

## Abid Hussein - Transcription

*Audio Quality: Good, bit of interruption for tea and biscuits!*

*Interview focuses on immigration, family life and work disputes/discrimination*

4

0:00:00

**LMI:** Right, I'm here again, talking to Abid. And Abid, you're going to tell us a bit more about working in Dalton Mill, because that's where you started working. You were 16. Do you want to tell us a bit more about?

1

0:00:09

**AH:** Yeah, I told you earlier I was 16 years old when I came over in this country in 1969 - March 1969. And... with my parents... down in Victoria having a new fulcrum there.

**LMI:** Yeah, yeah, I know it very well.

**AH:** Until I'm in this town, and I'm pensioner now, right? And 18th of June... today is 7th of June.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** And 18th of June my birthday, which is... I'm going 70 year old.

**LMI:** Oh, wow.

**AH:** 70 year old, yeah. So, more than 50 years I'm in Keighley. Mostly all my life here in Keighley and I start work into the textile mills. So first, I told you earlier, when I came over here, after my cousin - my family's - take me to the textile mill for interview.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** For...staff for the job. I came over from the Pakistan here. I never see the factories. I never see the machines.

**LMI:** Was it a shock?

**AH:** Very shock. Especially when I go in office, like this, really nice and peace[ful]. Quiet. They take my full details. And they said, 'You start on Monday.' Right. 'And start nine o'clock,' Sorry, '7 o'clock till 5 o'clock in evening'. Ok, I'm very happy I get the job in here, closest... go by walk, you know what I mean?

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** Right. So I go to Monday. Monday go into the mill, right. My cousin take me because I don't know which way I go. Will I last here? So taking me to the mill. And the foreman is there, 'Mr. Hussain?' 'Yes, sir.' Very nice time. Soon as you go, 'Good morning!' Right? 'Good morning!' You know, everybody said. Very smile, very happy, very friendly. Right. So, then they take me to the department number 3. There is a 4, 5 department, which is, I told you earlier, Dalton Mill, this is the biggest mill in Keighley.

16  
0:02:27

**LMI:** It's huge.

1  
0:02:28

**AH:** And very sad it's burning, last few months ago.

**LMI:** Very sad.

**AH:** And I told you earlier, when I passed from here, I told to my sons, my daughters, my family, my wife, my grandchildren now, I told them, 'When I came in this country, 1969, I was start first job, and this mill.' 'How dad, that so hard?' So very happy. So anyway, so he take me to the department number three. There is a machine, soon as go into the factory, noisy.

**LMI:** Really? Huge noise?

**AH:** Very noisy. Especially the gill box, you know, the wools. First wools. They process, they coming in. There is too noisy. Believe me, I got shock.

**LMI:** Have you never been anywhere like that before?

**AH:** Never, I've never been to the factories, inside them.

**LMI:** Had you come from quite a rural country... When you were in Pakistan it was very rural. Quiet?

**AH:** Yeah, my family in Pakistan the farmer like, you know what I mean?

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** So, there is no factory, you know. I was living in the village, that kind of village, you know, farm. Farmer like that, you know what I mean. So anyway...so and I was used to this noise and factory machine blah blah. Anyway, I heard of it from my parents, you know what I mean. But when I came into the mill...the gentleman take me to the third mill, he can explain me, the Pakistani boys.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** He's... I think it's more than one year he worked there.

2  
0:04:02

**LMI:** Yeah. You said there weren't very many Pakistani men working there at that point. There's lots of...

1  
0:04:07

**AH:** Yeah, only few [of] the Pakistanis.

4  
0:04:10

**LMI:** You said there's some Italians, as well.

1  
0:04:12

**AH:** Mostly mostly the Italian, mostly the Italian ladies. Ladies mostly, Italians. This is the day shift. That time mostly the day shift textile running. After few years... I said 1980s... they start night shift. So, the gentleman explained me, 'This is your job, you will start as like a labourer.' So he showed me the big trolleys. 'Right, the rover, bobbin, when they are empty... the operator, they put in this bin, bobbin, and you collect in to the big trolley.' Right. 'Take [them] to the down, put them in the skep.' Right. 'So then full one, I show you where you go.' The full one, right, depend on what quality they are, small books they write down... foreman write down here, "'There's so and so number, so and so color.'" Right. 'And this boys show you where you are collecting.'

**LMI:** And you would go and get them.

**AH:** Then go near the lift and they show me, 'You press this button, and the lift coming up, right.' The little bell - ping! The bell, door is open, we enter. And they take me to... 'Now we'll be going to the ground floor, so you press this G.' Right.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** Take me to the ground floor. There is all stock there, you see. So, we look in the number... every... what they're stocking.

**LMI:** Yeah, yeah, they're all labelled.

**AH:** All the labels there. So I check in the label. The good thing is that how I was been to school... Matric in Pakistan. So I read and writing ok.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** That's a good for me, very good help for me. I appreciate for my parents, you know, me take me to school in there. So I read the number, 'Yeah, ok.' Then we pick about 50, 60 roving. Put them in the basket, and bring by the lift. And coming up the department, and give to the operator. And the operator machine, machine operator. The[y] empties roving, they take them off. And pull this full one in there. And then slowly... I keep watching them as well, because in my mind...

**LMI:** You're kind of learning, are you?

**AH:** I keep learning every operator. And plus, try to best friendship, 'Hello, hi.' Blah blah, you know what I mean. And keep learning as well...

**LMI:** Oh, cups of tea. Thank you very much.

**AH:** I think it's 10 o'clock or quarter past 10 - tea time. The ladies come in with a cup of tea.

**LMI:** Oh, here we are, tea!

**AH:** Yeah, like our cup of tea is. And quarter past 10 to quarter to... half an hour. No, sorry, 15 minutes. 15 minutes. 15 minutes tea time. The ladies come in with a bell, like in school. 'Tea time! Tea time!' So, some biscuits and some tea cakes and that.

**2**

**0:07:20**

**LMI:** And you told me how much it costs?

**AH:** Only one penny.

**LMI:** One penny? Oh, look at that! You say biscuits and here comes biscuits!.

**AH:** Yeah, that time. One penny, cup of tea and a few biscuits or tea cake, anything. One penny. Because, I told you later on, end of the week, how much I get my wage. Right?

**4**

**0:07:38**

**LMI:** Say it again.

**AH:** From Monday to Friday, right, especially Friday between 3 till 4 o'clock afternoon...because a Friday finishes half an hour early.

**LMI:** 4 o'clock finish.

**AH:** Everybody looking at the gentleman wage man, 'Oh, my wage is coming up.' You know, right? So that time they put them in the envelope. The wage. So I opened my envelope, right? £6.75.

**LMI:** And you remember that, do you?

**AH:** Believe me, I still remember. £6.75. Full week.

**LMI:** And did you have to take that home?

**AH:** Plus, four hours Saturday, as well.

**LMI:** Did you have to take that home and give it to your mother?

**AH:** Yeah, my mother, yeah. I showed them. So they said, 'Oh.' And she kissed my hand. My mum kissed my hand, 'My 16 year son's first time work in the factory and he get the wage.' You know, so...

**LMI:** Yeah? Were they working?

**AH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** Were they working in...?

**AH:** And my father, my father's working textile mill as well. On night shift.

**LMI:** But not Dalton Mill?

**AH:** No, not Dalton Mill. In other one, next to the railway station. Low Mill. He's working on night shift.

**LMI:** I think they've knocked it all down, haven't they?

**AH:** Yeah, that's knocked down. That's completely... So, so quite, I'm not sure... I was work there three years... three years or more. And then I can learn how they're operating the machine. Right. The ladies, Italian ladies, very friendly. And Pakistani, mostly one or two machine operators. At that time, Pakistani community is very, very rare, very close, you know what I mean. Very little, sorry, very little. Very little.

**13**

**0:09:30**

**LMI:** Around how many?

**AH:** Yeah, very little. Especially small Keighley town, you know.

**LMI:** Yeah, yeah.

**AH:** So Bradford is big town, big city. And mostly, our Pakistani people when they came over they settled in Bradford. But my parents settled in Keighley.

**LMI:** You liked Keighley?

**AH:** I loved Keighley. Believe me. Nice people. And at that times, believe me, it's a big change. I loved more than 50s. It's a big change. At that time, believe me, as soon as we meet, 'Good morning! How are you? Nice day!' Blah blah. So, very friendly. In the school children respect each other. The marriage systems. Church. We go in the mosque, right? And the five time pray in the mosque. And that time is church, so many churches in Keighley, right. And there's the bell. Our Muslims say, 'Allah Akbar'. You know, at pray time. And they can belling, only Sunday. Our best day is Friday, the men day. And the Christian, they are Sunday. And they take the children into Sunday. We've seen it. They take small children, himself, wife and husband.

**LMI:** People got on well together, didn't they?

**AH:** Yeah, yeah.

**LMI:** That's great. Yeah.

**AH:** So, after a few months, I keep on learning in textile. Then I talk to my friend. The Italian ladies, 'Come on, I'll train you. Be very careful, foremen, that they can't see you.' You know. So slowly, slowly, he's training me. Very friendly, blah, blah. So a few months after, I pick up.

**2**

**0:11:13**

**LMI:** So you had no...it wasn't formal training; it was kind of secret training.

**1**

**0:11:18**

**AH:** Secret training. I had secret training there. So after that, a friend of mine...the vacancies on the machine?

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** So, they need some people. (At that time there were plenty of vacancies in textile mill. So, any mills you can go, you can get the job straight away.) So, same mills, you know what I mean, the friend of mine, talked to the foreman. They said, 'This man is... you can take a test if you want'. He said, 'Where are you learning?' I'm all good, you know. So, I said, 'Some nice ladies, they can train.' 'Oh, it's all right,' He don't mind, you know what I mean. 'It's a good thing. Today is good for us, because our worker, you know, is learning here, and they get on the machine now.' Right. So, he give me the machine. That time, say, only one operator one machine. Right. So I can start the machine. So, after that my wage is going up. Right. So full week then I got £15.

**LMI:** That's more than double.

**AH:** More than double.

**LMI:** Wow! I bet your mother kissed your hand again!

**AH:** Believe me, she prayed for me as well. So anyway...so slowly, slowly, I'm picking up different machines. Different department, like a ring spinning, fly spinning, and [?]some roving, twisting and all different processes.

2

0:12:54

**LMI:** Was the factory full? Was it working all the time?

**AH:** Yeah, yeah. When they're at dinner time, sometimes we'll do in the canteen, you know, canteen for a go. Then after a few years, they make in their canteen. Everybody go, a cup of tea in the canteen, or dinner. So very nice time. Very nice time. So slowly, slowly, slowly I'm picking up. Then my father said, 'You come into the Low Mill, there is vacancies, right. Day shift'. Yeah. So there is a bit more money and the closer as well. So I move into the Low Mill, textile mill. Six months I work in day shift. Then I was to go... around about four years after, right, I was 24 years old.

**LMI:** So that would have been...by then, we'd have been sort of mid-70s...'75ish, or something like that?

**AH:** Like that. Because I still remember 1974, I get...applies for British passport, and everything yeah. And that time very nice time, very easy. So, five year after, that's mean... '69...more '69 came here, yeah. So I went home... 1974, back home.

**LMI:** For a visit or...

**AH:** A visit home for the big family.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** And one year I stopped there.

**LMI:** Oh, did you?

**AH:** With my parents, as well. And they got me married. I married 25 years old. Around under 25. So I married there. So another 6 months I stayed with my family. So then came back in 1976. Straight away, night shift.

**LMI:** Oh, wow!

**AH:** Because... the more money on night shift. Hard work. 12-hour shift. 7 o'clock evening to 7 o'clock in the morning.

**LMI:** And you just got married?

**AH:** I married, I needed more money, now, because [of] my wife...

**LMI:** Did you have your own house?

**AH:** No, not mine. Still... my mum go back home, for some reason. You know, some families, you see. But my dad is still here. Ten year after, I bought my own house. And then I applied for my wife. And she came over here. And night shift, more money, more money. Then, some new machines come in. Fast machines come in; Fast machines come in.

**LMI:** This was all at Low Mill, was it?

**AH:** Yeah, Low Mills. Only one machine and one person. Then the times coming up, fast machines. Right? And more productions. They need more productions. More orders coming from all over the world, right. That times the British industries, especially textile mill, I don't know, I[m] used to the textile mill, you see. All my life my parents, my dad's, my uncles – all, they work in textile mill. So I know the textile history about... you know, better than foundries and other factories. So, then, more and more... then two machines.

**LMI:** You had to manage two machines at once?

**AH:** Instead of... Yeah. Instead of... two machines running.

**LMI:** Very fast machines.

**AH:** And plus, they're very clever at that times, owners, you know what I mean, directors.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** If you more production, you get more bonus.

**LMI:** Ok. Yeah.

**AH:** Right. So you know, so...

**LMI:** Was it getting harder work?

**AH:** Like a greedy little... hard work. Hard work, you get... at end of the day you get more money. Because in my mind I want to build up my life, bring my wife, you know. That time is locum line. You believe or not believe, like I told you earlier, my first wage - £6.75. When I bought the house... My dad bought a house - £900. Three bedroom.

**LMI:** Wow. Yes. I bought a house in 1970, for £750. In Bingley.



1  
0:17:15

**AH:** See. So, Bingley, especially locum land, same this time, as well. Areas depend on areas prices. So now the locum land is still the cheap. Older area, you know, Riddleston, with the Shantard and Longley, the more prices, you see. So that time... mostly about... 20 years, I was still living in locum land areas. Then I moved to Highfield Lane.

**LMI:** Oh, Highfield Lane.

**AH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** They're bigger houses up there, aren't they?

**AH:** That's a big house. Then I built myself, and my wife came. I need the house. You know what I mean. So I bought my own house. £2,500. Three bedrooms. Big house.

3  
0:18:04

[**Waiter:** We have Asian sweet dish today.

**AH:** Oh, very good. Thank you very much.

**LMI:** You are spoiling us.

**AH:** Thank you very much.] So, then slowly I moved... Dalton Lane. Then I finish, go back to country, come back. Then I start to William Hartley, William Hartley's... past Steeton?

4  
0:18:29

**LMI:** Oh I know, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**AH:** Cross Hill.

**LMI:** Crosshills?

**AH:** Crosshill, yeah. William Hartley. I worked there.

**LMI:** That's quite a long way from here.

**AH:** Yeah. At that time, because buses, very short buses and two-hour service, like that. But the factory's owners, they send a coach.

**LMI:** Oh, really?

**AH:** They send the coach. Highfield Mill, there is a... next to the Glowsburg.

**LMI:** Yeah, yeah. I know that.

**AH:** There's Highfield Mill, and that time is a very very popular. Anybody go they get the job.

**LMI:** Really?

**AH:** Through the day shift and they give you the training for a two week. Then send you the night shift, if you want to go. So I started in William Hartley's. There I worked about... a couple of years. Then they go on the strike, for some reason. Strike. So I started only about a couple of years, and then it...strike. People go on the strike. You know what I mean?

**LMI:** For more wages, or...?

**AH:** Yeah, more wages. Then I finish from there. Then I start to the class Highfield Mill.

**LMI:** Oh, right.

**AH:** That is a very tough, very tough job.

**LMI:** Why?

**AH:** The manager. Night shift, the manager. I think his name is Larry...Lorry...Lorry some, you know. He always running. All the night. Every department. Checking the people.

**LMI:** Right. Making sure you were...?

**AH:** You don't mess about. You don't mess about. Believe me, one day...

**LMI:** And it was still a 12-hour shift?

**AH:** There is 10-hour shift, I think.

**LMI:** Oh, right.

**AH:** So, I never forget that gentleman. Because you know, he's not nice with... he nice with owners, directors, with owners' people. But no[t] nice with the workers. My machine is running. I was sitting in the chair. Night shift, you see. The machine is running. I come round after 10 minutes, round the machines. No anything wrong, you know what I mean? Then I sit down. I never smoke in my life. Some operators go in the toilet for the smoke as well.

**LMI:** You never smoked.

**AH:** I never smoked in my life.

**0:20:55**

**LMI:** Well done.

**AH:** So the gentlemen...Every department is foremen you see. They look after the worker, changing this and that. They're all right. But he's the manager, night shift manager. He come in. He see me on the chair. 'Why you sit down? You no come for the sitting. You just around the machine.' That time I speak... pick up a little bit English, you know what I mean. I said

'Look, I'm just been round.' 'Never mind, you keep round. Keep round. Anything [can] happen.' I said, 'Look...' 'No, no!' Believe me, or not believe me, I saw it myself, every night four or five people are sacked.

**LMI:** Sacked?

**AH:** Sacked.

**LMI:** Really?

**AH:** As soon as this operator reply 'Why? I'm... Look, look my machine is running ok. Foreman's are happy, watching me.' So I look around, 'If I go for a smoke for five minutes and my friend look after...' 'No, you always round the machine.' So if someone replied, 'No.' 'No, no. You argue with me? Go finish.'

**0:22:08**

**LMI:** Wow.

**AH:** 'Finish'. Oh, terrible.

**LMI:** So did he say that to you?

**0:22:11**

**AH:** But I'm very scared that time, you know what I mean. So I never reply anything. So it's all right. I say, 'Ok, no, I go.' First time I say, 'I've just been round.' Second time, 'No man! Get up and [go] round again!' So I still, you know what mean, go around the machine. And the second thing that bad happened, with that gentleman. When the coach came out... they came into the coach. If anybody's newspaper, or any book... Some machines are very smooth running, you see, the ring spinning, the blah blah. 10-15 minutes they're round. And sit down 10 minutes to read the newspaper. Blah blah. Soon as they come, he took the newspaper from his hand. Book, newspaper, anything, they [he] take[s] it off from him. In the morning, when they go in the coach, 'Here is your newspaper. Here are your books. Don't bring any more here. You come for your work.'

**LMI:** God, that's terrible.

**0:23:14**

**AH:** Very sticky man, very sticky man. So, day shift director, we complaining then. They said... because it's good for the morale, you see. So they look after him. Anyway, but one day, there is the two coaches going. And that mill, two coaches, very day shift and night shift. The two coaches they go there. And they're very, very good. Good money as well. But the managers are very bad. Sometimes the coach... One coach come from Bradford, one coach from Keighley. There after I seen it... because I was new... only three months, four months,

they start strike there as well. Because they... they are little dog as well, with him, the manager.

**LMI:** Oh, really.

**0:24:02**

**AH:** Yeah, because he's scared as well, because the Bradford guys, you know, they're fighting each other and they sack him. He said, 'It doesn't matter you sack me, doesn't matter. I've get another job, but you will like it. We are not your servants. We are no servants, right? We employ here. We give you the good production, everything. Foremen look after us, our head. They know... they're watching us. Why you? You have no job to tell me, "Do this and do this and do that," Because the foreman is there.' When the guys are by him, they don't like him. Sack him. So staff you fighting there, you know. But anyway... So big strike. Big strike.

**LMI:** And this was at Highfield?

**AH:** Highfield. And that I never remember. The elder, our elder people there, that time 40 years old, 45 years old, very experienced, very respectful person. They said 'We are working here 10 years. Some are 15 years. This man is terrible.'

**LMI:** Is it just that one man who caused the strike?

**0:25:07**

**AH:** Caused the strike. Because... that times prayer. Our Muslims start praying. When they like this summer time, big day, so they can't be pray at home. They pray time in the mill. When they start... we take the mat, and they take the mat off, 'No, you can't pray here. You no can pray for here.' I said 'Look, I'm the Muslim. My machine is running. Foreman's watching me, they no any complain, what's problem [with] you?' But they don't like him. So at the end of the day he's causing trouble, and a big strike. And I still remember those gentlemen bring over this mosque, Amity Street Mosque. We're... honest to him, hand by hand. We go the... permanent strike. I say there's more than 50 people. Only four people, they can speak them. They selected four people. If they follow you, they ring you. That time it was a home line telephone. They ring you home. 'Oh no, that gentleman is bad. He's bad. You come too. You are very nice.' They try to bring it back.

**LMI:** So they try to sack some people, and keep some people?

**0:26:26**

**AH:** That's right. So Zeus straight away told him, 'You speak to them four people. No concern here. We agree here, we don't need this gentleman at night. This manager, we don't need him.' First our request to the owners, directors, here, 'Take me to the day shift, or whatever, but I don't... we don't like to him. Second thing, we are the Muslim, we are allowed to pray. Honestly, we look after the machine. Blah blah. So we allowed to pray in that mill. We allowed to prepare... a newspaper.'

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** And blah blah this and that. You know, few conditions. So first try a few weeks. Two weeks...Nobody...big loss. Big mill, big loss. They try to everybody, house COVID manager here, 'Sorry, you come back, you come back, you come back.' They say 'No.'

**LMI:** That's after four weeks?

**0:27:35**

**AH:** Yeah. So then after, they call to everybody. Big directors come. Owners come. Because a big loss.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** You know, all night shift is closed.

**LMI:** Was the day shift still running?

**0:27:47**

**AH:** Day shift is running. Only night shift. So big directors and owners, they come in. They come in to speak to, and they explain to us the only few conditions. 'We know. We love to work here. Ask your foremans, any complaining about that? No. Maybe a few of... Mostly everybody does. Why? Somebody's machine is running, and he's reading the newspaper for 5, 10, 2 minutes. So what's wrong with that?' You know what I mean? 'Prayer time. It takes only 5, 10 minutes. But somebody's watching my machine, I pray, then he goes to pray, I'm watching the machine. What's wrong with that?' So it's a decent complain, you see. So at the end of the day, directors and owners, they said, 'Ok.' They said, 'We don't need this manager here.' So they changed him.

**LMI:** They got rid of him?

**AH:** Yeah, they did.

**LMI:** Wow.

**AH:** Yeah, they did him in.

**0:28:50**

**LMI:** And did you go back to work?

**AH:** Because he was kind of hopeless, you see. After that I still worked there. After that I lost my textile mills in Westline, Robert Glue.

**LMI:** In?

**AH:** Robert Glue, Westline, Keighley. You know Westline?

**LMI:** Westline?

**AH:** Yeah. You know the big Hawkworth Road? Halifax Road?

**LMI:** Yeah, yeah.

**AH:** They go up Westline.

**LMI:** Ah, West Lane, yeah, yeah.

**AH:** Yeah. There is Robert Glue.

**LMI:** Oh, right.

**AH:** That is my best factories.

**14**  
**0:29:16**

**LMI:** Oh, really?

**AH:** Best staff. Best manager. Best staff. And good money.

**LMI:** What year is that?

**1**  
**0:29:24**

**AH:** That is the longest work I'm in the factories, because only four nights. Long hour, 13 hours. Six days, seven in the morning.

**LMI:** But four days a week?

**AH:** From Monday to Thursday.

**LMI:** Oh right.

**AH:** So three days [off], you know. Especially Friday we happy, go to the pray[er], you know. One o'clock wake up, get the shower. Sometimes not much bathrooms in the home. Bathrooms very rare, but we go to the public bath. Public bath in the Hyphy Lane.

**9**  
**0:29:56**

**LMI:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**AH:** We love to go.

**LMI:** I used to go to the one in Bingley.

**1**  
**0:30:00**

**AH:** Oh, right. We go there. So that is Robert Blue. That's the best [of] my factories.

**LMI:** So what year did you go there?

**AH:** There is go about '80s.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** '80s... till... '85, '87, '88.

**LMI:** And what happened at the end?

**AH:** End of the day I finish... In this period I've been to Pakistan, back. Blah blah. Change a job. Blah blah. So only a few factories - in Keighley. Never in Bradford, Halifax. Blah blah. Only Keighley, ok? So I finished round about... '89... something.

**LMI:** Were the mills beginning to close by this time?

**AH:** Slowly, slowly, closing, closing, closing, closing. Because Thatcher... when Thatcher Prime Minister...

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** She's... you know what I mean... When she came over here and, 'Businessman, you take the money, whatever you'd like.' But mostly textile, they go out of the countries.

**LMI:** Exactly, yeah.

**AH:** Going India, Sri Lanka, and all over. This and that. But there is the cheap labour, you see.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** So that's why... They have too many close factories there. So anyway, after... I think... I start taxi drivers, in Keighley. Private hire taxi, in railway station. [Central Taxi.] I started there. I started I think in... 1992, around about. So five years taxi here. Then I go to Bronte taxi in Haworth. Right? I worked in Ilkley for about six months. Then year 2000... Life is flying, man! Believe me, I can't believe it. I'm 70 years old now, you can remind me. All my memories go back from 1969 to over here.

**LMI:** Yeah, yeah, you've got a good memory.

Then year 2000, I moved taxi driver in Leeds.

**LMI:** Oh, right. That's a fair distance.

**AH:** Yeah, very fair distance. Because I... through my cousin from Dewsbury, he work in Leeds. Private hire. After he go... black and white. But he came a visit to my house and, 'How much you make money, driving?' I said, 'Sometime good day, sometimes bad day, £20, £30, £40 a day.' Like that, you know. 'Oh my, rubbish! C'mon, you pay the insurers, road tax, everything. Why not come into Leeds?' I say, 'Long way to...' 'You know. 'Doesn't matter. But the good money, man.' But good things, that time my wife is driver. I bought another car, £500. Toyota Corolla. Give to my wife. She take the children, school, bring it back. Because, you know, this is the main thing. So she said, 'Ok, no worry about it, you can start.' So I start afternoon...start three, four o'clock. The good thing, taxi is good thing. Because when you want to go, when you go finish. What time you want. You know, more hour, less hour.

**4**

**0:33:13**

**LMI:** So did you miss working in the mills?

**1**

**0:33:16**

**AH:** Yeah, definitely. Definitely. Because mills work is very peaceful. And the timing. And the start and timing, finish and the timing.

**LMI:** Did you make friends as well?

**AH:** Yes, a lot of English friends. Sometimes, believe me, this time... one of my foremen is dying. And other ones, [they] still meet at the Morrison and Asda. Sometimes they see me. 'Hussain, how are you?' He's a big man because he drinks, you know, too much drinks. Anyway, he saw me, you know. Only a few of...they can... we meet each other. But very friendly. So taxi drivers...is family-wise ok, when you want to go [home] and you want to come back; Or, no mood today; Tired? Ok, no bother; Or anything happened in the families, ok, no bother today; Two days, three days, doesn't matter. Want to go back in country? Stop the car, go home.

**LMI:** When did you finish?

**AH:** But problems, too many taxi problems. After the year...especially Iraq war, you know? Iraq war.

**13**

**0:34:26**

**LMI:** Oh yeah, yeah.



**AH:** When they started the war. Too much racist people.

**LMI:** Oh. right, okay. Yeah.

**AH:** Osama Bin Laden. Osama Bin Laden.

**LMI:** All that stuff.

**AH:** It was terrible. That time...

**LMI:** People would say things to you?

**AH:** Yeah, believe me.

**LMI:** In the taxi?

**AH:** In the taxi. Sometimes, they spit in my face.

**LMI:** Oh God!

**AH:** And they see my beard.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** And they see me, 'You look like bloody Osama Bin Laden.' [spit]

**LMI:** Really?

**AH:** Very bad. Very sad. That time, you know, very, very bad time. Sometime I think, 'Leave the bloody taxi, go home.' You know what I mean, but still, family and mortgage and everything.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** You know, hard times. So I still go. And three time I've beaten myself very very badly. Some black guys, you know what I mean?

**LMI:** They picked on you?

**AH:** They beat me two hours. They running me around end of the day, no pay the taxi. I come out and he beat me. Hit my head and take my car as well.

**LMI:** Oh, that's hard.

**AH:** And very sad, very sad.

**LMI:** When did you retire?

**AH:** So... then five years I worked... I told you earlier, I start Central Taxis and Bronte, Haworth, Ilkley, and then moved 2000 in Leeds. 2014. 2014 has come. And my three sons and two girls... One... my eldest son is manager in O2 mobile shop in Keighley. He's manager there. And second son is a science schoolteacher in Bradford. And my other son, he work in mobile shop too. O2. So they very respectful. And the marriage, very happy marriage. No complain at all. I get grandchildren, granddaughters. And my children said... before I'm age... pension age. Two years left. And they said, 'Dad, you've been very hard work. My mom told, we see you as well. You know, I mean, textile mill, there's taxi here, there. Support your mom and dad. Support families. Support...' You know what I mean? 'So you've been very hard work. Now we want to, you be retired.' I said, 'Ok, I work part-time.' You know what I mean? 'Instead of full week.'

9

0:36:47

**LMI:** Yeah, yeah.

**AH:** 'No, no, we look after you. Your house is cash, you paid all the mortgage.' So, rest of the bill, two sons he married, he get own house. One son with me. But they still look after me. I have no money... [no] problem about the moneys. Or any others. You know, I'm very happy. So, this is my story, you see.

**LMI:** That's great. So, have you got any regrets at all?

**AH:** I'm very happy. I told you about these textiles, ok? And the other side, about the communities.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** At that time, they were very, very friendly communities.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** And the first few years in taxis, very make good friends, English friends and other friends. Very respectful. 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock in the morning, when they enjoy the club. Drinks also.

**LMI:** I don't know how you coped with it!

**AH:** I take them to nice and peace and home. But some is very crazy.

**LMI:** Yeah, I'm sure.

**AH:** Some is very crazy.

**LMI:** Leeds on a Friday night!

**AH:** Terrible. So I've been very [?] .... My will power is very strong. My believing is very strong to my God. Death and life into my God's hand, you see. So I believe very strongly. So, good and bad, everywhere, you know what I mean? I always says. Very friendly in the taxi. This my English, right? I told you earlier, I never been to school in this country. But this my speak English. There's so many English customers, they ask, 'Hussein, your English is very good.' I say... when I say to them, 'I've never been to school in this country.' 'Oh, I can't believe it! I see so many other taxi driver like your age,' (At that time I was about 55, 54, you know.) "They "No, yes, no, we go." Blah blah. " Yes, no," only. Your English is very good.' I said, 'Because when I came into the taxi driver, my habbies talking... talking [to] each other, "How are you? How your families? Little kids, boys, girls?' You know what I mean, especially when 10 years, 9 years old, regular customer and the areas. 'Hello Hussain!' Sometimes they ask, 'What's your name?' I said, 'My name is Choo-Choo.' They laughing. Choo-Choo! First time I heard a Choo-Choo. So next time they see me, 'How are you, Choo-Choo?' So, very friendly, very friendly, you know what I mean.

2

0:39:32

**LMI:** So just to sort of round off, because I'm really interested in the textile bit of your work. So when all the mills started closing, was that difficult for you? Were there people out of work? That was in the '80s and Thatcher, wasn't it, when that started?

1

0:39:51

**AH:** In 1980, I think, you know, the more communities coming. Not only Pakistan. Indian, Bangladesh. Mostly in textile. I seen that Italian. First [to] start. First generation. Then Pakistani and Bangladesh. Indians, mostly no. They do some different business, whatever. Mostly Pakistani, Bangladesh and Italian, in the textile. So when that time has come, textile is moving to the other countries, it is very hard to find a job. But in that time, slowly, slowly, our Asians built up... Elder built up. Second generation coming up. And they start take-away, restaurants. You know what I mean? Or mostly the taxi drivers. Mostly the taxi drivers. Like in that time...

2

0:40:54

**LMI:** So did that happen to a lot of people? As the mills closed, a lot of people you worked with became taxi drivers?

1

0:41:00

**AH:** Yeah, they moved into the taxi driver and some start their shop, corner shop or clothes shop, you know what I mean. Some restaurants, some takeaways.

**LMI:** Did you miss it? Did you miss the mills?

**AH:** I missed the mills. Because... I told you best job is... best job is the times is the factories, textile factories. Because... it's timing, you see. Main thing is timing. You wake up on the right time; right time your dinner, tea; right time to go back home and sleep. Eight hours, nine hours. A weekend. Relax, nothing else to do.

**LMI:** You don't have to think about work.

**AH:** Not at all. So first time, when the Monday comes, you know, 'Aww, going to work Monday!' And Monday... especially night shift, maybe through the day, never much sleep on Monday. Some poems,, some take the children to school.

**LMI:** So just tell me, because you mentioned it to me before, what it was like when you went to the Industrial Museum? When you went on a trip to the Industrial Museum.

**AH:** When I went to the Sangha centre, the guys say, 'Mr Riaz, he take you to the museum.' Before he told me where we going, he said, 'I'm going to textile museum, because you're... all elder, I know them, my parents as well, they used to work in textile.' Believe me, everybody on face is smiling 'Oh, that's good, that's good!' So when I go in there... Oh believe me, I go 50 years back! Same machines - ring spinning, fly spinning, twisting, roving, gill box. You know, all full set of , you know, there in the museum. Right? And, surprise me that the two machine is running.

**LMI:** Oh, really?

**AH:** Right. The gentlemen's come, like foremen...

**LMI:** Yeah

**AH:** Especially those the blue blue overall...

**LMI:** Oh, yeah.

**AH:** ...overall is on, wearing on, yeah? So believe me, my memory last for 50 years back. All these machines are in front of me, and the foreman. And I spoke to him, 'Hello gentleman, what's your name?' 'Jack,' I think he said, Jack or something. I said, 'I worked long time in textile mill.' Another of my few friends, they come to me, 'Yeah, he working, he doing this fly spinning, he ring spinning, I doing the roving.' Then one day... one day I was working John Haggas's as well. Which is closed now.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** There's an... There is an un... um... full... Every job I know it. Like a master start. They start me master. Called the master job. Right? Master jobs mean you know everything.

**LMI:** Oh right, ok. Yeah.

**AH:** So there, I start there. 'Anybody missed it? Mr. Hussain? That gentleman's missed today. He's no come. You go there.'

2  
0:43:56

**LMI:** Oh, right, so you knew every job.

**AH:** Every job.

**LMI:** Wow.

**AH:** Every job I know it. Right? So sometime in John Haggas's, the evening shift, which is four hours. Maybe my day off, they ring me up, 'Hussain, are you coming to work? Because a few gentlemen are off for some reason.' I said, 'It's ok.' Give you extra money. Four hours. Four hours give me, give it for a wage of 12 hours. Yeah, it's good things. So that time... the end of the day... because of different factories I work... so I get different jobs. Training, learning. So end of the day I know *everything* in the textile. So very happy, very friendly. You know what I mean? So, good wage. End of the day, good wage. Plus Monday to Friday I've a mindset -Monday to Friday work, weekend relax. Very friendly, you know what I mean? So, visit to the family, and sometimes we go... From the beginning...

**LMI:** It's fascinating.

**AH:** ...when I was 20 years old, 30 years old, cinema, cinema? Picture house?

4  
0:45:10

**LMI:** Yeah, yeah.

**AH:** Keighley Picture House.

**LMI:** I remember when it nearly closed.

**AH:** Yeah. So there is in Bradford... Keighley no Asian films, movies here... but Bradford about two. So my parents said, (I was young, you know?) So this no... elder one, and other, my cousin, 20/30 years old. They can go every week. So mum and dad, they let us, two week after, 'You can go, only one movie. Go by the bus.' Two and a half croon, you know.

**LMI:** Yeah, half crown.

**AH:** Half crown, yeah, half crown.

**LMI:** Twelve and a half pee.

1  
0:45:51

**AH:** Yeah, that's right. So, very, very cheap, everything cheap. Oh, another thing, when I start driving...do you know how much? 50p a lesson.

**LMI:** 50p a lesson?

**AH:** 50p a lesson, when I started.

**LMI:** Woah!

**AH:** And £5 for the test fee. When your test come in, £5. But the wages, look, your wage £15, £20, you know. But very happy people. This time the people earning £500, £600... depend on... Taxi drivers - hard work. Taxi driver's job is... I don't... One side I like it. That's why 20... more than 20 years I work in taxi.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**AH:** Taxi driver. In the big cities. That time is no tom-tom. You know?

**1**

**0:46:36**

**LMI:** Oh yeah, no sat-nav.

**AH:** No sat-nav.

**LMI:** Yeah, yeah.

**AH:** I worked 5 years in taxi driver in Keighley. Then I move into Leeds -big city. One-way system. When I get the job...I start in the summertime, the fog and very bad weather. Believe me, I told my friends, 'I get keep Paracetamol all the time with me.' Because I get panic. 'Oh my God!' I take the customer for two miles, last I come back six miles back in office.

**2**

**0:47:13**

**LMI:** Now listen, I'm going to turn this off in a second.

**AH:** Thank you, sir.

**LMI:** But just, have you got any last things you want to say about your working life in the textile mills?

**1**

**0:47:21**

**AH:** Yeah. This is my message to my communities, or my... new generation that are coming up. In my 50 years life, the best life is my textile. Right? Very friendly, very peaceful. And after we very peaceful mind. And very nice life. But slowly slowly moving up, people going

greedy. Even factory owners going greedy. Bonus work, this work. Blah blah. You know what I mean? Make more money, more money. You know what I mean? So, everything's mixed up now. No[t] much respect at all. You know what I mean, very greedy people. All the community, good and bad, everywhere. Good and bad.

**LMI:** There is.

**AH:** But the new generation to, my message is - The best the textiles time.

**2**

**0:48:13**

**LMI:** Thank you so much.

**AH:** Welcome.