly have anybody here. So it's not like. You know, it's too bad because I

946 wish I had more cousins, aunts, and uncles that I could socialize with.

947 INTVWR: Yeah, you were telling me some of your cousins are in Australia.

948 SK: A lot of them are.

949 INTVWR: And they're just so far away. **00:55:00**

950 SK: Yeah, we just have to talk to them and it's hard to travel. It get's..

951 INTVWR: It can get tiring, especially on the body. And expensive, too.

952 SK: Yeah, and they all have families, lives, and you know it's expensive traveling.

953 INTVWR: Yeah, that's true. Especially, going to Australia is not cheap.

954 SK: Yeah it is.

955 INTVWR: Have you ever thought about visiting Fiji again?

956 SK: Not recently, no, not right now. I would like to. But it depends.

957 INTVWR: I've heard –

958 SK: It's expensive to travel to that.

959 INTVWR: This is true.

960 SK: I've heard it is expensive. But once you get there, it's not bad because the dollar is worth

961 more.

962 INTVWR: Okay, yeah, yeah. I mean, I've heard Fiji's different now because like before it used to

963 be maybe poorer, but now there's much money that's gone into it.

964 SK: Yeah, there is. I mean, there's more developments and stuff.

965 INTVWR: There's more development.

966 SK: Yeah, there's more resorts. They do depend a lot on tourism. And it's huge, like, the resorts

967 and stuff are absolutely gorgeous and stuff. I think I hear too, it's a number two or number one

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968 for destination weddings as well as **00:56:00** honeymoons. So I don't know, it's, it's because it's
969 an island by itself. So it has to be self-sufficient.

970 INTVWR: That's true. And Fiji has like a number of smaller islands.

971 SK: Oh, yeah. A lot of them around 300.

972 INTVWR: Oh, that's a lot.

973 SK: So there's Fiji and there's two main one, but then there's 300 all around it and stuff. And
974 then there's different islands that. Survivor is filmed in Fiji.

975 INTVWR: Is it? This explains a lot. I didn't know that.

976 SK: Yeah. Well, the last 10 years or 12 years or something.

977 INTVWR: Oh, do you ever watch? And you're like, "I know that place."

978 SK: No, I hate that show.

979 INTVWR: I haven't seen that show.

980 SK: No, I don't like reality shows. No, I just read it online where they are. I read it on line, where
981 they are, I've never been there, we never went to into the islands and stuff.

982 INTVWR: Oh, okay. That makes sense.

983 SK: When we were growing up, but I know where they are.

984 INTVWR: Interesting.

985 SK: I think the American dollar goes a long way there.

986 INTVWR: I can believe that, yeah.

987 SK: Yeah, they've been doing that for a long time.

988 INTVWR: They have a lot of people of Indian background there in Fiji because many of them
989 came during British colonial rule.

990 SK: Yeah, a lot of them **00:57:00** have immigrated as well during the time we immigrated. Most
991 of my family's immigrated and most of the people, usually, they want to just do better for
992 themselves or their children. There's still a lot of business there, you know a lot of them. And
993 then they, there's the local people, the local Fijians and stuff

994 INTVWR: Indigenous people and stuff.

995 SK: Yeah, yeah. Some of them are, you know struggling and

996 INTVWR: Yeah.

997 SK: They live in villages and stuff. They work in hotels and resorts.

998 INTVWR: Right, right, right.

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999 SK: But it is getting actually much better now.

1000 INTVWR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

1001 SK: There's an airline that goes a couple of times a week now directly,

1002 INTVWR: Really?

1003 SK: Yeah, Fiji Airways.

1004 INTVWR: I'm gonna have to tell my fiancé about that. Yeah, I don't think we knew that.

1005 SK: Oh, it goes directly now. It started last year in November because it was popular. It was

1006 going through LA before. And now, it's going directly from Vancouver to Nandi.

1007 INTVWR: That's amazing.

1008 SK: Yeah.

1009 INTVWR: He has one aunt that lives there, so I think

1010 SK: Yeah, it'd be nice to go.

1011 INTVWR: Yeah, do you know. Whenever that happens, yeah. Do you know like when **00:58:00**

1012 or like why your family got to Fiji?

1013 SK: No, I should really do that. I should actually, I've always thought of doing it. I was getting

1014 lazy, but maybe I should make the time. Now that I have a lot more time, I should really find out

1015 the tree and find out what happened.

1016 INTVWR: Yeah, it would be really interesting. We have a couple of things in the exhibition

1017 about Fijian indentured workers.

1018 SK: Yeah.

1019 INTVWR: That was the big, like a large portion of Indians from India went to Fiji as indentured

1020 workers.

1021 SK: Yeah, that I know. And I think my grandfather was one of them. My grandparents, my

1022 mom's side.

1023 INTVWR: Right.

1024 SK: They came then because they were not born in Fiji. My grandparents were not born in Fiji,

1025 they were somewhere very, very young.

1026 INTVWR: Right, right, okay. And then your father's side? We don't know.

1027 SK: Well, I have an aunt coming here next week from Kansas City. I'm going to ask her a little

1028 bit more and see if she can fill you in a little bit more. I should have really done more research.

1029 INTVWR: Oh, you got time now. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

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1030 SK: It's nice to know your family history.

1031 INTVWR: Yeah, yeah.

1032 SK: Same as my dad's side, I think my grandparents **00:59:00** were born in India or Pakistan. I
1033 think my dad, grandpa.

1034 INTVWR: Yeah, it would be interesting to ask your dad if he remembers anything.

1035 SK: Yeah, because my, this will tell a lot, I guess, my dad's side is Muslim and my mom's side is
1036 Christian.

1037 INTVWR: Interesting. I was wondering because you said you went to a Christian high school,
1038 right.

1039 SK: Yeah.

1040 INTVWR: Yeah, so I wonder how that, what happened.

1041 SK: My mother's name was, Liz.

1042 INTVWR: Oh, that makes sense. So was she was Fijian Christian.

1043 SK: Hmmm, hm.

1044 INTVWR: Okay.

1045 SK: No, Christian, Christian, Fijian Indian Christian. Yeah.

1046 INTVWR: Yeah, okay.

1047 SK: There's a lot of Christianity in Methodist in Fiji too.

1048 INTVWR: Oh, I didn't know that. That's very interesting.

1049 SK: Hindus, Gujaratis. There was a lot of Gujarati that had businesspeople. A lot of Hindus that
1050 celebrated Diwali and stuff, which we were involved because we had neighbors. So we always
1051 had a mixed culture growing up. We enjoyed their culture because they invited us and we invited
1052 them. So during it, they would come. In Diwali time, we would go there. So it was actually very,
1053 very much so the best part of growing **01:00:00** in Fiji because you knew the neighbors and you
1054 know their religion and stuff. I remember going to a couple of weddings and stuff where they
1055 would have an outside wedding and they would serve us on a banana leaf.

1056 INTVWR: Oh.

1057 SK: Yeah, like a meal.

1058 INTVWR: That's cool.

1059 SK: I know, yeah, yeah.

1060 INTVWR: They do that in some parts of India as well.

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1061 SK: Yeah they do.

1062 INTVWR: That's cool. So I know a lot of people came from Gujarat, some people, I think, came
1063 from Uttar Pradesh, but we don't know yet which state your family came from.

1064 SK: No.

1065 INTVWR: That would be interesting to find out.

1066 SK: So yeah, I think my, my great grandparents, my mom's side, they're South Indian. So I don't
1067 know if they came from Madras or Kerala, I don't know, but I have to find that out. That would
1068 be South Indians.

1069 INTVWR: Okay, so they probably didn't speak Hindi. They might have spoken to a South Indian
1070 language.

1071 SK: No, they spoke Hindi.

1072 INTVWR: Oh they did speak Hindi, okay, okay.

1073 SK: But also, our Hindi's very slang. You know, that Fijian.

1074 INTVWR: Yeah, Fijian Hindi is a bit different that's for sure. Yeah.

1075 SK: There's a lot but we, but I do understand everything. I mean, like if you, they know the
1076 difference. We can understand all movies and everything else.

1077 INTVWR: Yeah, it's the same.

1078 SK: Absolutely, yeah, but they would tell. If I went to India **01:01:00** now, they wouldn't know
1079 that -

1080 INTVWR: You're from Fiji.

1081 SK: No, they wouldn't know that I'm from Fiji. They would know that I'm from somewhere that
1082 speaks Hindi. But they might not know Fiji at all. No, they may know, but India is so highly
1083 populated now and so advanced.

1084 INTVWR: That's true. And I've also noticed with Fijian Hindi, you guys have some indigenous
1085 words in your Hindi as well.

1086 SK: Yeah.

1087 INTVWR: So yeah, that would be like, probably an indicator. "Oh that she's speaking something
1088 else."

1089 SK: Yeah, Hindi, yeah. I think they can say it's a little bit more slang than anything.

1090 INTVWR: Yeah, I think it was just when all the people came there, they just -

1091 SK: Yeah, the combination of the way they talked to each other and they picked up the lingo
1092 here and there type of thing so.

Transcription: BV023.16.18
Interview with Shanaz Khan
Audio Recording: 2023_0016_0018_002.mp3
Interviewer: Rajdeep Dhadwal (INTVWR)
Interviewee: Shanaz Khan (SK)
Date of Interview: September 24, 2023

1093 INTVWR: I'm curious to know if your grandma or your parents, because one was Christian and
1094 one was Muslim. Was there any problem with them getting married?

1095 SK: They had a love marriage, my parents. And I think there was because my dad's Muslim and
1096 probably my grandparents wanted him to marry same religion.

1097 INTVWR: Yes, yes, yeah, but I mean, it worked out, right.

1098 SK: Yeah it worked out.

1099 INTVWR: Yeah, interesting. I didn't know that there were that many Christians **01:02:00** in Fiji.

1100 SK: Oh, yeah, there was. And I remember going to a Christian school and stuff. So we learned
1101 about Christianity and stuff. I really enjoyed that because this way, I learned another religion. I
1102 remember Christmas time, we went to church just for Christmas carols and stuff,

1103 INTVWR: Interesting.

1104 SK: And Christmas Day.

1105 INTVWR: Right. So you had a mix of both,

1106 SK: Yeah.

1107 INTVWR: Plus the Hindu culture.

1108 SK: Yeah, the Hindu culture, the Fijian culture.

1109 INTVWR: Yeah. Were there a lot of Sikh people there or no?

1110 SK: Yeah, some. Not that many, yeah there were some.

1111 INTVWR: Yeah. I've never, I don't think I've ever met a Fijian-Sikh person.

1112 SK: Sikh from Fiji, yeah.

1113 INTVWR: Yeah, very little of them there.

1114 SK: Yeah, very little of them. A lot of Chinese and Gujarati. They had the business, the corner
1115 stores. Chinese stores or red shop.

1116 INTVWR: Yeah.

1117 SK: Yeah, they have that.

1118 INTVWR: And I thought the story you told me about your mom working in the cashier, as a
1119 cashier was interesting because she had the box around her.

1120 SK: Around here. Yeah. And the Gujaratis also had businesses like, clothing and jewelry and
1121 stuff too.

1122 INTVWR: I'm guessing they had, like, mandirs and stuff **01:03:00** there as well.

1123 SK: Yeah, they did.

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1124 INTVWR: Okay.

1125 SK: The Mandirs and the Gurdwara, they had the mandir and stuff. Yeah, they did.

1126 INTVWR: Interesting. When you came here, there's already people Hindu people here? Punjabis
1127 are here. Like, you're already used to this different...

1128 SK: Culture and everything. Yeah, it wasn't a big thing.

1129 INTVWR: Yeah, that's very interesting.

1130 SK: Where we lived, were my family lives, where my son lives, the neighbors are Gujarati. So I
1131 always converse with them and stuff like that. And they're from Fiji.

1132 INTVWR: Oh, okay.

1133 SK: So we always say hi. They're from Natoka.

1134 INTVWR: Oh, okay. So where's that?

1135 SK: By Ba.

1136 INTVWR: By Ba, I know Ba.

1137 SK: [inaudible] Ba.

1138 INTVWR: Okay, okay.

1139 SK: [inaudible] Ba.

1140 INTVWR: Yeah, Suva and Ba are the two places I know.

1141 SK: Natoka now.

1142 INTVWR: Yeah. Interesting.

1143 SK: [inaudible] Ba. Think so yeah.

1144 INTVWR: Can you drive the whole length of Fiji in one day?

1145 SK: Yeah, you can drive the whole island. Yeah.

1146 INTVWR: In one day? That's amazing.

1147 SK: One day.

1148 INTVWR: Yeah, I'm gonna try that one day.

1149 SK: You have to save and go.

1150 INTVWR: I should go. **01:03:54**