

### **Kahaani 3: Balwinder's Story – transcript of all extracts included on slides.**

#### **Slide 4:**

##### **Watch 00.00 – 01.46**

**(00.00)** My name is Balwinder Sehmi, I am sixty-four (64) years old. I was born in Kenya. I was fourteen (14) when I came to the UK with my mum.

My life in Kenya was good – um – during that time it was a British (...) colony in Kenya, so we were separated from all the Europeans in Kenya. So, I actually grew up in the Asian community and the local Kenyans there. So, where the British used to stay, we were not allowed to go there at all – er – the only people that were allowed to go was the housemaids, gardeners – um – watchmen – but we were not allowed to go where all the Europeans were staying. Europeans could be British, German, French. Um – we got Independence in 1964, I believe, '63 / '64, but then even after Independence, we were kind of separated from the European society.

But it was good, it was good. Um – I did my schooling in Kenya. Um – we had a very, very close – community there in Kenya – the Asians. The Asians could be the background of Sikhs, Hindu, Muslims, so we were all together – um – we all used to stay together and we used to look out for each other really and build up a good relationship. **(01.46)**

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#### **Slide 6:**

##### **Watch 13.47 – 15.07**

**(13.47)** The school I went to, I was the only Asian girl – they were all white students – that was a big culture shock for me – I was bullied at school, BIG time – I was ... I used to be called names that I didn't understand at all – and I used to laugh about it, you know – they used to call me P\_\_\_\_, Mud or Chocolate – I used to think it was funny because I didn't understand what they meant. As years went by, I started ... I had two (2) friends – they said, 'Why are you laughing? You're being bullied, why are you laughing?' I said, 'Well, I don't know why I'm laughing – but it just sounds silly what they were calling me.' Then they explained to me that you are actually being bullied because of your colour – and then I kind of, put my foot down. Y'know – I said to them, 'First of all, I am not a P\_\_\_\_, I'm a Sikh, I'm from Kenya, and we have the same education in Kenya. There's no difference at all.' I think it took, it took me about a year and a half for them to get used to me and me getting used to them. **(15.07)**

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#### **Slide 10:**

##### **Watch 01.50 – 02.25**

**(01.50)** I was growing up in Kenya – I used to live with my mum's family – my mum was a single parent – so I grew up with a single parent – but my mum's family looked after me – my grandad had his own business – it was an extended family – we all stick together – it was a good life – it was a good stable life in Kenya. The family was good – it was a happy life – we had no problems. **(02.25)**

**Slide 10:**

**Watch 05.35 – 06.54**

**(05.35)** My mum was a single parent – she was divorced – she was a single parent and I guessed she wanted her independence – my mum came here in '65/'66 on her own to see what it was like, whether she could survive in the UK – and then she went back after a year and then she decided to move here because obviously, staying in an extended family – um – there was freedom, but there was no independence for her – and she wanted her independence, so we came here in '74 – my mum and I came and I was only fourteen (14) then – my mum ... we arrived here on Thursday, on the Monday, she got herself a job because that's the kind of thing she wanted to do and she wanted to be independent. We used to live in a place called Stourbridge, near Kidderminster. I did my schooling there – my mum worked – it was hard, it was very hard, it was very hard for her, very, very hard – um – but she survived – she brought me up as best that she could. Um – yes, so that's my mum, she worked really hard. **(06.54)**

**Slide 10:**

**Watch 06.58 – 08.42**

**(06.58)** My mum was in a domestic violence relationship (...) Going back that time, our Asian community always wanted sons, um – so, she had a first child who was a girl and then obviously I came along – they weren't happy – the family wasn't happy and she was in a very bad domestic violence relationship.

Um – I have a sister and we were separated, so when the divorce went through for my mum – um – the court actually decided that the parents will have one each, so my sister, she's still around, she went with my dad, my ex-dad, and I was only eight (8) days old and I stayed with my mum – and I think that made her really strong – that made my mum really strong. She turned herself into religious – she became very, very religious. There were two Sikh leaders who really helped her to pull through - she was absolutely disheartened – um – for what she went through – and I think after that, she ... because we were staying in an extended family, she felt that she was a little bit restricted for what she wanted to do – um – so that's the reason she decided to come here and lead the life she wanted to lead – she never got married again... she hated men (*laughs*) ... she never got married again. Um – but she just wanted her independence – and the only way to get her independence is to come here. **(08.42)**

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**Slide 11:**

**Watch 02.53 – 04.13**

**(02.53)** So, the reason they (*Asians*) went to Africa was to build the railways – so because the British were already in India, what they did – um – they went to all the villages, to different villages, and they took all the first-born sons, put them in the ship and they took them to Africa, just to build the railways – and that's how – like – my grandad was only fourteen (14) when he was forcefully taken to Kenya – and that was because... to build the railways. So that's why in Kenya, up until today, the community are very

close – so it doesn't matter what background you are – Sikh, Hindu, Muslim – we all stick together 'til today (...)

*(Interviewer: Did your grandad ever talk about that experience, what it was like for him?)*

He did, but it used to upset him.

But, I'm here today – I would say I'm here today because of my grandad – er – I guess if my grandad did not go to Kenya, we wouldn't have a better life – probably would still be in India, in the village – um – I'm sitting here today is because of my grandad. **(04.12)**

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**(End)**